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COMPARISON OF BRITISH AND AMERICAN VARIANTS OF ENGLISH IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CONTINUUM

The article discusses the history of the formation of American English and the causes of differences between the two variants of English, American and British, as well as the main lexical and grammatical differences between them. The global transplantation of the English language led to the formation of its many regional variants, each of which is characterized by the presence of specific linguistic phenomena. The most prestigious versions of the English language are currently the British and American standards, which are considered the benchmarks for teaching English in most educational institutions in the world. The author analyzes the status of the British and American standard versions of the English language in the modern world English-language continuum. Synchronic comparison of the British and American standard variants of the English language at the phonological, spelling, grammatical and lexical-semantic levels is presented. As well this article considers the lexical and grammatical differences between the British and American versions of English. The analysis of such differences between the British and American versions of English helps to understand better the mental and cultural features of native speakers' communication, through which the intercultural meaning of communication is expressed. The purpose of our work is to analyze the characteristic differences in the inventory of systems. When writing the article, comparative methods, systematization and generalization and analysis of the content of the material were used.

Key words: language variant, language form, standard English, dialect, Creole, Pidgin, phonological features, spelling features, grammatical features, lexical-semantic features.

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Британдық және америкалық ағылшын тілі нұсқаларының ағылшын тілдік континуумде

Мақалада америкалық ағылшын тілінің қалыптасу тарихы және америкалық және британдық екі нұсқа арасындағы айырмашылықтың себептері, сондай-ақ олардың арасындағы негізгі лексика-грамматикалық айырмашылықтар қарастырылады. Ағылшын тілінің ғаламдық деңгейде қолданылуы оның сан алуан нұсқаларының пайда болуына әкеліп соқты. Қазіргі уақытта ағылшын тілінің ең беделді нұсқалары әртүрлі елдерде пайда болған британдық және америкалық стандарттар болып табылады. Автор заманауи әлемдік ағылшын тілдік континуумде ағылшын тілінің нұсқаларының британдық және америкалық мәртебесіне талдау жүргізеді. Британдық және америкалық стандартты нұсқаларының ағылшын тіліндегі фонологиялық, орфографиялық, грамматикалық және лексикалық-семантикалық деңгейлерде синхронды түрде салыстыру ұсынылған. Сонымен қатар, бұл мақалада британдық ағылшын және америкалық ағылшын нұсқалары арасындағы лексикалық айырмашылықтар және грамматикалық айырмашылықтар қарастырылады. Ағылшын тілінің ағылшын және америкалық нұсқаларының арасындағы осындай айырмашылықтарды талдау тіл тасымалдаушылардың қарым-қатынасының мәдениетаралық мағынасын білдіретін ментальды және мәдени ерекшеліктерін жақсы түсінуге үлкен септігін тигізеді. Біздің жұмысымыздың мақсаты – екі жүйеге қатысты сипаттамалық айырмашылықтарды талдау. Мақаланы жазу барысында маған қолжетімді материалдың мазмұнын талдау, жүйелеу және жалпылау, салыстырмалы-салғастырмалы әдістері қолданылды.

Түйін сөздер: тілдік нұсқа, тілдік формасы, стандартты ағылшын тілі, диалект, креол, пиджин, фонологиялық ерекшеліктері, емле ерекшеліктері, грамматикалық ерекшеліктері, лексикалық-семантикалық ерекшеліктері.

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Британский и американский варианты английского языка в англоязычном континууме

В статье рассматривается история становления американского английского языка и причины различий между двумя вариантами английского – американским и британским, а также основные лексико-грамматические различия между ними. Глобальная трансляция английского языка привела к появлению у него большого количества различных вариантов, характерных для разных поколений детей. Наиболее престижные версии английского языка в настоящее время являются британскими и американскими стандартами, которые возникли в разных странах. Автор анализирует статус британского и американского стандартных вариантов английского языка в современном мировом англоязычном континууме. Представлено синхронное сопоставление британского и американского стандартных вариантов английского языка на фонологическом, орфографическом, грамматическом и лексико-семантическом уровнях. Также в данной статье рассматриваются лексические и грамматические различия между английским и американским вариантами английского языка. Анализ таких различий между английским и американским вариантами английского языка помогает лучше понять ментальные и культурные особенности общения носителей языка, через которые выражается межкультурный смысл общения. Целью нашей работы является анализ характеристических различий в отношении двух систем. При написании статьи использовались сравнительно-сопоставительные методы, систематизация и обобщение и анализ содержания материала.

