

A BRIEF HISTORY OF AMERICAN DIALECT AND AMERICANISM

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Abstract

The present research throws some light on the development of American English as one of the main varieties of English language. The English language was introduced to the American through British colonization in early 17th country. It shaped the emerging new continent more than any other European language. The discovery of new world help to develop American dialect by need to name unfamiliar animal, plants , diseases that do not find in England. The growth of the population and its becoming as larger than that any of the countries of western Europe also contributes to evolve this dialect.

The present research comprises,, eight sections: the first section includes introduction , and aim of research. The second and third sections include short history of American dialect .The fourth section discusses the interaction between British and American dialect . The fifth section displays the concept of Americanism and the loanwords from other languages. The six section states the lexical difference between American and British dialect . The seventh shows the influence of American on British dialect. The eighth section includes the future of American dialect , results and reference.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

English language, whether, it is spoken in America, England, Australia or any other place in the whole world, is one language and its different varieties are equal. Despite the size of territory where the varieties are used and the number of people living , they enjoy equal status , and therefore it would be wrong to say that one of them is the sole representative of correct English while the others representing substandard forms .

The researcher would like to throw the light on the history of American dialect ,its historical deviation from British dialect and appearance of Americanism, finally the future of American dialect throughout this present work .

In many cases , when we speak about the American or the British equivalence , the distinction is not really a matter of one nation having a word or an expression which the other variety is not familiar with and vice versa , but it is more a matter of one the expression being prevalent and most widely used in one of the varieties, while the majority of speakers using the other variety of the two are more familiar and comfortable with the other.

1-2 Theoretical survey

The standard British and standard American English are two main varieties of English in the world –wide. American standard does not differ from the standard British

English really as much as do the individual substandard colloquial or dialectal spheres of the language.

Benedikt (2005:15) says that when two university professors, one from the U.S and the other from the U.K., are speaking to each other, they have less difficulty understanding each other than if we had two uneducated speakers of different regional or even social dialects from the two countries having a conversation.

Now days , there are 300 million people speak English as their mother tongue, and at least a further 300 million use it regularly as a second language or are able to communicate in English when the needs arise (Lingyu:2010:7) . It is a characteristic of all languages that varieties can be observed and described. Of course, they are all varieties of English; as Mexican and Castilian are varieties of Spanish. The important point is that different varieties exist in all languages .Whatever the varieties of any language may be ,their number reflects the size of the language , that is ,the number of people who use it ,its geographical spread , and the range of its uses .

1.3 History of American English:

Dialect is a variety of a Language, spoken in one part of a country (regional dialect), or by people belonging to a particular social dialect or sociolect), which is different in some words, grammar, and /or pronunciation from other forms of the same language.

A dialect is often associated with particular ACCANT. Sometimes dialect gains and becomes the STANDARD VARIETY of country(Richard: 2002:155)

Kovecses (2000:52) explains the difference between language and dialect in saying that it is customary to distinguish the notion of dialect from that of language in terms of two criteria:

1. Mutual intelligibility
2. Systemic differences

When the English of a group of speakers show systemic difference, but these speakers can nevertheless understand each other , we have different dialects of English . when speech communities show systematic without the speakers of the different groups understanding each other, we have different languages ..

Finnegan (2004:4) argues that When the speakers of English began to arrive on American shores to create permanent settlement ,they found themselves in a diverse linguistic culture . Historians of language have interpreted the evidence and have offered as evidence as of cultural contacts among the many languages of early America the borrowings from indigenous languages that have survived into modern usage. Chocolate ,canoe , tobacco such words from carbine and known everywhere suggest wonderment at the novelty of America landscape and the things found in it .

So we need, in short, to look at how new settlers used the linguistic resources available to them to interpret the experience and to communicate with others

When people find themselves in a situation of "mixed languages," they behave in ways that are remarkable and the same over time. Some are resolute in their monolingualism, refusing to even attempt to communicate with people who speak other dialects or languages. Other people become quite thoroughly mulilingual , and can switch from one language (or

dialect) to another with barely a trace to show which language (or dialect) in their "mother tongue " (Finnegan :2004:4)

"O my America ,my new found land" wrote John Donne in the 1590s in a sensuous comparison of his mistress 's nakedness with the "late discoveries " made on the far western shore of the Atlantic(ibid,3) . English adventures had penetrated the mystery of the of the north American continent and had brought back wonders plants–animals unknown in England .

