

LINGUISTIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BRITISH AND AMERICAN ENGLISH

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Abstract: This article investigates the primary linguistic distinctions between British English and American English, concentrating on phonetic, lexical, grammatical, orthographic, and pragmatic dimensions. Both varieties come from the same historical source, but they have grown apart because of where they are, the cultures they are in, and how they have evolved as languages. The research underscores variations in pronunciation, including rhotic and non-rhotic accents; discrepancies in vocabulary, encompassing everyday lexical items; distinctions in spelling; and grammatical preferences regarding tense usage, prepositions, and collective nouns. There is also a focus on stylistic and pragmatic subtleties that affect communication in academic, professional, and casual settings. By examining these distinctions, the study illustrates that British and American English constitute standardized national varieties within a singular language system rather than distinct languages. To communicate effectively across cultures, teach languages, study translation, and do linguistic research, you need to know about these differences. The results add to comparative linguistics by giving a systematic overview of the structural and functional differences between the two main types of English.

Keywords: British English, American English, linguistic variation, phonetics, vocabulary differences, spelling variation, grammatical distinctions, pronunciation, comparative linguistics,

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the most spoken languages in the world. It is used as a global language in business, science, technology, education, and international relations. British English and American English are the two most important and well-known standards among the many different types of English. Even though they both come

from the same historical source, they have changed over time because they are in different places, because of historical events, because of cultural changes, and because of language standardization that happened on its own. In the 1700s, the American colonies broke away from Britain. This was a big part of how American English became its own language. Independence in social, political, and cultural matters led to differences in language, and changes within the UK also helped shape the rules of British English. Because of this, differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, spelling, and some grammatical structures slowly started to show up. Understanding how language changes, how language varies, and how society changes language is important when looking at the differences between British and American English. These differences don't mean that there are two different languages; they are just normal ways that a global language changes over time. At the same time, modern globalization, mass media, and digital communication have made it easier for the two types to interact with each other, which has led to some influence and some convergence. So, looking at the similarities and differences between British and American English helps researchers and students learn more about how language changes over time, how culture shapes identity, and how people from different countries talk to each other.

The main linguistic distinguishing features between British and American English

More than 1.5 billion people around the world speak English, making it a truly global language. American English and British English are two of the most well-known forms of English. This is mostly because the United States and the United Kingdom have a lot of power in the world. These two versions have a lot in common when it comes to language, but they also have some big differences that can be hard to understand for both learners and native speakers. After the 17th century, when British settlers came to North America, American English and British English started to become very different from each other. Over time, geographical separation, changing cultural norms, and local influences led to the creation of distinct vocabulary, pronunciation patterns, and grammatical structures. A. Muminov, an Uzbek linguist, says that American English was also influenced by Native American and other immigrant languages. One clear example of these differences is in vocabulary. For example, Americans say "elevator," while the British say "lift," and Americans say "truck," while the British say "lorry." These differences in word choice often come from different historical preferences for words or changes made to fit local needs. One of the easiest differences to see is how words are spelled. Noah Webster's changes in the 1800s had a big impact on how Americans spell words. American English usually prefers spellings that are easier to understand, like "color" instead of "colour" or "organize" instead of "organise." Webster and others who wanted to create a unique American identity through language supported these changes to spelling in the U.S.

There are big differences between American and British English when it comes to pronunciation, especially when it comes to vowel sounds, intonation, and stress patterns: Most of the time, American English is “rhotic,” which means that the “r” sound is pronounced at the end of words or before consonants (like “car”).

On the other hand, British English is often non-rhotic, which means that the “r” is usually silent in these positions unless it is followed by a vowel. In American English, the “t” sound that comes between two vowels often turns into a “d” sound. For example, “butter” can sound like “budder.” In British English, words like “dance” and “path” are pronounced with a broad /ɑ:/ vowel. In American English, they are pronounced with a flatter /æ/ sound. The way the “r” sound is pronounced is one big difference, as shown. In American English, the “r” sound is very clear at the end of words. In Received Pronunciation, which is the standard form of British English, the “r” sound is often silent unless a vowel comes after it. Uzbek researcher S. Ismatova says that these phonological differences can have a big effect on how people in Uzbekistan learn to pronounce words. There are also grammatical differences: British English often uses the present perfect tense, while American English might use the simple past. For instance, an American might say, “I already ate,” while a British would say, “I have already eaten.” Prepositions can be different. Britons say “at the weekend,” while Americans say “on the weekend.” American English often treats collective nouns as singular (The team is winning), but British English may treat them as plural (The team are winning). There are also small grammatical differences, like using the present perfect instead of the simple past, as in “I have just eaten” (BrE) and “I just ate” (AmE). People all over the world learn both American and British English. The dialect that is most commonly used in schools often depends on historical ties, national education policies, and the availability of teaching materials. This lets students focus on what they want to do in school or at work. In Uzbekistan, both types of English are taught. However, American English is more common on digital platforms and among younger students, while British English is still the most common in academic texts and official language tests like IELTS. Cultural exports like Hollywood movies, British TV shows, and international education programs have helped spread both versions of the language around the world. In the fields of technology and digital media, American English is the most important. In the fields of academia and international relations, British English is still important. British English is often more formal and polite, using phrases like “Excuse me” and “Would you mind?” In contrast, American English is often more direct, like “Can you help me?” In American English, a “public school” is a school that gets money from the government. In British English, on the other hand, a “public school” is a private school that charges fees. British TV and radio, especially the BBC, often focus on Received Pronunciation. American TV and radio, on the other hand, often show General American with different regional accents. British English often

