

# American English Variety vs. British English Variety

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American English Variety vs. British English Variety

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## **1.INTRODUCTION**

The English language is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world today, but its roots can be traced back to the ancient times. This paper, thus, provides insight into the origins of English, following its development up to the language we know today, and also highlighting the key moments and factors that influenced its evolution. Firstly, it will explore the influence of other languages on English, including the wider historical context and the specific ways in which they have impacted the language. Next, there are presented some of the archaeological sites that can support the linguistic origins of English. By examining ancient artifacts, inscriptions and writings found at the sites, researchers can gain insights into the languages spoken by the early inhabitants of the region. Studying these findings can provide valuable information about the material culture and daily life of the past civilizations. The main aim of this paper is to study and compare the linguistic features, differences and similarities between the two major forms of the English language. It will explore various aspects, such as spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. Writing about sign languages is valuable for linguistic research, promoting accessibility and inclusion, exploring language universals, understanding sociolinguistic and cultural dimensions, improving education and communication practices. By focusing on sign languages we, therefore, contribute to a broader understanding of human language and diversity. Finally, the aspects of new standards in English will be presented, contributing to educational improvements, understanding language variations, promoting inclusivity and enhancing language assessment practices.

## **2.HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1.The influence of other languages on English**

As already mentioned, English is a language that has been influenced by a multitude of other languages throughout its history. From the Anglo-Saxons to the Normans, the Vikings to the Romans, the Spanish to the French, the Portuguese to the Dutch, and even the Native Americans, English has absorbed and adapted words from other languages. English originated from a group of Germanic dialects spoken in what is now England during the early Middle Ages. These dialects were spoken by a variety of tribes, including the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, who migrated to the British Isles from what is now called Germany and Denmark. The earliest written records of English date back to the 7th century, with the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, a series of annals written in Old English, that document the history of England from the Roman era to the 12th century (Lerrer, 2008). Old English, the earliest form of English, was spoken from the 5th century to the 11th century. It was a highly inflected language, with a complex grammar and a large vocabulary. Old English, also known as Anglo-Saxon, formed the foundation of the language with many core words and basic grammatical structures derived from this period. The examples of words that have survived to this present day include "father", "mother", "house", "love", etc. Many English words have the German roots, including "kindergarten," "blitz," and "doppelganger." Additionally, the German language has largely contributed to the English grammar, with the Germanic influence on English, leading to the creation of new grammatical constructions, such as the use of the auxiliary verb "do" in questions and negatives. One of the earliest and most significant influences on English had the Old Norse language spoken by the Vikings, who invaded England during the 9th and the 10th centuries. According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), over 1,500 words in modern English have their roots in Old Norse. Many of these relate to everyday life, such as "sky," "knife," "egg," and "window." Additionally, Old Norse influenced English through the development of a new grammatical structure, which included the use of the pronoun "they" and the plural ending "-s." Another language that has had a significant impact on English is French, which was brought to England by the Normans in 1066. The Norman Conquest of England led to a period of the strong French influence on English that lasted for several centuries. During this time, French became the language of the nobility and the courts, and many French words and phrases entered the English language. According to the OED, over 10,000 words in English actually have French origins, including many words related to law, government, and cuisine. The examples of French words in English include "restaurant," "cuisine," "menu," and "chef." One of the most significant influences on English is ascribed to Latin, which impacted the language in several ways. Latin was the language of the Roman Empire, which had a massive impact on the European culture, including the language of England. Latin words and phrases are still used in many areas, including science, medicine, law, and religion. For example, words like "et cetera," "quid pro quo," and "ad hoc" are the Latin phrases still commonly used in English. Spanish is another language that has had a significant influence on English, particularly in the area of vocabulary. According to the OED, over 1,000 words in English have Spanish

origins, including words such as "banana," "tomato," "chocolate," and "mosquito." Many of these were introduced to English during the Age of Exploration in the 16th and the 17th centuries, as English explorers and traders came into contact with the Spanish-speaking cultures in the Americas. Portuguese influenced English, particularly in the area of nautical terminology. During the Age of Exploration, Portuguese sailors were some of the most skilled and experienced navigators in the world. As a result, many English nautical terms have their roots in Portuguese, including "armada," "cargo," "flotilla," and "jib." Dutch is also a language that has had impact on English, particularly in trade and commerce. During the 17th century, the Dutch were one of the world's leading powers in trading, so that many Dutch words and phrases entered the English language during this time. According to the OED, over 800 words in English have Dutch origins, including words such as "boss," "cookie," "spook," and "yacht." The Native American languages have also had an impact on English, particularly in the area of place names. This is why many American place names have their roots in the Native American languages, including names, such as "Massachusetts," "Connecticut," and "Mississippi." Additionally, many words in English that describe American flora and fauna have their roots in the Native American languages, including "moose," "raccoon," and "skunk," etc. A language that has had a large impact on English is Greek. Greek has contributed many words to English particularly in the areas of science, medicine, and philosophy. Greek words, such as "cosmos," "psychology," and "philosophy", are all commonly used in English. In addition, many English words have the Greek roots, such as "telephone," which comes from the Greek words "tele" (far) and "phone" (sound). Arabic is also the language that has contributed to English, especially in the areas of mathematics, science, and philosophy. Arabic numerals, used in modern mathematics, were introduced to Europe through Arabic texts. Besides, many scientific and medical terms in English have the Arabic roots, such as 'alcohol', 'syringe', and 'elixir'. In addition, Arabic has contributed to the English idioms and expressions, such as "the apple of my eye", which comes from the Arabic expression 'pupil of the eye'. Finally, Chinese is the language that has influenced English in the most recent years. With the rise of China as a global economic power, many Chinese words and phrases have entered English, particularly in the areas of business, technology, and culture. For example, 'feng shui', 'dim sum', 'kung fu', 'wok', 'ying yang', 'qi', 'maoism' have all entered the English language from Chinese.

