

# A Study of Major Syntactical, Written and Oral Communication Differences between British and American English

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**Abstract – As a universal language, English provides the opportunities for people from different countries to communicate conveniently. As language is changeable, English also develops constantly and produces many kinds of varieties among which, British English and American English are the two important ones. They have great differences in vocabulary, pronunciation grammar, and other aspects. The paper focuses on lexical differences between British English and American English.**

**This study talks about syntactic, written and oral communication distinctions in British and American English. It points at talking about the distinctions from an evaluative purpose of view. It is a welcome to the scientists to view and take a shot at American English contrastingly as opposed to passing by the general origination of improvement. Dialect has dependably been valid and solid wellspring of recognizable proof. The same is accurate to the American English.**

**The aim of this study is to underscore the major contrasts between British and American English both in composed and oral correspondence. Besides, this research is planned to build the universally adored in concentrating on one or an alternate, and to be cognizant which English they talk and how effectively or inaccurately they talk it, contingent upon the reason for their uttering. As English has come to be more than a pattern these days it turned out to be to be extremely intriguing the investigation of what sort of English we talk, what sort of English we hear around us, in films, while listening to music or even while visiting on the web.**

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## INTRODUCTION

Since May Flower carried the first group of people from European continent to America, they brought their political system, traditional culture, as well as their languages. After that Americans set up their own policy, economy, and culture. During the 17th century, on the basis of British English, Americans created their own English which is now called American English. Although British English and American English are rooted in the same language, there are differences between them in aspects of grammar pronunciation and vocabulary. Therefore, the autor will introduce the difference between English and British English, such as speling, homonymy, lexicology, and so on.

American English gradually formed making the American colonies established by British colonists as the basis in the early 17th century. In the colonies, Elizabethan English is a universal language. American English is the language the people in England used during this period, that is to say, the basis of the development of American English is the language

people used in Bunyan, Milton, and Shakespeare. Therefore, early American English retained the part characteristics of British English in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. However, due to the Renaissance, the native language of UK has undergone earth-shaking changes to a certain extent, and at the same time, American society still does not have sparked the same change of basic conditions, namely not subjected to the obvious influence of the Renaissance. Therefore, compared with British English, American English showed its conservatism and inheritance, retained the language features of British English which have ceased to exist in the Elizabethan. Such as Shakespeare's time, "fall" was commonly used to represent the autumn by British people, and then was replaced by Latin vocabulary "autumn", thus "fall" has lost its meaning, and the plural meaning "waterfall", but "fall" is used today in the United States. Thus it can be seen that American English is conservative, with a certain degree of conservatism.

## DIFFERENCE REPRESENT BETWEEN AMERICAN ENGLISH AND BRITISH ENGLISH

### Synonymy-

Synonymy means that different words in American English and British English are used to designate the same meaning. In process of 200 years' separation and communication with immigration from other countries, differences of synonymy become more and more distinct and also greater in number. Here are two examples.

In America, the first floor of the buildings and houses is called first floor and of course the second floor is called second floor. But in Britain people call the first floor of the buildings and houses, especially these with a long history ground floor. So the second floor of those is called first floor and the third floor is called second floor. In Britain, people use the word "biscuit" to describe a small baked unleavened cake, typically, crisp, flat, and sweet. But in American English, the word "cracker" has the same meaning. In British English, the word "cracker" means a firework exploding with a sharp noise. British people may be surprised when American people say, "Do you like to eat some crackers?"

### Homonymy-

Homonymy refers to words or phrases that differ in meaning. Many words have totally different meanings or refer to different things in British English and American English. The phrase "wash up" means that washing the plates knives and forks and so on in the UK. However, when

American people say "wash up", they mean washing one's body. But when British people say "I will help you to wash up" to American people, American people may be very surprised because American people think that it means "I will help you wash your body". It may cause sort of misunderstanding. Yet another, the "pavement" refers to the road itself on which vehicles drive. Whereas, the British people call the path alongside of the road where pedestrians walk "pavement" and American people call the path "sidewalk".

Apart from totally different in meaning there are some words which have an additional meaning in American English or British English or both of them. In both American and British English the word "faculty" refers to talent and authority. But in American English, it also means teaching staff. For example, Harvard has an excellent mathematics faculty. In British English, it means university school or college. For instance, London University comprises London School of Economic and the teaching faculties of various hospitals.