Ключевые слова: вариант языка, форма языка, стандартный английский язык, диалект, креол, пиджин, фонологические особенности, орфографические особенности, грамматические особенности, лексико-семантические особенности.

Introduction

According to modern concepts, language proficiency means not only knowledge of the lexicogrammatic constructions of this language, but also the ability to apply them in various social and cultural contexts. This idea was first considered in the works of the famous American linguist V. Labov (Labov, 1971: 153) and then developed by D. Heims, who called this level of language a communicative competence (Hymes, 1972: 111) The concept of communicative competence has received wide recognition in modern pedagogy and has served as the basis for the development of a communicative method of teaching foreign languages.

The communicative method is especially relevant when teaching English, since this language at this stage of its development is a complex linguistic-sociocultural system in which constant changes take place. In particular, over the past fifty years, the approach to the concept of norms and standards in the English language has changed. If until the mid-50s of the last century, the role of the international standard was assigned to the British literary variant of the English language, now this function is also performed by the American literary variant of the English language. Australia, New Zealand, Canada and a number of other English-speaking

countries have formed their own national versions. In the states that were formed on the site of the British colonies, artistic English-language literature with distinctive ethnic characteristics is developing, that is, conditions are being created for the emergence of new national versions of the English language.

In such a complex linguistic situation, one of the most important tasks in teaching English is to develop a sociolinguistic orientation in students, that is, an understanding that modern English is a heterogeneous system in which numerous variants and forms coexist.

The aim of our work is to analyze the modern English-speaking continuum and to characterize typical language differences between the two most prestigious versions of modern English: British and American.

In linguistics, the concepts of variant and form of language are often identified. In our analysis, we proceed from the following definitions for these terms. The variant of the English language is the realization of the English language in the speech of a separate nation. As part of this definition, English in the United States represents American English, and English, which sounds on the Australian continent, is characterized as Australian English.

The form of the English language reflects its differentiation in the speech of representatives of various social and dialect groups within a single

nation. For example, London Cockney (Cockney English) is one of the social forms of the British English, and English, which is spoken by the characters of the famous novel by J.B. In English, as in other modern Indo-European languages, all forms existing in its system are divided into standard and non-standard.

The standard form is a literary language that is studied in educational institutions, is used by the state mass media and is used in a formal setting by the educated part of the population. Non-standard forms of language are implemented in regional and social dialects. Regional dialects are characteristic of the speech of the poorly educated part of the rural population. Social dialects are forms of language that are used in an informal setting by representatives of various social groups of the urban population.

English has gained a dominant position in the modern world linguistic continuum due to two factors: – the colonial expansion of the British Empire, which began with mass emigration to North America and reached its apogee at the end of the First World War. – The economic and political power of the United States in the second half of the twentieth century (Graddol, 2000: 14).

The global transplantation of the English language led to the formation of its many regional variants, each of which is characterized by the presence of specific linguistic phenomena.

In relation to the source of transplantation (English, which was formed in England), regional variants of English are divided into two groups (Kashru, 1992: 41).

The first group includes the so-called «old» variants (old Englishes), which include:

- Australian English;
- American English;
- British English;
- Irish English;
- Canadian English;
- New Zealand English.

The second group includes «new» versions of the English language (new Englishes), formed in the former British colonies, in which English has long functioned as the language of official communication. Each «new» version is a hierarchy in which the local national form of the English language coexists with numerous English jacket and Creoles.

Pidgin are defined as hybrid forms of language that have arisen spontaneously, due to contacts between European languages (source languages) and indigenous languages of the continents of Australia, Asia, Africa and the islands of the Atlantic and Pacific regions (substrate languages). Pidgin is not

the native language of any of the speakers. However, if pidgin is constantly used by the population in a certain territory, then for the second generation of this population it can become a native language. In this case, pidgin is transformed into a creole.