## **2.2.The influence of English on other languages**

..English has become a lingua franca, the language used as a means of communication .between speakers of different native languages. The widespread use of English worldwide has significantly been affected other languages, covering their lexicon, grammar, and pronunciation. This influence can be observed in various aspects, e.g., borrowing, code-switching and language convergence. One of the most visible ways in which English has entered other languages is through borrowing. When the speakers of different languages



come into contact, they often borrow words, expressions, and other linguistic elements from each other. In the case of English, its influence on other languages has led to the adoption of numerous English words and phrases, efficiently integrated into the vocabulary of many languages worldwide. This process of borrowing is particularly evident in the fields of science, technology, and popular culture. For instance, many technical and scientific terms are borrowed from English and used in other languages, often with little or no modification. The examples include "computer," "internet," "smartphone," and "software" in the languages, such as Spanish, French, and German. Popular culture has also been a significant source of borrowing, with many English words and expressions related to music, film, and television (entertainment in general) being adopted by other speakers. The examples include "rock and roll," "jazz," "hip-hop," and "sitcom" in various languages. While borrowing can enrich a language by providing its speakers new ways to express ideas, there are concerns that the dominance of English and its pervasive influence on other languages could lead to the language homogenization and the loss of linguistic diversity. Another way in which English influences other languages is through code-switching and language mixing. Code-switching refers to the practice of alternating between two or more languages in the course of a conversation. This phenomenon is common among bilingual and multilingual speakers and often involves the use of English alongside other languages. Code-switching can serve various functions, for instance, to signal group identity, accommodate different interlocutors, or express certain concepts more efficiently in one language than another. For example, the bilingual speakers of English and Spanish might switch to English to discuss technical matters for which they have a more extensive vocabulary in English. Language mixing, on the other hand, involves the incorporation of words, phrases, or grammatical structures from one language into another, often without a clear switch between the two. This form of language contact can result in the creation of new linguistic forms and expressions that combine elements from different languages. One example of language mixing involving English is Spanglish, a hybrid language that obviously combines elements of English and Spanish. Spanglish is spoken by many bilingual speakers in the United States and other countries where English and Spanish are in contact. Similar phenomena can be observed in other language pairs involving English, such as Hinglish (English and Hindi) and Singlish (English and various languages spoken in Singapore). The widespread use of English as a lingua franca has also contributed to language convergence, a process whereby languages in contact become more similar to each other over time. This can occur at various levels, that is, in phonology, grammar, and lexicon. Phonological convergence involves the adoption of English phonetic features by the speakers of other languages, often due to the exposure to English through education, media, or travel. For instance, the speakers of some languages may adopt the English-like stress patterns, or adopt certain English sounds that do not exist in their native language. Grammatical convergence can involve the adoption of English syntactic structures or the simplification of certain grammatical features in the languages influenced by English. For example, some languages may adopt the subject-verb-object (SVO) word order common in English or simplify their tense or aspect systems under the influence of English. Lexical convergence, as discussed earlier, involves the borrowing of English

words and expressions by other languages. In some cases, this borrowing can lead to the replacement of native words or expressions, which can contribute to the erosion of linguistic diversity. The influence of English on other languages is pervasive and multifaceted, affecting the crucial aspects of language, that is, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. While this influence has led to the enrichment of many languages through borrowing and mixing, it has also raised concerns about the language homogenization and the loss of linguistic diversity. As English continues to be a dominant global language, it is essential to understand and manage the complex ways in which it interacts with and influences other languages around the world.

### **2.3. Archaeological sites that affected the English development**

The English language has significantly evolved over the centuries, influenced by numerous cultures, invasions, and migrations. Several archaeological sites in Britain and America, that have had an impact on the development of the English language, are further discussed.

#### **Britain**

##### **1. Sutton Hoo, Suffolk, England**

Sutton Hoo is an important archaeological site in England, best known for the discovery of a 7th-century Anglo-Saxon ship burial. The site provides crucial insights into the early Anglo-Saxons who migrated to Britain from what is now Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands. The Old English language spoken by the Anglo-Saxons is the earliest form of the English language, while the artifacts and inscriptions from Sutton Hoo offer valuable information about their language, culture, and society.



## 1. The Sutton Hoo ship burial

Source: Khan Academy

## 2. Vindolanda, Northumberland, England

Vindolanda is a Roman fort and settlement located near Hadrian's Wall in northern England. It is famous for the discovery of the Vindolanda Tablets, i.e., thin wooden writing tablets that date back to the 1st and the 2nd centuries AD. These tablets contain Latin texts, which demonstrate the influence of the Roman occupation on the development of Old English. Latin loanwords and grammatical structures found their way into Old English, and this influence can still be seen in modern English today.



2. Vindolanda Tablet 343; Letter from Octavius to Candidus concerning supplies of wheat, hides and sinews. British Museum, London

Source: ThoughtCo.

### 3. Whitby Abbey, North Yorkshire, England

Whitby Abbey is a ruined Benedictine abbey overlooking the North Sea on the East Cliff above Whitby in North Yorkshire, England. It was an influential monastery during the Anglo-Saxon period and played a significant role in the Synod of Whitby in 664 AD. The Synod was a meeting during which it was decided that the Roman method of calculating the date of Easter would be adopted by the Anglo-Saxon Church, which led to a greater contact and communication between the Anglo-Saxon and Latin-speaking worlds. This interaction contributed to the influx of Latin words and phrases into Old English.



