

The Analysis of American and British English's Vocabularies

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Abstract

The analysis of American and British English's Vocabularies. The purpose of this research was to find out and analyze the vocabularies in American English and British English. The research was held by using the qualitative descriptive analysis method and library research where data made in form of words, sentences, quotations or definitions by using the sources of data from books, articles also journals which the data related to the analysis. It was found from the research that although there were similarities between American and British English but it was also found the differences, that is : (1). Past and Past Participle Forms of Verb, (2). Past Simple Vs Present Perfect, (3). Subject-verb Agreement, (4). Prepositions, (5). Vocabulary Differences, (6). Writing Dates, (7). Articles, (8). Auxiliary verbs, (9). Tag questions and (10). Spelling, (11). Punctuation, (12). Stress

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Introduction

English is the most widely spoken foreign language in today's world. Because English is the international language and has become a globally prominent language, almost every country learns it. Current research suggests that the English language is now spoken by approximately 1.35 billion people worldwide. That's 17% of the world's population and leading to a lot of varieties of English, such as American, British, or Australian. Why does English have many varieties? The historical account tracks the movement of English around the world, beginning with the pioneering expeditions to the Americas, Asia, and the Antipodes, as David Crystal (2003) outlines in *English as a Global Language* that It was an expansion that continued with nineteenth-century colonial activities in Africa and the South Pacific, and that took a huge stride forward when it was chosen as an official or semi-official language by numerous newly independent states in the mid-twentieth century. Every continent, as well as islands in three major oceans — the Atlantic (St. Helena), Indian (Seychelles), and Pacific (Pacific Islands) — now speak English (in many islands, such as Fiji and Hawaii). The term "global language" has become a reality as a result of this diversity of representation. It can be proved and seen where English is communicated by people from all countries in the world. Spoken by more than 380 million

people in the United Kingdom, the United States, and the former British Empire, it is the largest of the Western languages. Why has English become the world's most widely spoken language today? The British Empire, postwar America, the coolness factor, technology, and the snowball effect are the most obvious reasons why English became widely used. Grammar, vocabulary, and orthography (spelling and punctuation) are all distinctive elements of standard English, but pronunciation is not. This is due to the fact that it can be uttered in any accent.

In Indonesia, British English (BrE) and American English (AmE) are used as a reference in studying English. It is also supported by Algeo (2006) that American English and British English are the most spoken languages and studied by most foreign learners. These two versions become the most influential languages to the countries with English as a foreign language. In other sentence, American English and British English are two versions of English that are regarded to be the most widely used. Sulaiman (2015) describes that British English is from the United Kingdom that includes Wales, Scotland, England and North Ireland. British English is a Language that derived from UK and now that language is used by the people all over the world while Kemerman (2010) says that American English is more popular than British English, and it is used specifically by American people and most of people are using that language to communicate with the others. The English language used in the United States of America is known as American English (US). American English differs from British English in terms of formality. It's because some American English words are easier or simpler than British English words.

Darragh (2005) argues that there are some differences in the speech, namely accent, tempo, intonation, pronunciation, idiom, vocabulary, and syntax. From this definition, it can be described that even both are English but either American English or British English are still having differentiation beyond the other similarities. The learners need to understand or comprehend the language both written and oral forms, therefore they will not speak both versions and cause problems. For instance, the learners will be confused when they find a word from American and British English with the same meaning, yet different spelling, e.g., Analyse and Analyze, Honour and Honor or the words with same meaning but different words, e.g, sweets and candy, parcel and package or public lavatory and restroom. The vocabulary knowledge of second and foreign language students, as well as native speakers, determines their capacity to communicate in English. Though expanding one's vocabulary is important, it might be difficult for non-native English speakers. It is clearly stated by Alqahtani that low vocabulary knowledge poses severe problems to its learners, which consequently impedes the learning of English language (2015). Hence, the learners need to know so it can be easier in having communication. In another study, Alqahtani (2015) declares the learning of vocabulary as an important aspect of the foreign language learning with an emphasis on the meanings

of new words. In short, by knowing another new words or vocabularies, the learners can be more creative in creating another sentence to be talked.