uses more formal ways to ask for things, like “I was wondering if,” while American English is usually more direct, using phrases like “Can you...?” People often say that British humor is dry, ironic, and subtle. American humor is usually more direct, lively, and expressive. American and British English are still changing on their own, thanks to different social, historical, and cultural factors. It’s very important to know about these differences in order to communicate well, especially in school and around the world. It is better to see the unique richness and adaptability of each form instead of thinking that one is better than the other. In the end, American and British English are different not only in how they are structured, but also in how they are used in culture, social norms, and ways of talking to each other. Recognizing both forms makes communication, education, and translation work much better around the world.

Differences in vocabulary between American and British English are a big deal in the English language. Both types have a common historical origin and a mostly the same grammatical system, but their vocabularies are very different. These differences have come about because the two groups live in different places, have had different histories, and have been exposed to different cultural and social influences. One of the most obvious ways that words can diverge is when they are used to mean the same thing or object. This kind of variation often shows how things really are and how people live. For example, American and British English often use different words for things like household items, transportation, education, and public institutions. These differences aren’t random; they are shaped by the social environment in which each variety has grown. Semantic differentiation is another important part of lexical variation. In some cases, the same word is used in both dialects but means something different or has a different style. This change in meaning could cause problems when people from different language groups try to talk to each other, even though they all speak the same language. Also, some words may be used more often or in a different style in one variety than in the other. Another thing that sets American English apart from British English is how they spell words differently. American English often prefers simplified spellings because of historical reform efforts and standardization processes. British English, on the other hand, tends to keep traditional spelling forms. These different spellings make the lexical identity of each variety even stronger. The examination of lexical disparities between American and British English is fundamental to comparative linguistics and sociolinguistics. It shows how language changes, how it becomes more standard, and how culture affects vocabulary. It is also very important to know about these differences in translation, lexicography, and English language teaching, where knowing about lexical variation helps with accuracy and cultural competence. To sum up, the differences in vocabulary between American and British English are a natural result of how language changes over time in different

historical and cultural contexts. They show how a common language can create different lexical systems while still being able to understand each other.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of linguistic differences between British and American English illustrates that both varieties constitute dynamic and fully developed manifestations of the same language rather than distinct linguistic systems. Their differences are mostly in how they sound, what words they use, how they spell them, and some parts of grammar. However, they are still understandable to each other and have similar structures at their core. One of the most obvious differences is how the sounds are made. British English, especially Received Pronunciation, is usually non-rhotic, which means that the /r/ sound is not pronounced in all positions. American English, on the other hand, is usually rhotic, which means that the /r/ sound is pronounced in all positions. There are also differences in the quality of the vowels, the stress patterns, and the intonation. These phonological differences help to make the accents that are easy to tell apart for each variety. Another big difference is lexical variation. Different words can mean the same thing in everyday life. For example, “flat” and “apartment,” “lorry” and “truck,” or “holiday” and “vacation.” These differences are a result of the history, culture, and social factors in the UK and the US. Globalization and mass media have also made it easier for people to borrow from each other and have an effect on each other. The differences in spelling, such as “colour” and “color,” “centre” and “center,” show how historical standardization processes have changed things, especially the changes that Noah Webster pushed for in the US. The use of the present perfect tense, collective nouns, prepositions, and some past tense forms also shows grammatical differences, though they are less obvious. Even though there are some differences, British and American English have the same basic grammar and core vocabulary. So, the differences should be seen as examples of how language changes over time because of geography, history, and social and cultural growth. In today’s communication, especially in school, work, and online settings, people are much more likely to be exposed to both types of language, which has led to more tolerance and flexibility in how they are used. In conclusion, the differences in language between British and American English show how rich and flexible English is. Instead of causing division, these differences show how a single language can change in many ways while still being understood around the world.

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