### 3. Whitby Abbey, North Yorkshire, England

Source: English Heritage

### 4. Stonehenge (England)

Stonehenge, one of the most iconic archaeological sites in the world, has a profound influence on the English language and its development. Located in Wiltshire, England, Stonehenge is a prehistoric monument consisting of massive standing stones arranged in a circular pattern. While the exact purpose of Stonehenge remains a subject of debate, its historical significance cannot be overstated. From a linguistic perspective, Stonehenge provides valuable insights into the ancient cultures and languages that existed in the British Isles. The monument's construction dates back to around 3000 BCE to 2000 BCE, during a time when the indigenous people of Britain spoke various Celtic languages. These early Celtic languages, belonging to the larger Indo-European language family, form an essential part of the linguistic heritage of the British Isles. The Celtic languages spoken in ancient Britain, such as Brythonic and Goidelic, were later influenced by the arrival of Latin with the Roman conquest in the 1st century BCE. Latin, as the language of the Roman Empire, had a lasting impact on the linguistic landscape of the British Isles. It introduced new vocabulary, grammatical structures, and ways of expressing ideas that eventually merged with the existing Celtic languages. Over time, the Celtic languages spoken in Britain evolved into what we now know as the Insular Celtic languages, including Old Welsh, Old Cornish, Old Breton, and Old Irish. These languages played a significant role in shaping the early linguistic history of the British Isles, including the development of Old English.





#### 4. Stonehenge, England

Source: English Heritage

#### 5. Hadrian's Wall (England/Scotland)

Built by the Romans in the 2nd century CE, Hadrian's Wall stretches across northern England and marks the ancient boundary between the Roman Empire and Scotland. The linguistic contact between the Latin-speaking Romans and the Celtic-speaking locals facilitated the language transfer and led to the development of hybrid forms of speech in the region. The presence of the Romans and their interactions with the indigenous population along Hadrian's Wall led to the borrowing of Latin words into the local languages. These words enriched the vocabulary of the native languages and contributed to the linguistic diversity of the region.



Source: HISTORY.COM EDITORS

## America

### 6. Jamestown, Virginia, USA

Jamestown, founded in 1607, was the first permanent English settlement in the Americas. The archaeological remains of Jamestown reveal the challenges faced by the early colonists and provide valuable insights into the development of Early Modern English in the New World. The interaction between the English settlers and the Native American tribes led to the borrowing of some Native American words into the English language, examples would be "raccoon," "tomahawk," and "moccasin."



Source: The Guardian

## 7. Plymouth Colony, Massachusetts, USA

Established in 1620 by the Pilgrims, who were the English separatists, the Plymouth Colony was the second successful English settlement in America. The Pilgrims brought with them the English language, which was influenced by their own religious beliefs and the new environment they encountered in America. As they interacted with the Native American tribes, words from the local Algonquian languages were adopted into English, such as "squash," "moose," and "skunk."



## 7. Plymouth Colony, Massachusetts, USA

Source: Britannica

## 8. Roanoke Colony, North Carolina, USA

Although the Roanoke Colony, founded in 1585, ultimately ended in the mysterious disappearance of its settlers, the short-lived colony marked the beginning of the English attempts to establish a presence in the New World. The subsequent settlements, such as Jamestown and Plymouth, were built on the experiences and lessons learned from Roanoke, including the development of the English language in America.





## 8. The Lost Colony of Roanoke

Source: American History Central

## 9. Colonial Williamsburg (Virginia, USA)

Colonial Williamsburg is a living-history museum that recreates the 18th-century capital of Virginia during the colonial period. It offers insights into the language and culture of the American colonies, showcasing the influences of British English on American English.



## 9. Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia

Source: Side of Culture

## 10. Ellis Island (New York, USA)

Ellis Island served as the main entry point for immigrants coming to the United States between 1892 and 1954. The diverse waves of immigrants from different countries, including England, Ireland, Germany, Italy, Croatia, and others, contributed to the rich linguistic tapestry of American English.



Source: Britannica

### **3.TWO COMMON VARIETIES**

#### **3.1 American English versus British English**

The differences between British English and American English can be traced back to the history of both countries. The British colonized America in the 17th century, and during that time, English was introduced to America. However, over time, the language developed differently in the two regions, with each having its unique characteristics. Their differences in spelling are a reflection of this evolution. For instance, during the 18th century, the English language underwent a serious spelling reform movement in America, led by Noah Webster, which sought to simplify spelling. As a result, many words lost their redundant letters, such as the "u" in "colour," which became the standard in American English (Biber et al, 2015). Darragh (2000) provides a fascinating insight into the cultural differences that clearly underlie the linguistic differences between British and American English. He notes that British English often uses more indirect patterns than American English, reflecting the cultural emphasis on politeness and diplomacy in the British culture (Darragh, 2000). For example, British speakers may use euphemisms or polite expressions to soften the impact of a statement. Instead of saying "I don't like your idea," a British speaker might say "I'm not sure that's quite what we're looking for." In contrast, American English tends to be more direct and straightforward, reflecting the cultural emphasis on honesty and authenticity in the American culture (Darragh, 2000). The Americans are often praised for their "can-do" attitude and willingness to speak their minds. In American English, it is common to use plain language and to get straight to the point. For example, instead of using a euphemism like "passed away," the Americans might say "died." The differences between British and American English, however, are not limited to the language use. They also mirror different attitudes and values that are deeply ingrained in each culture (Darragh, 2000). For example, the British culture places a strong emphasis on tradition and history, while the American culture values innovation and progress. These cultural differences can be seen in different ways in which language is used to express ideas and to communicate with others. By studying the cultural differences that underlie the linguistic differences between British and American English, Darragh claims (2000), we can gain a better understanding of the rich diversity of the English language and the cultures that shape them. Such differences do not represent an objective measure of the language correctness or superiority, which has to be particularly emphasized. Instead, they reflect the unique histories, attitudes, and values of each culture. As we continue to communicate across cultures and languages, it is essential to approach these differences with an open mind and willingness to learn from each other. One of the key themes in Ashraf Abu Fares' s article(2019) is the impact of colonialism on the development of American English. The British settlers who founded the American colonies brought with them their own unique form of English, which was heavily influenced by regional dialects and other linguistic factors. However, as the colonies developed their own distinct culture and identity, they began to develop a unique form of English that supported their own experiences and history. Another important factor that has shaped British and American English is immigration. Over the centuries, both the UK and the US experienced