Vocabulary is one of the important aspects in English. According to Neuman & Dwyer (2009:305), vocabulary is words that we must know effectively to communicate. Hence, it is concluded that without knowing lots words or vocabularies, the learners will difficult to have a communication effectively. Mastering vocabulary is not easy as pie, moreover other aspects of the language, additionally related to some aspects on it such as pronunciation, spelling (sound) or grammar/structure. Harmer explains, when the grammar or the structure of one language plays role to build up the skeleton of language, then it is vocabulary be the component that provide the vital organ and the flesh. From the quotation, it can be said that it is significant to master the vocabularies and other aspects related to it connected to build the communication effectively because the effective communication depends on how many words are spoken in explanation or discussion. However, there are a number of factors that affect the students or learners limited vocabulary, they are internal and external factors. The internal refers to elements that affect learning process, such as motivation, interest, intelligence, and so on while the external refers to factors that affect a student's learning process from outside the students or learners. That is why, those factors need to be thought so that the students or learners are aware about the lack in learning that.

In other study according to Richard and Willy, “vocabulary is the core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read and write. In this definition, the authors want to state that vocabulary is the main poin that represents all the English skills that is speaking, listening, writing and reading. Thornby quotes Wilkins’ statement that without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. From that statement above, it can be understood that besides knowing grammar/structure, students or learners to learn vocabularies and their function so that they can make the correct sentences in having the communication with others. On the other hand, if learners are unable to understand the meaning of the words, they will be unable to engage into communication with others.

The other of vocabulary’s definition stated by Hatch and Brown (1995: 1), that vocabulary refers to a list or set of words for a particular language or a list or set of words that individual speakers of language might use. They also state that vocabulary is the only system involved of alphabetical order. From that opinion, It can be indicated that vocabulary is a group of words, especially one that is used in specific contexts or as a standard usage. formula, phrase, code, and formulary are all terms that can be used to describe something. Richards and Renandya (2002: 255) support the statement that it is significant to learn vocabulary because according to them, vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how learners speak, listen, read and write. From this sentences above, it can be explained that learning a new language

cannot be separated from vocabulary because it is a core component in having the communication. Building up vocabulary is a complicated process, and one that takes a long time. Some of the most common causes of these issues: Pronunciation, Spelling, Grammar and meaning. Therefore, the learners must pay attention to all things related in learning vocabularies especially between American English and British English. In this study, the writer did a study about the vocabularies between American English and British English because the writer would like to gain the information more about American and British English vocabularies study.

Methodology

In this study, the writer used a qualitative approach in which the data were explained in words, so qualitative approach was used, which aimed to create or construct, interpret and explain the studied issues. (Sugiyono: 2016). From the meaning given, It can be explained that this approach refers to study more about the analysis, to make the concept of the data finding, having data process by using method to review the data till arriving to relevant conclusion. Furthermore, according to Mary W. George on her book of the Elements of Library Research, Qualitative research method designates any research whose results area captured in words, images, or nonnumeric symbols; for instance, research on dreams. In the other hand, the descriptions of data are explained in words or sentences. In conducting the research, the qualitative research has been done in a natural setting where the researcher is an instrument of data collection who gather words, quotations, definitions or statements or pictures, analyzes them inductively, focuses on the meaning of participants and describes a process that is expressive and persuasive in language (Creswell: 1998). In analyzing the data, there are six steps has been used, they are:

1. Organize and prepare the data for analysis.
2. Read through all the data to obtain a general sense of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning.
3. Begin detailed analysis with a coding process of taking text data or pictures, segmenting sentences (or paragraph) or images into categories, and labeling these categories with a term based on the actual language of the participant.
4. Use the codes to generate a description of the setting of people as well as the categories. or themes for analysis. Description involves a detailed rendering of information about people, place or events in a setting. Researchers can generate codes for this description.
5. Advance how the description and themes will be represented in the qualitative narrative
6. Evaluate the lessons learned from the data and make interpretation (or meaning) of data.

Findings

Here are some following data describe about the American and British English vocabularies, especially about the differentiation of both of them, they are:

1. Past and Past Participle Forms of Verb

The changes in verb forms are likely the most significant difference between AmE and BrE, according to Modiano (1996). The t-inflection is seen in a number of BrE verbs, although AmE verbs tend to follow the standardized -ed pattern. These distinctions represent a small change in pronunciation that often goes unnoticed in pronunciation but identifies the English language in which a piece is written. It's worth noting that several AmE conjugations are considered Standard English in BrE, therefore both are deemed proper.