### The Special Word-

Britain and the United States, the two countries also gradually introduce and create a lot of new words in the continuous development of their own. Some of the vocabulary for their own use, not for other uses, the most obvious performance is the proper nouns used to describe their national characteristics and things. For example, there is significant difference between Britain and the United States in climate, which leads the two countries to have many different kinds of plants and animals. Therefore, the proper noun used to represent this kind of plants and animals of the two countries is also completely different, such as hickory, moose, raccoon, etc. In addition, the building structure and style of the two countries is also different, which leads to the differences of language to a certain extent, such as family-room, ranch-house, and tri level-house in American English, while no similar buildings in UK, which also does not contain the English vocabulary of English words. At the same time, because of the influence of the different political system of the two countries, American English vocabularies include: lobbyism, the state-house, division, electoral college, etc. But, these words do not exist in British English. Therefore, in the process of the development of American English and British English, some of their own unique vocabularies appear.

These days, English is presumably the most habitually spoken dialect on the planet, it is possible that as an official dialect, or as a remote dialect. Talking English has come to be more than a pattern, more than a style. Relative familiarity with English is getting more to be a must regarding the matter of corresponding with individuals having a place with different countries or petitioning an occupation. Yet the inquiry is: the thing that sort of English do we talk? For English is not in any manner a homogenous dialect.

Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary (seventh version, p.829) characterizes dialect as "the arrangement of correspondence in discourse and thinking of that is utilized by individuals of a specific nation or zone".

Dialect is intrinsic in individuals (Chomsky, 1957), and it is recognized by sustenance. As it is challenging to call attention to what sort of sustenance is more vital? Indian, Chinese or American and so forth, same is with dialect. Be that as it may, politically and deductively overwhelming countries impact the planet with their dialects. Probably that social and political quality gives cash to a dialect or an assortment of any dialect both at national and worldwide level. It was the time when George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) portrayed England and America as two countries partitioned by normal dialect (wikipedia2011), and it could be accurate even now.

Nonetheless, American dialect called American English (AE) clearly sounds in an alternate way. Limb C. Albert and Cable Thomas (1981:130) show the

starting and forward response to the development of American English:

"From the time that distinctions in the vocabulary and figure of speech of Americans started to be recognized they started the subject of remark and before long of dispute. Before all else English remark was consistently unfriendly, in any event as far once again as the utterance of Dr. Johnson, and to a vast degree it still is today. Frequently American were blamed for undermining the English Language by presenting new and new statements, though they were actually just pressing on to utilize terms well known in the seventeenth century which had ended up out of date in England. The point when the bad form of this state of mind was observed, Americans started to guard their utilization of English and, with a developing feeling of their position around countries, to request equality for their discourse with the English of England. Over this distinction of perspective a debate was carried on through a large portion of the nineteenth century and can barely be said to have abated totally at the present day."

British English (UK English) is a group term for the types of English dialect spoken in the British paths. As per Norbert Schmitt (2006), "It has been spoken for 1,500 years in Britain, and there have been distinctive lingos from the start."p.180. The point when British use, it alludes to the composed Standard English and the Scottish local varieties. The occupants of these paths don't utilize the term frequently, despite the fact that they do allude to the Scottish English, Welsh English, and Irish English thus numerous lingos thereof. The broader utilization of the term spreads the dialect spoken all through the United Kingdom incorporating standard and non standard, formal and casual, constantly, in all locales, whatsoever social levels.

American English is a differing manifestation of English since "in America, the occupants were of such differing inceptions and moved around and blended such a great amount of as the nation developed that neither man nor woman tongue commanded, and the different tongues of English that they spoke appear to have mixed together into a relatively uniform new one". Norbert Schmitt (2006:177).

American English is utilized basically within the United States of American. It is US official's and the dialect of media. Canadian English drops out of the meaning of American English in spite of the fact that the elocution is comparable to that in the United States. Truly, American English appears making its roots when the first wave of English-speaking migrants was settled in North American in seventeenth century. When till now it has been utilized as a device of correspondence in the United States.

## DIFFERENCES IN LANGUAGE USE CONVENTIONS

Here are some of the key differences in language use conventions.

1. **Dates.** In British English, the standard way of writing dates is to put the day of the month as a figure, then the month (either as a figure or spelled out) and then the year. For example, 19 September 1973 or 19.09.73. The standard way of writing dates in American English is to put the month first (either as a figure or spelled out), then the day of the month, and then the year. For example, September 19th 1973 or 9/19/73. Commas are also frequently inserted after the day of the month in the USA. For example, September 19, 1973.
2. **o and out.** In British English, the standard way of writing words that might include either the letter o or the letters out is to use the out form. For example, *colour, humor, honor, behaviour*. The standard way of writing such words in American English is to use only o. For example, *color, humor, honor, behavior*.
3. **Through.** In American English, the word *through* (or *thru*) can be used to mean *until*. For example, 'September 19th thru October 1st', would be in British English '19 September until 1 October'.
4. **Hyphens.** Hyphens are often used in British English to connect prefixes with the main word. For example, *pre-emption, pre-trial, co-operation*. They are less common in American English. For example, *preemption, pretrial, cooperation*.
5. **z or s?** In British English, s is generally used in such words as *recognise, authorize*. The letter z is used in American English in such words as *recognize* or *authorize*. However, it is not wrong to use z in such words when using British English as standard.
6. **I or all?** In American English, a single *I* is used in such words as *traveled* or *counseled*. In British English, *all* is used (e.g. *travelled, counselled*).
7. **Note,** however, that in British English, some words that end in a double *ll* lose one *l* when a suffix is added: *skill* becomes *skillfully*, *will* becomes *willfully*. In American English, the double *ll* is retained: *skill* becomes *skillfully*, *will* becomes *willfully*.