significant waves of immigration from all over the world, which has led to the adoption of new words and phrases into the English language. This is particularly evident in American English, which has borrowed words from languages, such as Spanish, French, and various Native American languages. As noted, British English has been more heavily influenced by Latin and Greek, causing the adoption of words, such as "television," "telephone," and "photograph." In contrast, American English adopted words from a much wider range of languages, which has led to words, such as "garage," "guitar," and "tomato." By understanding the factors that have shaped these varieties, the learners of English can improve their communication skills and become more proficient in both varieties. Another interesting aspect, mentioned by Abu Fares (2019), refers to the impact of culture on the language development. For example, he notes that British English tends to be more formal than American English, with a greater emphasis on correct grammar and proper usage. This reflects the cultural values of British society, which places a high value on education and correctness. In contrast, American English is often seen as more informal and flexible, reflecting the cultural values of the United States, which places a greater emphasis on individuality and creativity. This can be seen in the use of slang and informal expressions in American English, as well as in the way in which the Americans tend to be more comfortable with change and innovation. The following factor that has influenced the development of both varieties is technology. In other words, technological advances, such as the internet and social media, have had a profound impact on the way in which people communicate, within a culture and between cultures. This has resulted in the acquisition of new words and phrases, as well as new communication forms, such as texting and instant messaging. Despite these differences, Abu Fares (2019) emphasizes that British English and American English remain fundamentally similar, with the same basic grammar and syntax. This means that the speakers of both varieties can generally understand each other without difficulties, even if they may occasionally encounter unfamiliar words or expressions.

### **3.2. Differences in spelling, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary**

#### **Spelling**

The spelling differences between British and American English have long been a subject of some fascination for linguists and language enthusiasts. British English tends to follow the traditional spellings, while American English uses simpler spellings that sometimes omit certain letters. They can be confusing for the English learners, but they actually reflect the differences in the way each language developed over time. Of course, these differences are not limited to the use of "u" or "s" versus "z", but extend to other aspects of spelling as well. One of them is the use of "-our" versus "-or" at the end of words. Darragh (2000) notes that this particular spelling difference can be traced back to the 18th century when the British spelling was standardized. The "-our" spelling was introduced to differentiate English from French, which had a significant influence on the English spelling at the time. In contrast, American English chose to simplify the spelling by eliminating "-u" from the words. Today,

both forms of spelling are widely accepted in their respective speaking countries. Additional spelling difference between British and American English includes the use of "-re" versus "-er" at the end of words. Darragh (2000) explains that this spelling difference can be seen in words, such as centre (British) and center (American), metre (British) and meter (American), theatre (British) and theater (American). The use of "-re" in British English is due to the influence of French, where the ending "-re" is used in many words. In contrast, American English has adopted the spelling "-er" in these words, which is closer to the original Latin spelling. Besides, there are other notable spelling differences, such as the use of "-ise" versus "-ize" (e.g., "organise") in British English versus "organize" in American English) and the use of double letters in some words in British English but not in American English (e.g., travelled in British English versus traveled in American English). According to Darragh (2000), the use of "-ise" versus "-ize" has been a subject of debate among language enthusiasts. Both spellings are accepted in British English, while the "-ize" spelling is more common in American English. It is worth noting that the spelling differences between British and American English are not always straightforward. Darragh (2000) provides an example of the word "defense", which is always spelled with "s" in American English, while the word "licence" is spelled with "c" in British English when referring to a document, but with "s" when used as a verb. The same can be seen in many other words, for instance, "honour" in British English and "honor" in American English (Biber et al., 2015). This difference is not only limited to vowels but it also includes consonants, as with the above-mentioned example "traveled" versus "traveled". Similarly, "apologise" in British English is spelled as "apologize" in American English (Biber et al., 2015). Additionally, some words have different spellings in the two varieties. For example, "programme" in British English is spelled as "program" in American English. Similarly, the word "manoeuvre" in British English is spelled as "maneuver" in American English (Biber et al., 2015). The differences in spelling can sometimes create confusion for people who are not familiar with the two varieties of English. For example, a British person may spell the word "aluminium", while an American may spell it as "aluminum" (Biber et al., 2015). Also, another example would be that British English uses the word "lorry" for a large truck, whereas American English uses the word "truck" for the same object. The spelling differences between British and American English are complex and nuanced. They reflect the historical, cultural, and linguistic influences that have shaped the development of English in different parts of the world. Although some may argue that one spelling is better than the other, it is essential to recognize that both forms are correct in their respective countries. Understanding these differences can help improve a communication between the speakers of the two varieties, and promote a greater appreciation for the diversity and richness of English.



