



A COMPARATIVE LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF AMERICAN AND BRITISH ENGLISH IN CONTEMPORARY USAGE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the linguistic differences between American and British English in three areas: usage, pronunciation, and vocabulary. By combining phonetic transcription, qualitative interpretation, and corpus analysis, it investigates the dynamic variance in the English-speaking world. Numerous lexical variations between American and British dialects are produced by the analysis, ranging from common words to technical vocabularies based on sociocultural, historical, and geographical aspects. Additionally, although language use is examined to demonstrate syntactic variety, idiomaticity, and pragmatic norms, phonetic analysis detects vowel pronunciation variation, rhoticity, and intonation patterns. These analyses' ramifications have an impact on translation, language pedagogy, and intercultural communication, highlighting the necessity of understanding and navigating linguistic variance in many social situations. Furthermore, the study investigates the distinctions between these two global English dialects as a foundation for linguistic variety and cultural division. Generally speaking, this research opens up new avenues for further investigation into the topic as well as for our comprehension of lexical, phonetic, and pragmatic variety in English and its wider consequences for communication, culture, and identity.

Key words: pronunciation, vocabulary, linguistic variety, American and British English,

INTRODUCTION

In addition to being the native tongue of the English people, English is also spoken by individuals in many other nations. The British Isles is where English originated. Three Northern European tribes—the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes—invaded Britain at the start of the fifth century. After settling on the island, these three tribes united to form a single population. The English language developed naturally from the three dialects they spoke. It is made clear that English is a Germanic language. It is a language that is linked to Swedish, Norwegian, Dutch, and German. Its history begins with the marking of the ancient English in the year 450. Three major periods can be distinguished in the history of the English language: Old English (450–1150), Middle English (1150–1500), and Modern English (1500–present) (Qin, 1983). There was a relatively tiny population when the English language first emerged. It is currently arguably one of the most frequently

spoken languages in the world, though, following years of evolution. As the English language has evolved, it now has numerous dialects across the globe. Accents, vocabulary, grammar, discourse, sociolinguistics, pronunciation, tone, intonation, spelling, and other traits vary among variants. Consequently, it is critical that English language learners pay attention to the variations in language usage.

In modern usage, American English (AmE) and British English (BrE) differ significantly in spelling, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. AmE frequently simplifies spelling (e.g., color vs. colour, -ize vs. -ise) and uses different terms (pants vs. trousers), while BrE maintains older forms, especially in modals (shall, should), though mutual intelligibility is still high because of shared core language and dialectal influence.

The distinctions between British and American English

The United States and the United Kingdom are "two countries divided by a common language," according to George Bernard Shaw, and "we have really everything in common with America nowadays, except, of course, the language," according to Oscar Wilde. The differences between American and British English have made for amusing commentary. Thus, it is evident that American and British English are regarded as distinct yet identical at the same time. We will also talk about the most notable distinctions between the two languages, but first I'd want to explain the background of American English. American English has developed alongside the nation.

During its colonial beginnings, it started to deviate from British English, and as the continent was settled, it picked up regional and ethnic variations. The language forms used in the Americas, particularly the United States, and the United Kingdom have changed slightly over the last 400 years, resulting in what are now sometimes referred to as American English and British English. Although the differences between written and most spoken grammar structure tend to be much less than those of other aspects of the language in terms of mutual intelligibility, the two do differ in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary (lexis), spelling, punctuation, idioms, and formatting of dates and numbers. A few words are either unknown or not used in one of the versions, or they have entirely different meanings in the two versions.

Noah Webster, who authored the first American dictionary in 1828 with the goal of demonstrating that Americans spoke a distinct dialect from Britons, akin to a regional accent, made a significant contribution to the formalization of these distinctions. Because American English is the channel through which the allure of American culture—its literature, films, and television shows—is spread throughout the world, it now has an impact on other languages and varieties of English. We will also talk about how these languages differ from one another. Specifically, idioms, spelling, punctuation, grammar, vocabulary (lexis), pronunciation, and date and numeric formatting.

RESEARCH METHOD

One tool for measuring a phenomenon or social observation is a research instrument. Since it is one method of gathering data, the instrument is crucial to the study. Creswell (2018:149) states that there are four fundamental types of instruments used in qualitative research to gather data: visual images, interviews,

documentation, and observation. The researcher's only tools in this study were observation and documentation. Since gathering data is the primary goal of research, data collecting procedures are the most crucial stage in the process. Observation, interviews, documentation, and visual images are some of the methods used to gather data for qualitative research.