8. *-re or -err?* In American English, the *-err* ending is used in words like *theater, center, meter, and fiber*. In British English, these words are spelt *theatre, centre, meter, and fibre*.
9. *one and are*. Some scientific terms retain the use of the classical composite vowels *oe* and *ae* in British English. These include *diarrhea, an aesthetic, gynecology, and homoeopathy*. In American English, a single *e* replaces the composite vowel: *diarrhea, anesthetic, gynecology, and homeopathy*.
10. *-e or -ue?*. In British English, the final silent *-e* or *-ue* is retained in such words as *analogue, axe* and *catalogue*. In American English, it is omitted: *analog, ax, and catalog*.
11. *-eable or -able?*. The silent *e*, produced when forming some adjectives with a suffix is generally used in British English in such words as *likeable, unshakeable, and ageing*. In American English, it is generally left out: *likable, unshakable, and aging*. The *e* is however sometimes used in American English where it affects the sound of the preceding consonant: *traceable* or *manageable*.
12. *-ce or -se?* In British English the verb that relates to a noun ending in *-ce* is sometimes given the ending *-se*. For example, *advice* (noun) / *advise* (verb), *device*/*devise*, *licence*/*license*, *practice*/*practise*. American English uses *-se* for both the noun and verb forms of these words. It also uses *-se* for other nouns which in British English are spelt *-ce*, including *defense, offense, pretense*.
13. *Prepositions*. In American English, it is acceptable to omit prepositions in certain situations. In British English, this habit is less common. For example, an American lawyer might find a certain clause in a contract to be 'likely enforceable'. A British colleague would be more likely to say that it was 'likely to be enforceable'. An American civil rights activist might 'protest discrimination', while his British colleagues would 'protest against discrimination'.
14. *Have and got*. In American English it is quite acceptable to use the word *got* without *have* in sentences like 'I got two tickets for the show tonight'. In British English, it is more usual to say 'I've got two tickets for the show tonight'.
15. *Gotten*. *Gotten* is a proper word in American English, but is only used as an Americanism in British English, except in certain phrases such as 'ill-gotten gains'.
16. *While or whilst?* Both *while* and *whilst* are used in British English. In American English, *while* is the right word to use, and *whilst* is regarded as a pretentious affectation.
17. The past tense and past participle of the verbs *learn, spoil, spell* (only in the word-related sense), *burn, dream, smell, spill, leap*, and others, can be either irregular (*learnt, spoilt, etc.*) or regular (*learned, spoiled, etc.*). In British English, both irregular and regular forms are used, but the irregular forms tend to be used more often. In AmE, only the regular form is used.

In British English the above would be considered incorrect. However, both forms are generally accepted in standard American English. Other differences involving the use of the present perfect in British English and simple past in American English include *already, just* and *yet*.

### DIFFERENT RECOGNITION METHODS

Effective method of identifying vocabulary differences between American English and British English mainly includes: the judgment method according to the content of the statement and judgment method according to the syntactic relation. The former refers to stating according to the content. That is the statement method by analyzing the content and finding out the specific vocabulary of Britain and the United States to judge the statement belonging to what kind of English. For example: "She got up early to be ready for the post, and from the second floor flat she could see the postman". Because the British people with a "flat" describe "apartment", while Americans use "apartment" to describe "apartment". In addition, British people use "post" to describe "email", while Americans use "mail". Therefore, the statement belongs to the part of British English. The later refers to stating according to the syntactic relations. If a word with the same meaning and unique meaning in the two classes of English at the same time, scholars can judge the word according to the syntactic relations. For example, in the two classes of English, the verb "rate" refers to "evaluate", "tax", etc., in American English, the word can be used as an intransitive verb, while in British English, the word only transitive verbs. For example, in the "What stunt did he ever pull that makes him rate?", "rate" means "get high evaluation"; the behind of it cannot pick up the object directly, therefore, the statement should belongs to American English.