# LEARN ENGLISH *with friends*

| American English  | British English   |
|---|---|
|  |   |
| Soccer  | Football  |
| Downtown  | City centre   |
| Fall  | Autumn  |
| Store   | Shop  |
| Closet  | Wardrobe  |
| Movie theater   | Cinema  |
| Sales Clerk   | Shop assistant  |
| First floor   | Ground floor  |
| Parking lot   | Car park  |
| Two weeks   | Fortnight   |
| Sidewalk  | Pavement  |
| Check   | Bill  |
|  |  |

Source: ESLBUZZ

## **Pronunciation**

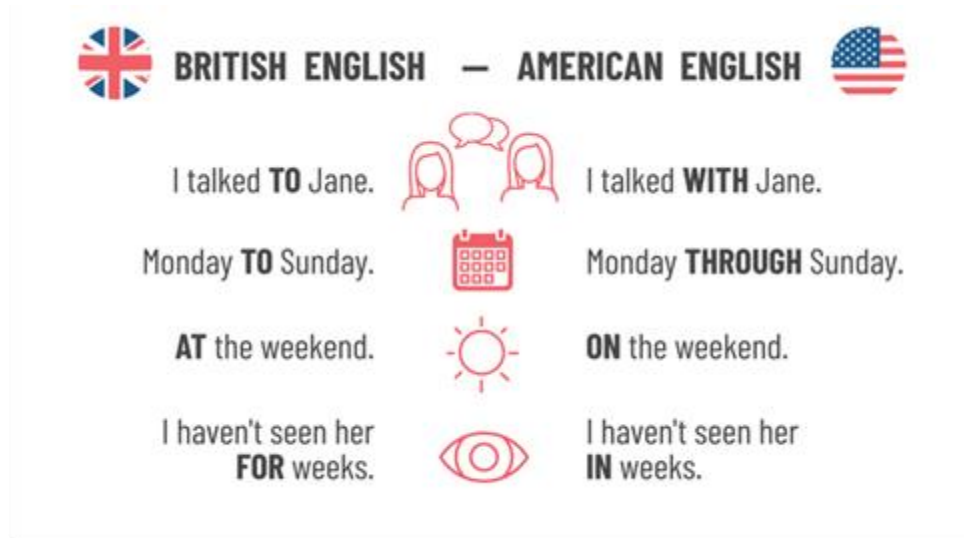
While both varieties have a similar vocabulary and grammar, there are some notable differences in pronunciation that set them clearly apart from each other. One of the most significant differences in pronunciation between British and American English is the way in which the letter "r" is pronounced. In British English, it is often silent or lightly pronounced in the words, such as "car" and "card". However, in American English, the letter "r" is pronounced more prominently, especially in the words like "hard" and "part" (Crystal, 2003). Another difference between the two is the way in which certain vowel sounds are pronounced. For example, in British English, the vowel sound in the words like "bath" and "dance" is pronounced with a short "a" sound. However, in American English, the same vowel sound is pronounced with a longer "a" sound. As a result, the word "bath" would sound more like "bahth" in American English (Crystal, 2003). There are also differences in the way consonants are pronounced. In British English, the "t" and "d" sounds are often pronounced with a softer, more subtle sound. On the other hand, in American English, these sounds are pronounced with a more distinct and forceful sound. For example, the word "water" would be pronounced more like "wadder" in American English (Crystal, 2003). Some other typical pronunciation differences are given in the table below.

| Words      | British Pronunciation | American Pronunciation |
|------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Again      | /ə'geɪn/              | /ə'gen/                |
| Patent     | /'peɪnt/              | /'pænt/                |
| Apparatus  | /æpə'reɪtəs/          | /æpə'ræts/             |
| Radio      | /'reɪdiəʊ/            | /oʊ/                   |
| Charade    | /ʃə'rɑ:d/             | /ʃə'reɪd/              |
| Promenade  | /prɒmə'nɑ:d/          | /prɑ:mə'neɪd/          |
| Patriotism | /'pætriə'tɪzəm/       | /'peɪtriə'tɪzəm/       |
| Either     | /'aɪə/                | /'i:ə/                 |
| Neither    | /'naɪə/               | /'ni:ə/                |

Source: "A to Zed, A to Zee" ; A Guide to the Differences between British and American English, Glenn Darragh, 2000

### **Grammar**

Furthermore, there are differences in the way certain grammatical structures are used. For example, British English speakers might say "I have got a headache" or "I have just finished my work", whereas American English speakers would simply say "I have a headache" or "I just finished my work". Likewise, British English uses the present perfect tense more frequently than American English, which tends to use the past simple instead (Darragh, 2000). The use of the past simple and past participle forms of irregular verbs can differ in examples such as "I got" (American) or "I gotten" (American), for the past participle of "get" according to the British use of "got". While the Americans might say "I dove" or "I dived" for the past tense of "dive", the British use "dived". These differences in grammar usage affect the way a sentence is constructed, leading to the variations in sentence structure between the two variations, as mentioned above. Despite such differences, both varieties of English are mutually intelligible and serve as an important means of communication around the world. Huddleston and Pullum (2002), thus, state: "The differences between British and American English are not always trivial, but they are almost always overstated."