America was reflected in the English language half a century before these first –hand contacts .The first word of American origin to reach English was *guaiacum*. 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 its resin. In 1533,*guaiacum* became the first word of American origin to enter the language. Many believed America's separation from Britain would bring degradation to the English language in America (Finnegan:2004 :16).

Although the British Empire brought a degree of social, linguistic homogeneity to the continent, the establishment of the new "United states America "after civil war) allowed more tolerance of other languages alongside English(ibid 13) .Because of this ,American English evolved continually through the 18th and 19th centuries as it adopted words from the nation groups and became more exposed to their language and culture.

Crystal (2003:80) argues that by the beginning of the nineteenth century, Britain had become the world's leading industrial and trading country. By the end of the century, the population of the USA (then approaching 100 million) was larger than that of any of the countries of Western Europe, and its economy was the most productive and the fastest growing in the world. During the twentieth century, this world presence was maintained and promoted almost single, handedly through the economic supremacy of the new American English super over economics replaced politics as the chief driving force. And the language behind the US dollar was English.

Throughout the early 20th –century the communication revolution of the telephone brought significant changes ,on top of those created through the transportation revolution .As Lerer (2007:209) states that enabling immediate communication by distant interlocutors ,the telephone not only revolutionized the passage of information, it changed irrevocably social relationships in late –nineteenth – century American "

Overall ,the homogenization of culture through the mid 20th century , especially via emergence of public education ,created a negative view of dialect (McDavid:1966: 1-2) .Throughout the early20TH century ,many parts of America contained minimal sing of dialects ,while other regions remained strong (e.g. midland ,southern ,and regions).through the latter 20th century a misunderstanding of dialects caused backlash against their continuation . McDavid(1966:10) discusses the attitude of these measure when she states "we notice that people of our own community speak varieties of English markedly different from our own ,we dismiss them as ignorant ,or simple as making mistakes ".

Despite surviving dialects in some regions ,Americas have lost sight of the richness these dialects present to our culture ,and our as a nation .

Wolfram (2006:103) states that dialects are not static ,discrete ,entities ;they constantly interact with one another undergo change over time and place .Dialects simultaneously reflect the past ,the present and future .

1.4 Interaction between BE and AME

We have already seen the way in which British and American diverged, and the main changes which American English underwent. There remains one important aspect of their history to be noticed, and that is the way in which they have influenced each other.

The interaction fall into three phases. First American English was colonial in status and British English was dominant. During this phase the influence and the flow of development was from British to American English.(Lingyu:2010:21)

In the second phase, from Independence until the First World War, American English established for itself a character of its own, including a reputation for creating new expressions and being original. While still being regarded and perhaps regarding itself as a junior partner beside British .

Thirdly, which continues at the present time, American English emerges as of equal status and value as the British English and in some respects reversing the earlier flow of influence, so that it is frequently British English which draws on American English.

1-5 What is Americanism?

Dillard (1980 :15) states that the English has seldom been neutral in his attitude towards America. In the eighteenth century the political division between Whig and Tory influenced his opinion , and even in regard to language one group felt that extension of English in America presaged a rosy future while the other group prophesied the utter degradation of the language –How far had speed in the America diverged from that in England ? What were its characteristics? What was its future? Englishmen had dealt with these questions extensively even before 1800.

What appears to be first proposal for a glossary of Americanisms was made in 1774 by the essayist, Richard Owen

"Word or one of its meaning which is currently used in American English and has a different equivalent in the British variety."(Dillard:1980:16)

Americanism did not spring in to existing all over the colonies at once. They were often regional in origin and USA, especially southern, New England, middle Atlantic. The westward moving frontiers was another significant factor in the creation of Americanisms.(ibid:6) Americanism including the most successful of all Americanisms OK, whose origin and early spread has been documented in detailed by Allen walker Read if we were to identify a single person who influenced the adoption of Americanisms in the United States; it would be Noah Webster through his dictionaries and spelling book.