Experiment

Nowadays, the classic form of RP is owned only 3% of the population of the British Isles. This form of pronunciation can be heard in the speech of representatives of the royal family, in Parliament, in church, in court. The bulk of the educated population in the UK speaks a mixture of RP and various regional dialects. This form is called the modified RP (Crystal, 1995: 365).

Phonological discrepancies between the British and American standard versions are both general and private. General discrepancies are represented in tables 1, 2.

Table 1 – Vowel sounds

Letter	In words like	Norm in BE	Norm in AE
a	last, ask, aunt	[a:]	[æ]
o	hot, lot	[o]	[ɑ]
u	hurry, current	[*** e]	[ə]
u	duty, tune, student	[ju:]	[u:]

In addition, all vowel sounds in American pronunciation are nasalized in the positions before and after [m] and [n].

Table 2 – Consonants

Sound	Norm in AE	Norm in BE
[r]	is pronounced in all positions: reader [ˈri: dər]	[ˈ ri: də]
[s]	[q] in the combinations -sion, -sia: excursion [iksˈkæʃn]; Asia [ˈeiʃə]	[iksˈkəʃn] [ˈ eiʃə]
[t]	approaches [d] in the position between vowels: writer [ˈraɪdər]	[ˈ raitə]

Analysis of the British and American private phonological discrepancies is difficult because of their multiplicity and diversity. Such cases are the most problematic in the process of learning English pronunciation. Examples of some of these cases are presented in tables 3, 4 (Hornby, 1984).

Table 3 – Differences in the pronunciation of individual words

The word	Norm in BE	Norm in AE
clerk	[kla: k]	[klɜ:k]
either	[ˈaɪðə (r)]	[ˈi: ðər]
leisure	[ˈleɪʒə (r)]	[ˈli: qər]
medicine	[ˈmedsɪn]	[ˈmedɪsən]
tomato	[təˈma: təu]	[təˈmeɪtəu]

Table 4 – Differences in stress

Norm in BE	Norm in AE
add ‘ress’	address’
‘ballet	‘ballet, ba ‘llet’
‘garage	ga ‘rage
week’ end	‘weekend

Noah Webster (1758–1843) in his book on English spelling, published in 1783, for the first time reformed the spelling of a number of words. The new spelling acquired the status of a standard after it published the dictionary «*An American Dictionary of the English Language*» in 1828, which in the subsequent revised and expanded editions became known as Webster’s Dictionary (Webster’s Dictionary).

Noah Webster, in particular, proposed a modified spelling of such words as *color* (BE: *colour*), *center* (BE: *centre*), *defense* (BE: *defence*), *traveler* (BE: *traveller*). The following quote from the text of the famous «Autobiography» by Benjamin Franklin suggests that the new English spelling quickly came into use in the Americas. «*Morning to Breakfast, I found it in China Bowl with a Spoon of Silver. It was a little bit of peace and a little bit more than that. and China Bowl as well as any of his Neighbors.* »

In table 5 presents the most productive cases of discrepancies in the systems of British and American spelling.

Typical grammatical differences between AE and BE. In the field of morphology, discrepancies are observed mainly in the paradigms of certain verbs and nouns, as well as in frequency use of certain temporary forms, participle forms and conjunctiva. In tab. 6 presents examples of typical morphological discrepancies recorded by M. Swan (Labov, 1971: 153) (page numbers are shown in brackets).