Source: Emaze

### Vocabulary

In addition, there are also differences in vocabulary between British and American English. British English, for instance, uses “lift” instead of “elevator”. Some of the other examples would be when the Americans use the word “gas” to refer to fuel for a car, while the British use “petrol”. Similarly, the Americans use “sidewalk” to describe a paved pedestrian path, while the British use “pavement”. The Americans might say “apartment”, but the British use the word “flat”. Other vocabulary differences include the use of words for clothing items, such as “pants” (American) and “trousers” (British). These differences in vocabulary can be attributed to a variety of factors, such as dialects and regional influences.

| <b>General</b>           |                                |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>British English</b>   | <b>American English</b>        |
| Flat                     | Apartment                      |
| University               | College                        |
| Theatre                  | Theater                        |
| Holiday                  | Vacation                       |
| The cinema               | The movies                     |
| Soft drink / fizzy drink | Soda / pop / coke / soft drink |
| Jumper                   | Sweater                        |
| Postbox                  | Mailbox                        |
| Football                 | Soccer                         |
| Trousers                 | Pants                          |
| Trunk call               | Long Distance Call             |
| Parcel                   | Package                        |
| Junction, crossroads     | Intersection                   |
| Sweets                   | Candy                          |



Table 1: Some vocabulary differences

Source: Semantic Scholar

## **4.SIGN LANGUAGE (S)**

### **4.1.American sign language**

Sign language is a diverse and fascinating spectrum of language that serves the hard of hearing, deaf, mute, non-verbal, and others. With over 138 to 300 sign languages in use around the world, each language has its own grammar, sentence structure, and unique way of signing. Unlike spoken languages, sign languages have no alphabetic correspondence to the written language, but instead rely on non-alphabetic parameters and finger-spelling for correspondence. The two most commonly used sign languages include the American Sign Language (ASL) and the British Sign Language (BSL), which are completely separate and distinct from one another and cannot be understood by each other's users. While sign languages are not universal, an approach called the "international sign" has been developed for communication between signers who do not share the same sign language. It implies a simplified and highly iconic lexicon that relies on gestures and role-playing. Similar to spoken languages, individual signs in sign languages are arbitrarily assigned and usually have no direct meaning. However, sign languages tend to rely more on the imitation of figures, actions, and pointing rather than spoken languages. Learning a sign language can be time-consuming and frustrating, but it can also promote understanding and appreciation of deaf culture. In the United States, the formal education of deaf students began in 1817 with the establishment of the American School for the Deaf, where the American Sign Language became the dominant language of instruction by 1835. However, there was a belief that sign language would interfere with the development of oral skills, which led to the oral approach advocated by Alexander Graham Bell. The first federally chartered school for the deaf was established in 1864 by President Abraham Lincoln, which is now Gallaudet University in Washington, DC. The university is bilingual, with instruction provided in both ASL and English. ASL is currently the third most-used language in the United States and Canada, and it is thought to be the primary language for more than half of the country's deaf population. It is not only used by deaf people, but also by teachers, parents, and friends as a means of effective communication. ASL is a language completely separate and distinct from English, with its own rules for pronunciation, word formation, and word order. It contains all the fundamental features of language, including its own rules of grammar and syntax. Regional dialects and accents exist within ASL, with BASL being a dialect used in Black communities that tends to have a larger signing space. Age, gender, race, and location also contribute to variations in ASL. Interestingly, ASL and the French Sign Language are more similar to each other than ASL and BSL.

### **4.2.British sign language**

The British sign language is a type of sign language used by deaf and hearing individuals in the United Kingdom. It is the most common type of sign language used there. It was

recognized as an official minority language in 2003 by the government of the United Kingdom. It has led to a lot of positive changes for the community. They got more funding and spread awareness of this sign language and raised it to the same status as Gaelic and Welsh. When looking at the statistics of how many individuals, both deaf and hearing, use the British Sign Language in the United Kingdom it was found that there are around 151,000 users, of which 87,000 are legally deaf. A sign language can be used by anyone, hearing people can use it to aid deaf people. As with all stories of disability in the past, this story is also marked by oppression. The written history of the British Sign Language should not be held as a correct and truthful retelling of the beginning of it all because it was written by hearing individuals who oppressed deaf and/or mute individuals. Their interpretation of the language, the signs and gestures used, is unreliable at best. There is reliable evidence that the deaf people of Britain were signing in the 16th century, some may argue that they were signing way before that, but we do not have any concrete evidence to back those claims. Sign language as we know is thought to have been developed sometime in the 18th century, The British sign language developed with the development of civilization. As the cities of Britain grew so did the sign language. Before the development of cities, deaf individuals were spread across multiple smaller communities, with the development of cities they came into contact with each other. This led to them forming communities that created a standard version of sign language and it evolved and developed like any other language. The first school for the Deaf was "Thomas Braidwood's Academy for Deaf and Dumb", and it was opened in 1760. Braidwood introduced a combined system which set some standards for the British Sign Language as we know today. In the 20th century there was much opposition to sign language, even leading to the punishment of deaf children, so that they were forced to only learn finger spelling and lip-reading. The opposition persisted until the results of the tyranny showed that it had done a lot more harm than good. Not everyone changed their mind, and the trouble persisted until 2003 when the British Sign Language got the recognition it deserves.