### MAJOR DIFFERENCES

There are bunches of diverse assortments of English, spoken in distinctive parts of the world, for example Australian English, South African English, Indian English et cetera. Be that as it may, two assortments of English are recognized to be the most powerful and prevailing of all: Region English, usually reputed to be British English, basically spoken on the domain of



Great Britain, and American English, the dialect spoken in the U.S.a. British English is likewise spoken over the previous settlements of the British Empire (Commonwealth), incorporating parts of Africa (Egypt and South Africa), Asia (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Thailand), and also in Malta, Australia, New Zealand what's more Ireland, while American English is broadly utilized as a part of a great part of the East Asia (Japan, South Korea Taiwan and the Philippines), the Americas (rejecting the previous British settlements of Jamaica, Canada and the Bahamas) and Africa (Liberia).

A more extraordinary case is Canada, where British English is utilized within spelling; however elocution and vocabulary are closer to American English. Around the worldwide associations, the World Bank, and the Organization of American States have a tendency to utilize the American structure, while different bunches and associations, for example the International Olympic Council, NATO and the World Trade Organization utilize British English. As we can see, both British and American English are give or take similarly spread all through the world.

At any rate, the principle protest of this work is not to build the champ of an asserted rivalry between these two variants of English, however to demonstrate the different distinctions that there are between them, distinctions that frequently expedite disarrays, a few entertaining, other greatly genuine. For example, there was an instance of misjudging throughout the Second World War, while, as per Winston Churchill, a basic word, "to table", made "a long and even caustic contention" between the British and the American. To the previous, the statement implies "to propose formally in a gathering something that you might like every living soul to talk over", while for the last, it has precisely the inverse importance, that is, "to defer managing something for example a proposal until a fate time". It is even accepted that the delegates of the two countries depended on a "mediator" throughout the war, to maintain a strategic distance from further errors of this kind.

Obviously, it appears anyhow peculiar to us, outside speakers of English, that two individuals talking the same dialect can come this. On the other hand would we say we are discussing two dialects? Are the contrasts between British and American English that extraordinary? All things considered, provided that we were to quote G.b. Shaw, we could say that "England and America are two nations divided by a regular dialect". As confusing as this proclamation may appear, it depicts an evident truth.

Acknowledging the way that, for more than 200 years, the two nations have existed divide lives, it is common that there are critical contrasts in what concerns not just the dialect, additionally the social and social

angles, between the British and the Americans. The English pioneers who landed on today's domain of the USA, back in the seventeenth century, needed to adjust to the new circumstances, their ensuing development was resolved by them. They went over an enormous region of area, another sort of atmosphere, altogether different from the one they were acclimated to; additionally, they experienced aggregations of individuals they had at no other time come in contact with, the Native American tribes. Its development was additionally impacted by the way that, all through its history, the USA was home to outsiders of an incredible assortment. This time, the British Isles had their own destiny, the dialect and the propensities endured a few conversions, as well. Anyhow to what degree are British and American English not the same as each other? Facts show that the contrast has arrived at 1% and is continually developing. By and by, it appears that broad communications, the Internet, and the globalization wonder some way or another have a tendency to lessen the local variation.

Without recognizing the various tongues existing inside the two countries, the distinctions are situated between the standard manifestations of British and American English. These different characteristics have a place particularly to the accompanying realms: spelling, semantics, grammar, and pronunciation.

## **CONCLUSION**

American English and British English originated from the same language form lexical differences. And the differences are showed in meaning spelling and usage in vocabulary. It is just the differences that cause inconvenience and misunderstanding to English learners and users. But as the communication and corporation between America and the UK are deeper and deeper, differences between American and British English are becoming smaller and smaller. On the one hand, due to leading position in politics, economy, culture, and military, a large number of American English words are introduced to British English. On the other hand, British English also have an effect on lexical development of American English. As a universal communication tool by means of mutual permeation, American English and British English narrow their gaps gradually. As English learners, we should realize their differences and have right understanding of these differences.

This portrayal of distinctions doesn't imply that there aren't any more contrasts. An immense contrast is there in the zones of elocution, push and pitch design. Truth be told Americans considered pushing off the dialect of their provincial experts after the war of freedom. Basically, it didn't happen for them as

English was the first language of the dominant part of the individuals. Notwithstanding this, this feeling of pride or recognizable proof made the Americans improve their English through slight and now and then huge variations in all the territories of dialect.

The more critical take a gander at this variation uncovers the actuality that off and on again it is bringing about rearrangements and at times in inconvenience with reference to British English. In genuine sense, it is distinguished everywhere throughout the planet that American English has picked up money after the World War II. This is because of the proceeded political, social and budgetary command from that point forward.

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