Benedikt (2005:15) defines the term Americanism as follows

1. A word or one of its meanings ,which is currently used in American English and has a different equivalent in the British variety (elevator –lift ,gasoline –petrol)
2. Word which refers to something exclusively characteristic of American society.
Example (convention ,bayou, caucus)

3. A word which originated in American English but has since spread to other varieties of English, including British. Example .bike, boss
4. A word or an expression which originated in British English but is no longer used among the British's but is still used on the North American continent.

So, when we speak about American and British equivalents, the distinction is not really the matter of one nation having expression which the other is not familiar with and vice versa.

Sometimes the two connotation carry totally opposite meaning, 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.

1.6 Americanism and Loanwords

In the earliest, colonial period, the first task for English in America was the need to find names to refer to places, plants, animals, and customs which existed in America but had no equivalent in Britain.

The first genuine Americanisms were undoubtedly words borrowed bodily from the Indian dialects—words, in the main, indicating natural objects that had no counterparts in England. Chamberlain(2013) said that We find opossum, for example, in the form of opasum, in Captain John Smith's "Map of Virginia" (1612), . Moose, musa, skunk, hickory, squash, caribou, pecan, scuppernong, paw-paw, raccoon, chinkapin, porgy, chipmunk, terrapin, menhaden, catalpa, persimmon, hickory squash, chinkapin and persimmon are in documents of the preceding century. Menken(2000:3) Many of these words, of course, were shortened or otherwise modified on being taken into colonial English. . Its variations show a familiar effort to bring a new and strange word into harmony with the language. They found that the British soldiers in India, hearing strange words from the lips of the natives. Thus the words Hassan and Hosein, frequently used by the Mohammedans of the country in their devotions, were turned into Hobson-Jobson.

Hill (1929 :432) shows that the Indians have given to English a few words, but otherwise they have no effect whatever on the English language spoken in America. they have not created in any respect a linguistic substratum. So he did not give any significant role for contact in development of American English.

Much structural interference can be characterized as "imposition" resulting from imperfect second language acquisition. As Van Coetsem(1988:3) puts it "the source language speaker is the agent, as in the case of a French speaker using his French articulatory habits while speaking English". where borrowing is "recipient language agentivity" and imposition 'source language agentivity'. This focus on 'agentivity' helps constrain notions of which kind of linguistic item is more or less likely to be borrowed or to be imposed during contact. Howell (1993:189) represents the inverse relation between borrowing and imposition like this:

- (1) stability : Borrowing versus imposition
More open to borrowing → less open to borrowing
Less affected by imposition ← more affected by imposition

Less stable domains:

Lexical items ,derivational
morphology ,semantic system,

More stable domain :

Phonology, inflectional morphology
Syntax

Koinéization or new dialect creation ,proceeds from dialect contact through leveling and simplification (Kerswill : 2005:196-220), this principle applies to mixing situations where dialect features persisting generally come from the first speech communities contributing to the koine .for example ,kwa-speaking slaves, who were brought to the west ,shaped plantation African – American (AAF) much more than more numerous bantu speakers who arrive later .(Mufwene :2001:42).

Kerswill and Trudgill (2005:200) argue that it is important for migration to have stabilized by waiting period allowing for stabilization for of the koine colonization ,hence Trudgill's term colonial lag.

Mencken (1937:150-163) displays that loanwords have had marginal impact on American –English –they have not changed our stress patterns the way Norman French did for English and their morphological integration is seldom distinctive .loanwords have contributed few and minor new phonotactic patterns, and differential phonological integration can be found.

From the very earliest days of English colonization the language of the colonists also received accretions from the languages of the other colonizing nations.

The French word portage, for example, was already in common use before the end of the seventeenth century, and soon after came chowder, cache, caribou, voyageur, and various words that, like the last-named, have since become localisms or disappeared altogether. Contributions of the Dutch during the half century of their conflicts with the English included cruller, cold-slaw, dominie (for parson), cookey, stoop, span (of horses), pit (as in peach-pit), waffle, hook (a point of land), scow, boss, smearcase and Santa Claus. means to burst into a sudden rage.