### **4.3. Sign language and its problems**

Sign language is a collection of hand movements, expressions and body language used to communicate with deaf, mute, and non-verbal individuals, and used by the deaf, mute, and non-verbal to communicate with each other. The use of sign language by hearing and able individuals spreads awareness and helps the communities that need it most to live normal and happy lives. Hearing individuals who do not know how to sign often think of sign language to be a one-to-one way of conveying spoken language to sign language. The only way to have a one-to-one representation of spoken language is to write everything down so that someone can read it, yet it is still not one-hundred percent reliable because of some social cues and ways of saying something. Sign language is as complex as spoken language, but is entirely different from spoken language. Two sign languages are completely different from each other despite being in the same "category", a good example refers to the American Sign Language and the British Sign Language. The American and British spoken

English can be understood by English speaking individuals, while BSL and ASL are not interchangeable. The grammar of sign language is also different from spoken language. For example, the British Sign Language uses a type of grammatical structure which is commonly called the Topic Comment Structure. The order of the structure is a topic first and then a comment on the topic, and it is explained in the continuation of the sentence. An example of that kind of sentence would be 'Sally is going to the "store" this sentence would be signed as "Store Sally go". Even though the sentence seems simple for hearing and speaking individuals, sign language is a lot more logical when interpreted by the individuals who need it to communicate. We would understand it as "Store Sally go", but the people who know and use sign language would interpret it as "Sally is going to the store". The idea behind the simplification of sentences is to make it easier and quicker for individuals to communicate, but still be able to carry out important information. There is a need to "set a scene" when it comes to communicating with sign language. They described it like painting a picture, adding elements as need be so the person we are talking to can visualize it and understand it. The store is the centre of the story, we begin with it to set the scene, then we add the person or anything secondary, and finish it off with something that explains the action, what is happening in the scenario. The way of carrying meaning is different from what we as able and hearing people are used to, but it has been developed to be perfect for those who need it. As with anything else, there are some problems. No language is perfect and sign language is no different. The biggest problem lies in the variety of sign languages even in the same language. The British Sign Language has dialects that either cannot be understood or can be understood, but with a bit of trouble, by various users although fully understood by the people signing the dialect. Every region in the United Kingdom has its own way of signing, so one research found that, after having asked around 249 deaf people, they found 17 different signs for the color purple. The dialects differ by what is signed more than how it is signed. It is like asking people from Istria and people from Zagorje how they say something specific. In the realm of the British Sign Language there is also Auslan and NZSL (the New Zealand Sign Language) with its own way of signing. In the American Sign Language there is also some sub-varieties, such as Black American Sign Language (BASL), Bolivian Sign, Burundian Sign, Costa Rican Sign, Ghanaian Sign, Nigerian Sign, Francophone African Sign, Québec Sign. There is also the problem of hearing and speaking individuals not learning any sign language. That makes the lives of deaf, mute, and non-verbal individuals difficult, presenting everyday tasks harder than they need to be. Learning sign language should be a basic skill taught in schools and evaluated more than now. It may be useful in many situations even when we do not have a deaf person in our lives / around. A problem that may seem very strange for some people is that for sign language you need one or both hands, which can be a hurdle for some. The inability to use your hands makes signing impossible, which creates the need to use some form of technology that can be expensive. Currently, there are advancements in the field of technology which make disabled people's lives easier, such as eye motion tracking tablets with which people can "say" what they need to. The tablets are programmed with certain words the person can select to make a sentence. Sign language as a whole is a very complex and fascinating field. It is useful in a lot of situations and should be learned from a

young age to help those who use it. Its grammar is complex and the way the signs are interpreted is fascinating.

## **5.STANDARDIZATION**

### **5.1.New standards in English**

As stated several times so far, the English language has gone through many changes in its history. One of the most significant changes that have occurred is the establishment of new standards in English. This has led to a greater level of consistency in the language and has made it easier for people to communicate with each other. The establishment of new standards in English began in the 18th century with the publication of Samuel Johnson's "A Dictionary of the English Language." This dictionary was the first to standardize the spelling and the usage of words in English. It was a significant step in creating a standard English form that could be used by everyone. Over time, other dictionaries were published, and they continued to refine the standards of the language. Another significant factor in the establishment of new standards in English was the rise of literacy. As more people learned to read and write, there was a greater need for consistency in the language. People needed to be able to communicate with each other effectively, and having a standard form of English made this possible. Today, English is the most widely spoken language in the world, and it continues to evolve. New words are added to the language every year, and the standards of usage continue to change. However, the establishment of new standards in English has played a significant role in making the language more consistent and accessible. The establishment of new standards in English has been a crucial development in its history. It has allowed for greater consistency and clarity in communication and has made English more accessible to people around the world. As Professor Seth Lerrer notes in his book "The History of the English Language," this development has been essential in shaping the language we use today (Lerrer, 2008). As English continues to evolve and change, so do the rules and conventions that govern the language, of course. One area in which we have recently seen significant changes includes grammar standards. From the use of pronouns to the structure of sentences, modern English speakers are pushing the boundaries of traditional grammar rules in new and exciting ways. One notable change refers to the increasing acceptance of the singular "they" pronoun. Historically, English used "he" or "she" as a default pronoun when the gender of a person is unknown or irrelevant. However, this practice has been criticized for being exclusive and perpetuating gender stereotypes. In response, many people have begun using "they" as a gender-neutral pronoun. This usage has been gaining acceptance in both informal and formal writing, including publications, such as The Washington Post and The New York Times (Strunk and White, 2017). Another change in grammar standards relates to the use of the passive voice. Traditionally, the passive voice was considered weak and awkward, and writers were rather encouraged to use active voice whenever possible. However, modern English writers are increasingly using the passive voice to convey a sense of objectivity and impartiality. In some cases, the passive voice can also help to emphasize the action being described rather than the person or group responsible for the action (Truss, 2003). Finally, modern English speakers are also experimenting with new sentence structures that challenge traditional rules. For example, many writers are using sentence fragments to create an emphasis or to convey a sense of

informality. Although sentence fragments were once considered a major grammatical error, they are now being used creatively in both spoken and written English. Also, the traditional prohibition against ending a sentence with a preposition is being increasingly challenged, with many writers choosing to use prepositions at the end of sentences for the sake of clarity or naturalness (Gwynne, 2013). In conclusion, the English grammar standards are constantly evolving, with new conventions emerging all the time. From the use of gender-neutral pronouns to changes in sentence structure, modern English speakers are pushing the boundaries of traditional rules and creating new ways of communication. While some may resist these changes, they are ultimately a reflection of the vibrant and dynamic nature of the English language.