As mentioned on the preceding page, the researchers will gather data for this study by documentation and observation. In the section below, the researcher provided a comprehensive explanation of the observation and documentation. Since scientists can only work with data, observation is the foundation of science. Additionally, the scientists must make the observation in order to obtain the data. Furthermore, according to Usman and Purnomo (Hardani et al., 2020:123), observation is the process of observing an object while methodically documenting the symptoms under study. Based on those claims, the researchers believe that one method of gathering data is observation, which involves looking at the subject of the study. Similar to a scientist, a researcher must observe in order to gather research data. Sugiyono (2016:310) lists several types of observation, including direct or obscure observation, unstructured observation, and participatory observation. Because this study is qualitative, the researchers will employ unstructured observation. Unstructured observation refers to observations concerning the object of observation that are not prepared in a methodical manner.

After reading the Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary, the researchers discovered the information that needed to be examined. A document is an account of past occurrences. According to Hardani et al. (2020:149), the documentation technique is a means of gathering data by documenting data that already exists. Writings, drawings, or colossal works can all be considered documents. The researcher employed both written and visual documents in this study. The researcher recorded a few American and British English vocabulary words that were learned from dictionaries, articles, or applications. Additionally, the researcher took notes on terminology that differed in spelling, pronunciation, and usage. The data collected in the table below will be used as an example by the researcher.

Table1. The Differences of Vocabulary in BE and AE

No.	Word		Meaning
	British English (BE)	American English (AE)	
1	Autumn	Fall	Musim gugur
2	Biscuit	Cookie	Biskuit
3	Candy floss	Cotton candy	Harum manis
4	Car park	Parking lot	Tempat parker
5	City centre	Downtown	Pusat kota

Table2. The Differences of Spelling in BE and AE

No.	Spelling of Word		Meaning
	British English (BE)	American English (AE)	
1	C-E-N-T-R-E	C-E-N-T-E-R	Pusat
2	C-A-T-A-L-O-G-U-E	C-A-T-A-L-O-G	katalog
3	C-O-L-O-U-R	C-O-L-O-R	Warna
4	F-A-V-O-U-R-I-T-E	F-A-V-O-R-I-T-E	Kesukaan
5	E-N-Q-U-I-R-Y	I-N-Q-U-I-R-Y	Penyelidikan

The information in the following table comes from a variety of sources, including the British vs. American application, the U-dictionary application, and the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary International Student's Edition (New 9th Edition), which was released in 2015. As indicated in the table, the researchers write the terms and categorize them according to variations in vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary International Student's Edition (New 9th Edition), published in 2015, the U-dictionary application, and the British vs. American application are some of the sources of the data in the following table. The researchers compose the terms and classify them based on differences in vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation, as shown in the table.

Table3. The Differences of Vocabulary (word using) in British and American English

No	Word		Meaning	Description
	British English	American English		
1	Autumn	Fall	Musim gugur	The season of the year between summer and winter.
2	Candy floss	Cotton candy	Harum manis	A type of sweet or candy in the form of a mass of sticky threads made of melted sugar.
3	Flat	Apartment	Apartemen	A set of rooms for living in, usually in one floor of building.

From the ninth edition of the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, the researchers identified fifty terms that differ between American and British English. Every word has the same meaning. The researcher only provides a sample of 15 words in this chapter. The appendix sheet has all of the words. The spelling variation is the second distinction. The words in the table below are examples provided by the researchers:

Table4. The Differences of Spelling in British and American English

No	Word Spelling		Meaning	Description
	British English	American		
1	A-N-A-L-O-G-U-E	A-N-A-L-O-G	Analog	A clock or watch that showing the time using hands on a dial and not with a display of numbers
2	A-N-A-L-Y-S-E	A-N-A-L-Y-Z-E	Menganalisa	To examine the Nature or structure of something especially by separating it into its part in order to understand or explain it.
3	C-A-C-A-T-A-L-O-G-U-E	C-A-T-A-L-O-G	Katalog	A complete list of Items, for example of things that people can look at or
4	C-E-N-T-R-E	C-E-N-T-E-R	Pusat, tengah	The middle point or Part of something.