Table 5 – Typical spelling differences

Norm in BE	Norm in AE
centre	center
clamour	clamor
catalogue	catalog
marvellous	marvelous
enrol	enroll
encase	incase
apologise	apologize
defense	defence

Table 6 – Typical morphologies of discrepancies

Norm in BE	Norm in AE
Love isn’t as bad as toothache. (138)	Love isn’t as bad as toothache.
This team is / are going to lose. (526)	This team is going to lose
One should always be polite to one’s bank manager. (394)	One should always be polite to his bank manager
Have you heard? Switzerland has declared war on Mongolia! (423)	Did you hear? Switzerland / Mongolia!
Have you got a meeting today? (231)	Do you have a meeting today?
I’ve never really got to know her. (41)	I’ve never really gotten to know her
I can see Susan coming. (110)	I (can) see Susan coming
It is essential that every child should have the same educational opportunities. (566)	It is essential that every child have the same educational opportunities

The syntactic features of the standard American version relate to the construction of phrases and the structure of sentences and are mainly distributive.

Table 7 shows the cases that M. Swan notes as fairly typical.

Within the framework of this article, it is not possible to give an exhaustive description of the distinctive features of the British and American lexico-semantic systems. In particular, we are forced to overlook the system of word formation and the field of idiomatics, which contain extensive material and require separate research. The purpose of our work is to analyze the characteristic differences in the inventory of both systems.

Table 7 – Typical syntactic discrepancies

Norm in BE	Norm in AE
He probably has arrived by now (emphatic use) He has probably arrived by now (common use) (26)	He probably has arrived by now. (common use)
I haven't seen her for years. (81)	I haven't seen her in / for years.
Both (of) my parents like riding. (98)	Both of my parents like riding.
One cannot (help) but admire his courage. (101)	One can not help but admire his courage.
He looked at me really strange.	He looked at me real strange. (informal style)

In the process of autonomous development of the American English in its lexicosemantic system, a significant number of specific units were formed, which are commonly called Americanisms.

Americanism, first of all, is classified into two categories: standard (literary) and non-standard (for example, dialectisms, slangisms, jargon, etc.). We confine ourselves to the analysis of standard Americanisms.

In the diachronic aspect, standard Americanism can be divided into such groups.

- The names of representatives of flora and fauna, which are not found on the European continent, and were borrowed by the first-wave English immigrants from the languages of the local Indian population. These are, for example, such words as *moccasin*, *opossum*, *raccoon*, *skunk*, *tomahawk*, *totem*, *wigwam*.

- Lexical units, formed from English or Latin bases. Examples include the verb *to belittle* and the noun *cent*, formed from the stem of the Latin *centum* (one hundred).

- Lexical units that eventually fell out of use in the UK, but survived in the United States. An example is the noun *township*, which in the XVII century was used in England in the meanings of «*a parish, a small town or village that is part of a large parish*», and which is currently used in the United States in the sense of «*a town, district, area of 6 sq. miles*».

- Lexical units that were borrowed from the languages of emigrants from other European countries, mainly from Spanish, French, German and Danish. Examples of such borrowings are presented in table 8.

Table 8 – Americanisms of Danish, French and German descent

Source of borrowing	Example
Danish	yankee, boss, cookie
French	prairie, saloon
German	kindergarten

In the synchronous aspect, there are two main types of differences between the lexical units of the American and British lexicosemantic systems: differences in terms of expression and differences in terms of content. The members of the oppositions of the first type are called lexical-semantic analogues, and the members of the oppositions of the second type are referred to as lexical-semantic divergent (Швейцер, 2003: 104, 114). In tab. 9, 10 examples of such analogs and divergents are presented.

Table 9 – AE-BE lexical-semantic analogues

Russian variant	British English	American English
автоприцеп	caravan	trailer
автостоянка	carpark	parking lot
Багажник	boot	trunk
Бензин	petrol	gas
Городской транспорт	urban transport	urban transport, traction
Грузовой автомобиль	lorry	truck
Капот двигателя	bonnet	hood
Ветровое стекло	windshield	wind-screen
Пешеходный переход	zebra crossing	crosswalk
Подземная железная дорога	underground	subway
тротуар	Footpath, pavement	sidewalk

Table 10 – AE-BE lexico-semantic divergents

Word	Meaning in BE	Meaning in AE
asphalt	oil bitumen нефтяной битум	A mixture of asphalt binder with mineral filler
barge	barge, barque, barcas	bus for excursions
pavement	panel, pavement панель, тротуар	мостовая

In addition to the aforementioned general discrepancies, there are numerous particular differences. The most characteristic of the areas follows.