## **5.2. The future of English as a world language**

In the "English as a Global Language," David Crystal delves deeper into the evolving landscape of English language standardization and the dynamic interplay between native speakers and non-native speakers. He underscores the transformative power of language and its inherent democratizing nature, allowing anyone who learns a language to have rights within it. This empowerment extends to modifying, creating, and even discarding elements of the language. The trajectory of the English language is being significantly shaped by those who adopt it as a second or foreign language, challenging the traditional dominance of native speakers in driving linguistic changes. This is introducing the idea that linguistic fashions, akin to trends in other fields, emerge as a product of numbers. As the number of native English speakers as a proportion of global English users diminishes, the influence of non-native speakers becomes more pronounced. The potential of linguistic trends is highlighted, originating from non-native speakers or speakers of creole and pidgin varieties, which may eventually permeate the standard educated speech of a region and find their way into written communication. Crystal offers concrete examples of possible changes, such as new concord rules, shifts in countability, or unconventional verb usage, which might challenge established norms. The concept of power and prestige associated with emerging English varieties are being explored, particularly in their home countries. Innovative linguistic features gain visibility, initially within the national press, then gradually becoming integrated into everyday language. This process is often boosted by influential figures within the society, such as politicians, religious leaders, and even pop musicians, who lend their endorsement to these linguistic evolutions. Moreover, Crystal investigates the progression from national recognition to international acceptance of these novel linguistic features. He describes scenarios where influential individuals from different countries introduce local usages during international gatherings. Over time, as these speakers gain international prestige, their linguistic idiosyncrasies transition from being perceived as foreign to becoming accepted as part of the evolving English language landscape. It is important to address potential conflicts and challenges that arise from the coexistence of standard English and emerging linguistic varieties. Singapore's "Singlish" is examined as a case study, where the Prime Minister's call for maintaining Standard English prompted a nuanced debate

about language identity and its intersection with national and international aspirations. In conclusion the interaction of linguistic fashions, power dynamics, and international influences paints a vivid picture of the evolving nature of English as a global language.



## **6.CONCLUSION**

The popularity of British English and American English varies, depending on the region and context in which each of them is spoken. In the United Kingdom, British English is the predominant form, widely used in education, media, and government. In the United States, American English is the predominant form, widely used again in education, media, and government. Outside of the UK and the US, their popularity depends on the historical and cultural background of a given region. In many parts of the world, particularly in the former British colonies, British English is widely spoken and is often considered the standard form of the language. In other parts of the world, particularly in the Americas , American English is more widely spoken and is often the preferred form. However, it is important to note that both British English and American English have gained popularity around the world due the influence of media and popular culture. British and American films, music performances, and television shows are worldwide watched and enjoyed, crucially leading to the spread of both English varieties.

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## **Summaries**

This paper offers insights into the roots of the English language, tracing its development to its present form, while also emphasizing the pivotal moments and factors that shaped its evolution. By scrutinizing ancient artifacts, inscriptions, and writings discovered at archaeological sites, researchers can gain knowledge about the languages spoken by the early inhabitants of the region. Delving into these discoveries can yield valuable insights into the material culture and daily lives of civilizations from the past. The primary objective of this paper is to analyze and contrast the linguistic characteristics, distinctions, and parallels between the two major variants of English. It will delve into various facets, including orthography, pronunciation, lexicon, and syntax. The popularity of British English and American English varies depending on the region and context in which they are spoken. Nevertheless, it's worth noting that both British English and American English have achieved global prominence due to the influence of mass media and popular culture. British and American films, musical performances, and television shows enjoy international viewership and appreciation, significantly contributing to the dissemination of both forms of the English language.

Key words: origins, evolution, characteristics, varieties, popularity

Ovaj rad pruža uvid u korijene engleskog jezika, prateći njegov razvoj do jezika kakav danas poznajemo, istaknuvši također ključne trenutke i čimbenike koji su utjecali na njegovu evoluciju. Ispitujući drevne artefakte, natpise i zapise pronađene na arheološkim nalazištima, istraživači mogu dobiti uvid u jezike koje su govorili rani stanovnici tog područja. Proučavanje ovih nalaza može pružiti vrijedne informacije o materijalnoj kulturi i svakodnevnom životu prošlih civilizacija. Glavni cilj ovog rada jest proučiti i usporediti jezične značajke, razlike i sličnosti između dviju glavnih varijanti engleskog jezika. Istražit će različite aspekte, poput pravopisa, izgovora, rječnika i gramatike. Popularnost britanskog engleskog i američkog engleskog varira ovisno o regiji i kontekstu u kojem se govore. Ipak, važno je napomenuti da su i britanski engleski i američki engleski postali popularni diljem svijeta zbog utjecaja medija i popularne kulture. Britanski i američki filmovi, glazbeni nastupi i televizijske emisije gledaju se i uživaju diljem svijeta, što značajno pridonosi širenju obje varijante engleskog jezika.

Ključne riječi: podrijetlo, evolucija, karakteristike, varijeteti, popularnost