Additionally, 50 terms with different spellings were discovered by the researchers. The first, middle, and end of the words all have different spellings. Words ending in -or and -our, which often end in -or in British and -or in American, are the key distinctions. British and American English differ in pronunciation in addition to vocabulary and spelling. The following table displays the list of words:

Table5. The Differences of pronunciation in British and American English

No	Word	Pronunciation		Meaning	Description
		British English	American English		
1	Abaya	/ə'beɪ.ə/	/ə'baɪ.ə/	Abaya	A full-length piece of clothing worn over other clothes by Arab men or women.
2	Bolster	/'bəʊl.stər/	/'boʊl.stə/	Guling	A long thick pillow that is placed across the top of a bed under the other pillow.
3	Capybara	/,kæp.ɪ'baɪ.rə/	/,kæpə'beɪ.rə/	Kapibara	An animal like very large rabbit with thick legs and small ears which lives near water in central America.
4	Home	/həʊm/	/hoʊm/	Rumah	The house or flat/ apartment that you live in, especially with your family.
5	Laboratory	/lə'bɒr.ə.tər.i/	/'læb.rə.tɔːr.i/	Laboratorium	A room or building used for scientific

The researcher also selected 50 words for analysis in terms of spelling, lexicon, and pronunciation variations. There are numerous ways to pronounce words differently. For example, "student" is pronounced

/ˈstjuː.dənt/ in British English and /ˈstuː.dənt/ in American English. The consonant /j/ is not pronounced in American English. The list of British and American words that differ in vocabulary (word usage), spelling, and pronunciation is displayed in the table on the preceding page. The researcher has included additional British and American words in an appendix sheet. In order to help the reader understand the variations between British and American vocabulary, the researcher has attached an appendix sheet.

The Variations in Word Usage and Vocabulary

There are numerous terms that are used to refer to the same item in both American and British English. Many people are occasionally confused and unsure of how to utilize words to convey their meanings or thoughts. For instance, "jagung" is referred to as "corn" in American English but as "maize" in British English. Many products in Indonesia use the term "corn" to indicate that they are made from maize or corn. Below is an example of one of the goods.

Fig1. Example of Products which Use Term ‘corn’



All of the products in the images above utilize the word "corn" to indicate that they contain corn or maize. In addition to "corn," other terms like "candy" are used to describe products that are popular in Indonesia. "Candy" is a more prevalent word in Indonesia than "sweet(s)." Product examples include:

Fig2. Example of Products which Use Term ‘candy’



This indicates that American English terminology are employed more frequently in Indonesian products. However, in contrast to vocabulary (word usage), British spelling is more prevalent in Indonesia, particularly in English textbooks. On the following page, the researcher provided an explanation of the spelling variations.

The Variations in Spelling

In addition to vocabulary (word usage), spelling is another area where British and American English diverge. The words with the endings -our in British and -or in American are the first, and the words with the endings -re in British and -er in American are the second. American and British vocabulary still differs greatly. The next page has the full explanation. 1) British English terms typically end in -our, whereas American English words end in -or. Here are some instances of the words:

Table6 .The words with ending –our and –or

British English	American English
Colour	Color
Labour	Labor
Humour	Humor

2) Words that end in -re or -er Words that finish in -re are typically British English words, whereas words that end in -er are American words. The words that follow are examples of words that finish in -re and -er.

Table7. The words with ending –re and –er

British English	American English
Centre	Center
Metre	Meter
Fibre	Fiber

The Variations in How They Are Spoken

Differences in pronunciation can be found in the vowel, diphthong, consonant, and stress aspects. It was connected to the idea in Chapter 2 by Gumelar (2018:3), which claimed that there are two characteristics of pronunciation: segmental sounds and suprasegmental sounds, which are further subdivided into vowels, diphthongs, consonants, stress, and intonation. The researcher's data indicates that the pronunciation of /r/ is the biggest variation. The sound /r/ is typically not pronounced in British, particularly when it appears at the conclusion of a word. For instance, the sound /r/ is silent or unpronounced while pronouncing the word "Absurd" in British English. In American English, however, the word is pronounced as "Absurd." The word is pronounced with the sound /r/. This distinction is found in the consonant sound /r/. In addition to consonants, there are also distinctions in the diphthong sounds, which are /+ and /o. For instance, "home" is pronounced /həʊm/ in British and /hoʊm/ in American. These pronunciation variations apply to all English words and are quite simple to guess. The other distinctions are in the way the words are stressed.

For instance, the term advertisement is stressed in the second syllable in British (~d'vɜ:.tɪs.m'nt/), but in American (æd.v'ɜ:.'taɪz.m'nt), it is stressed in the third syllable.

CONCLUSION

- There are numerous similarities between American and British English. The differences between American and British English are minimal.
- There are notable differences between American and British English, despite their general similarities. The vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and pronunciation of British and American English differ from one another. Vocabulary is the largest of them all.
- Successful teaching of English, including its variants, results from an understanding of the parallels and discrepancies between British and American English.
- American and British English are both formal.
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