- Cases when words with the same semantic structure have different distributional characteristics. For example, in the standard British version the verb *ride* is combined with such nouns as *a horse*, *a bicycle*. The British almost do not use phrases such as *toride on a bus / on a train / in a boat*, typical of the language of residents of the United States.

- Cases when the same lexemes differ in frequency of use. For example, the noun *time-table* is more common in the British version, and its synonym for *schedule* is in the United States.

Results and Discussion

In terms of language, English pidgin and Creoles are systems of phonological and lexical-grammatical forms of the English language, significantly modified by the influence of the local language. The lexico-grammatical structures of the English Creoles are more developed and closer to the English standard than the similar structures of the pidgin. Let us give an example of a statement in Jamaican Creole and Nigerian Pidgin in comparison with the standard form of English.

<i>Standard form</i>	<i>Nigerian English pidgin</i>
They came at night, got the wife and gave her to her husband. – Они пришли ночью, забрали женщину и отвели ее домой к мужу.	Dem come take night carry di wife, go give di man.
<i>Standard form</i>	<i>Jamaican English Creole</i>
He used to go to school every day last year, now sometimes he goes and sometime she doesn't. – В прошлом году он ходил в школу каждый день, а теперь он иногда ходит, а иногда нет.	Him go a school every day last year, now sometime him go, sometime him nogo

When fixing the English pidgin and Creoles in writing, spelling was accepted, the phonetic features of their use in oral speech.

Currently, more than 35 million people speak English pidgin and creole. These forms of English often perform the functions of lingua franca for a population of diverse ethnic composition in vast territories. Some English pidgin and Creoles (for

example, Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea) have the status of an official language.

In the United Kingdom and the United States, English was given legal status earlier than in other English-speaking countries, and currently the literary forms of the English language of these two countries are the benchmarks for teaching English throughout the world [3].

The formation and development of English in North America was the result of the emigration of part of the English-speaking population from the British Isles, mainly from Ireland and Scotland. In the future, this population was constantly replenished by immigrants from other countries, first from Europe and then from countries in Asia and Africa. The peculiar linguistic situation that has developed in the United States as a result of these processes, as well as the relatively independent development of the English language on this continent, led to the formation of the American national English language, in the system of which numerous specific phenomena are observed. For us, those of them that currently have normalized status are important. Let us analyze these phenomena against the background of the British standard.

The British and American standard forms of pronunciation are recorded in the national dictionaries of both countries in the form of transcription signs. More prestigious is considered the British normative pronunciation, known as RP (Received Pronunciation). This form of pronunciation began to form in Britain about four hundred years ago, first in the speech of the aristocracy, and then in the speech of the representatives of the big bourgeoisie. In the 1920s, the RP form became the official speech for the announcers of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). RP ownership is still considered a sign of belonging to a higher social elite.

Conclusion

At this stage of development, the English language is a multi-level linguistic socio-cultural system, the components of which are various national, regional and social variants and forms.

The dominant position of the English language among other languages of the world is due to such factors as the world colonial expansion of the British Empire in the XVII – XIX centuries, the United States gained the status of a leading economic power in the second half of the XX century, the leading role of the USA in globalization processes and in the development of modern information technologies.

The most prestigious versions of the English language are currently the British and American

standards, which are considered the benchmarks for teaching English in most educational institutions in the world.

In the systems of the British and American versions of the English language there are numerous discrepancies, both general and private, at all language levels. The main reason for the existence of such discrepancies should be considered the relatively autonomous development of the American version over a long historical period.

The features of each variant are most clearly manifested at the lexico-semantic level. Numerous

discrepancies at this level are primarily due to the properties of the lexico-semantic system itself, which, as a rule, is the most open and, therefore, highly sensitive to linguistic changes.

Despite the fact that in the American and British standard versions are found numerous discrepancies at the phonological, spelling, grammatical and lexico-semantic levels; the nature of these discrepancies does not affect the English language system in general, which gives reason to consider American and British English as variants of one language, and not two different languages.

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