The chief Spanish contributions to American were to come after the War of 1812, with the opening of the West, but creole, calaboose, palmetto, peewee, key (a small island), quadron, octoroon, barbecue, pickaninny and stampede had already entered the language in colonial days. Jerked beef came from the Spanish charqui by the law of Hobson-Jobson.

The Germans who arrived in Pennsylvania in 1682 also undoubtedly gave a few words to the language, though it is often difficult to distinguish their contributions from those of the Dutch. It seems very likely, however, that sauerkraut and noodle are to be credited to them. Finally, the negro slaves brought in gumbo, goober, juba and voodoo (usually corrupted to hoodoo), and probably helped to corrupt a number of other loan-words, for example banjo and breakdown. Banjo seems to be derived from bandore or bandurria, modern French and Spanish forms of tambour, respectively but offers no evidence.

Even today ,as Labov et.al.(2006:150) American English can seem striking for its homogeneity at the national level .indeed , even with much media attention to the contrary most Americans assume that regional variation is modest and receding .

By far ,the largest single immigrant group was made up of slaves African origin .Their influence on the language was less than might be expected from their numbers .There are three main reasons for this

- They did not share a single tribal, geographical or linguistic origin but included members of different places.
- The forced immigrants from Africa were slaves , and so their own customs and language did not have any value ,meant the denial and suppression of their own culture .
- The children and further descendants of the African slaves had to learn English, both in order to communicate with their masters and as a lingua franca.

1.7 Lexical differences between American and British dialect

There are far more examples of British and American differences in vocabulary than in grammar .When comparing the grammar of the two it is unexpectedly difficult to find many examples , and most of those are rather trivial. But in vocabulary there is no shortage of the examples. The problem is how to find describe a parent of vocabulary differences, rather than simply listing a fact; it is possible to distinguish three types of vocabulary.

- 1- Words occur identically in both American and British English .
- 2- Items where an idea or an object which exists in both British and American culture, but where different words are used for them in the two forms of English .
- 3-words for ideas or objects which have no counterparts in the other country. These words are used for geographical features or plants or animals found only in America .

1.8 Lexical Influence of American English on British English

Alego (2001:13) explains that the processes of emigration and colonization then gave rise to new regional varieties overseas , many of which have now achieved a high degree of linguistic independence ,and some of which ,especially American English , may even have dominating influence on British English . The structure of this work is designed to reflect these different types of development.

Lexical influence of American English on British English's is of most importance and begins by revealing the factors that favored the influence of American English on 'world English ':

- America's population and wealth.
 - America 's magnitude of higher education and of publishing industry
 - The appeal of America 's popular culture on luggage and habits
 - America 's international , political , and economical position
- There are two kinds of influence of American English on British
- :on the one hand , on the everyday vocabulary , namely food and , clothes , family and home , entertainment , and phrases , expressions and euphemisms .

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 reasons for this situation are explained as follow;

- The great appreciation of the status of America institutions and a readiness to adopt American practices;

- Adoption of American inventions designed to relieve people of some every inconvenience: the passenger elevator, the telephone, the type writer, electric light cash register.
- The speeding up of ocean voyage between England and America.

Barber (1993 :263) states that the mutual influence had shown itself especially in vocabulary: many people are surprised to learn that some commonly used words are of American origin. Words like cockroach, loafer, stevedore and tornado are so familiar that we do not think of them as Americanisms, and the same is true or rapidly becoming true of more recent importations like blurb, cagey. An American influence has always been strong in the entertainments industry, and one reflection of this has been the supplanting of British producer by American director.

For example, consider caucus. It originated in Boston at some indeterminate time before 1750, and remained so peculiarly American for more than a century following that most of the English visitors before the Civil War remarked its use. But, according to J. Redding(1909) Ware it began to creep into English political slang about 1870, and in the 80's it was lifted to good usage by the late Joseph Chamberlain. Ware said that the word had become "very important" in England, but was "not admitted into dictionaries." But in the Concise Oxford Dictionary, dated 1914, five years later, it is given as a sound English word, though its American origin is noted.