Here are some examples:

1. BrE Simple Past-Past Participle : Bust-Bust

AmE Simple Past-Past Participle : Busted-Busted

2. BrE Simple Past-Past Participle : Dreamt/dreamed- Dreamt/dreamed

AmE Simple Past-Past Participle : Dreamed/dreamt- Dreamed/dreamt

3. BrE Simple Past-Past Participle : Got - Got

AmE Simple Past-Past Participle : Got - Gotten

4. BrE Simple Past-Past Participle : Smelt/smelled - Smelt/smelled

AmE Simple Past-Past Participle : Smelled/smelt - Smelled/smelt

5. BrE Simple Past-Past Participle : Woke - Woken

AmE Simple Past-Past Participle : Woke/woked - Woken

6. BrE Simple Past-Past Participle : spoil- spoilt

AmE Simple Past-Past Participle : spoil-spoiled

7. BrE Simple Past-Past Participle : dwell - dwelt

AmE Simple Past-Past Participle : dwell - dwelled

8. BrE Simple Past-Past Participle : spill - spilt

AmE Simple Past-Past Participle : spill - spilled (Modiano : 1996)

2. Past Simple Vs Present Perfect

American speakers use the present perfect less frequently than British speakers, preferring instead to use the simple past, especially in sentences including words like just, yet, and already.

For instance;

AmE and BrE Past Simple Vs Present Perfect (Dylan Lyons, 2020)

AMERICAN ENGLISH	BRITISH ENGLISH
I ate too much	I have eaten too much
I went to the store	I have been to the shop
Did you get the newspaper?	Have you got the newspaper?

Another example according to Don R. McCreary, 2003

1. British (and American) English: Have you eaten yet?

American English : did you eat yet?

2. British (and American) English: Has Sam just left? Sam has left already

American English : Did Sam just leave? Sam left already?

In the other hand (Bin Zhang, 2008) wrote on his article that in British English, the adverbs “yet” and “already” cannot be used in past tense and can only be used in past perfect tense. However, in AmE, they can be used both in past tense and pas perfect tense.

For example:

I haven't bought one yet. (BrE and AmE)

I didn't buy one yet. (AmE)

Have you read it already? (BrE and AmE)

Did you read it already? (AmE)

3. Subject-verb Agreement

The various discrepancies in subject concord between AmE and BrE are explained by Modiano (1996). Plural nouns such as organizations, enterprises, and government agencies, for example, are frequently handled as plural entities in BrE, which means they are given the verb are, whereas in AmE, the same nouns are viewed as singular and are given the word is. In BrE, it is allowed to say 'the committee is going to issue a statement' and 'the government is examining the proposal,' whereas in AmE, it is appropriate to say 'the committee is going to issue a statement' and 'the government is considering the proposal.' When the plural form is used, it refers to the persons or sub-groupings in a certain situation.

With a singular collective noun, BrE can prefer using either a singular or plural verb whereas a singular verb is used in AmE (Quirk et al in Md. Faruquzzaman). So, Collective nouns (i.e. nouns referring to specific groups of people or things-government, team, people, class, etc.) can be followed by either a singular or plural verb in British English, depending on whether the group is thought of as a single notion or as a collection of individuals.

Don R. McCreary (2003) says on his article that in British English, collective nouns, (referring to groups of people) are often followed by a plural verb even the noun is singular. Army, company, jury, audience, mob, majority, class, enemy, staff, committee, government, and union are some typical collective nouns that frequently use a plural verb in British English. For instance:

1. BrE : The football team are winning the competition.
AmE : The football team is winning the competition.
2. BrE : The staff are having the meeting
AmE : The staff is having the meeting
3. BrE : The company are celebrating their success
AmE: The company is celebrating their success
4. BrE : The committee are voting for new leader
AmE : The committee is voting for new leader
5. BrE : The government are making new law
AmE : The government is making new law

4. Prepositions

The differentiation are shown in (1) different use of prepositions in the construction of phrases; (2) when using phrases, one will use a preposition while the other will omit it (Bin Zhang, 2008). For instance:

1. BrE/AmE :He will come here at a quarter to seven.
AmE :He will come here at a quarter before /of /till seven.
2. BrE :Your daughter's name stands first in the list.
AmE :Your daughter's name stands first on the list.
3. BrE : I am going to England at the weekend
AmE :I am going to a party on the weekend
4. BrE : Monday to Wednesday
AmE : Monday to Wednesday
5. BrE :It's different from/to the others
AmE :It's different from/than the other (Bin Zhang, 2008)

Tottie (2002) demonstrates how the same prepositions in AmE and BrE might take on distinct meanings. Although the form amongst is considered old-fashioned in BrE, the word towards is often spelled with a -s and among (acceptable in AmE and BrE) is spelled with -st:

1. AmE, BrE : He found it *among* the flowers
BrE: He found it *amongst* the flowers
2. AmE, BrE : She walked *around* the block
BrE : She walked *round* the block

5. Vocabulary Differences

Abdel (2018) suggests that the three main semantic areas where there are differences between BrE and AmE English are food, clothing and transportation. The vagaries of fashion have caused divergence in the of clothing. The many differences in the terminology of transportation result from the fact that the railroad (British “railway”) and motorcar industries, developed after the separation of the United States and Great Britain. Therefore, there are still some variances in vocabulary between BrE and AmE.