A good many other such Americanisms have got into good usage in England, and new ones are being exported constantly. Farmer describes the process of their introduction and assimilation. American books, newspapers and magazines, especially the last, circulate in England in large number, and some of their characteristic locutions strike the English fancy and are repeated in conversation. Then they get into print, and begin to take on respectability. Travel brings in still more: England swarms with Americans, and Englishmen themselves, visiting America, are struck by the new and racy phrases that they hear, and afterward take them home and try them on their friends. The English authors who burden every west-bound ship, coming here to lecture, have especially sharp ears for such neologisms, and always use them when they get home.

Dickens was the first of these visitors to carry back that sort of cargo; according to Bishop Coxe he gave currency in England, in his "American Notes," to reliable, influential, talented and lengthy. Bristed, writing in 1855, said that talented was already firmly fixed in the English vocabulary by that time. All four words are in the Concise Oxford Dictionary. Finally, there is the influence of American plays and moving pictures. Hundreds of American films are shown in England every week, and the American words and phrases appearing in their titles, sub-titles and other explanatory legends thus become familiar to the English.

But though there are many such protests, the majority of Englishmen make borrowings from the tempting and ever-widening American vocabulary, and many of these loan-words take root, and are presently accepted as sound English, even by the most squeamish. The two

Fowlers, in “The King’s English,” separate Americanisms from other current vulgarisms, but many of the latter on their list, in the sense indicated, are actually American in origin.

American verbs that seem to find the way into English least difficult, particularly those compounded with prepositions and adverbs, such as to pan out and to swear off. Most of them, true enough, are still used as conscious Americanisms, but used they are, and with increasing frequency.

1.8 The future of American dialect

Wolfram (2006:103) states that traditional dialect boundaries of the US, particularly those in the eastern us, were based on information from linguistic surveys that, were conducted in 1930s and 1940s. Since most of the speakers, surveyed were older, the patterns reflect division in twentieth century's, when these speakers 'speech patterns were established. (Caver:1987:64) suggests that dialect divisions may not have changed greatly in the first half of the twentieth century do suggest that some dialect areas are losing the distinctiveness that they still of the that set them apart .

As we consider the extent to which the traditional dialect landscape has altered over the past century, and particularly in more recent decades, we must bear in mind that a number of important socio- historical and socio- cultural changes have taken place since the initial linguistic survey s were conducted in the following:

- Changing patterns of immigration and the language contact.
- Shifting patterns of population movement.
- Changing cultural centers.
- Increasing interregional accessibility.

Conclusion

- American dialect was rapidly becoming the dominant form of English in non –native countries other perhaps than those of Western Europe.
- Its large capacity for taking in new words and phrases and for manufacturing new locutions out of its own materials.
- American dialect starts at the end of the eighteenth century when the language employed in the united states differed somewhat from that used in England
- The Americans are not afraid to use words as in England .So British English shows no living change in structure and Syntax
- American confront a novel problem alongside English, and immediately its superior imaginative resourcefulness become obvious . Movie is better than cinema ;and the English begin to admit the fact by adopting the word it is not only better American , it is better English .
- British will probably continue to be influenced by American as long as this influence is manifested in fields of activity where the lack of appropriate words and phrases demands it.
- English as spoken and written in America acquired a character of its own, reflecting the growth and history of the American community.

- We need know how people used the linguistic resources available to them to interpret their experiences and to communicate with other, not only to select examples that reached and were used in metropolitan center.
- Need to name unfamiliar animals ,plants; places, diseases which are new and not find in England contribute to build American dialect.
- American is not infrequently vulgar ;the Americans ,too ,are vulgar .but means no more than a yielding to natural impulses in the face of conventional inhibitions .
- The growth of the population of America and its becoming as larger than that any of the countries of Western Europe, and its productive and faster economy contribute to the developing of the American dialect.
- Through Political ,educational ,economic or artistic international gathering American words or phrases could pass into the traditional Standard of British English.

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