For example :

American E.	British E.
airplane	aeroplane
apartment	flat
area code	dialing code
ashcan	dustbin
baby carriage (buggy)	perambulator (pram)
bill	banknote
billfold	wallet
billion	milliard
blank	form
bulletin board	notice board
can	tin
candy	sweets
cane	stick
chips	crisps
commuter ticket	season ticket
cookbook	cookery book
cookie, cracker	biscuit
corn	maize, etc

(Abdel:2008)

6. Writing Dates

In British English, the most usual way is to put the day of the month first, then the month (beginning with a capital letter), and finally the year.

12 January 1987, 14 November 2007

It is also written like this:

12 January 1987 = 12/1/1987

24 November 2007 = 24-11-2007 or 24.11.07

Sometimes the last two letters of the number as spoken can be used (th, rd, st, nd):

Yesterday was the 3th March

The grand opening of the new store is on 1st July or ... on July 1st.

With the exception of May and June, months can be shortened as follows:

Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, Jul, Aug, Sept, Oct, Nov, Dec.

Dates in American English, the month of the date come before the day and year. For example, In American English it is written 9/2/2017 while 2/9/2017 in British English

7. Articles

Tottie (2002) describes how indefinite articles are used depending on whether it is followed by a vowel sound or a consonant sound, as in *a dog*, *an apple*. However, in informal AmE, the indefinite article 'an' is replaced with the phoneme /ə/ as in *a orange*, *a area*, due to the influence of Black English where it is used frequently. The use of definitive articles differs between AmE and BrE. In university and hospital settings, AmE uses the definite article more than BrE.. *For example :*

1. BrE :He is in hospital.

AmE :He is in the hospital.

2. BrE :He is at university.

AmE :He is at the university.

Bin Zhang (2008) says that Most phrases of British English have articles, while those of American English do not have. The "the" in common British idioms like as "all the afternoon," "all the winter," "all the week," "this time of year," and so on is frequently removed in AmE. Consider the following examples:

1. new malls are open all summer

2. I will be at home all afternoon

3. He has practiced Salsa dance all week

In the case of "illness" and "river," British English will use articles, whereas American English will not. For example, in British English, "the measles," "the mumps," "the flu," "the Niagara Falls," and "Black Creek" are used, whereas in American English, "measles," "mumps," "flu," "Niagara Falls," and "Black Creek" are used. However, there are exceptions. In some expressions, British English does not use articles, while American English does.

1. AmE : Go into the hospital

BrE : Go into hospital

2. AmE : At university

BrE : At the university

3. AmE : In the hospital

BrE : In hospital

8. Auxiliary verbs

Another distinction between American and British English grammar is the use of auxiliary verbs. Auxiliary verbs, also known as assisting verbs, are verbs that assist in the formation of grammatical structures. They “help” the main verb by adding information about time, modality and voice. For instance, the auxiliary verb shall. Brits sometimes use shall to express the future. E.g : “I shall go home now.” It is rarely used in conversation by Americans even though Americans know what shall means . It seems very formal. Americans would probably use “I will go now.” In question form, a Brit might say, “Shall we go now?” while an American would probably say, “Should we go now?” When Americans want to express a lack of obligation, they use the helping verb do with negative not followed by need. “You do not need to come to work today.” Brits drop the helping verb and contract not. “You needn’t come to work today.”

9. Tag questions

A grammatical form that turns a statement into a question is known as a tag question. for example;

The whole situation is worse, isn’t it?

You don't like her, do you? or You don't like her, do you?

A pronoun and its corresponding form of the verb be, have, or do are included in the tag. People are more likely to answer and agree with the speaker when they are asked tag questions. Tag questions are also used by Americans, but they are used less frequently than British

10. Spelling

There are hundreds of minor spelling differences between British and American English. It is seen in Webster’s legacy in the American spelling of words like color (from colour), honor (from honour), and labor (from labour). Webster dropped the letter u from these words to make the spelling match the pronunciation.

Most spelling distinctions are systematic, according to Tottie (2002), however others must be learnt individually. The discrepancies in spelling are sorted and grouped by simple rules, and they are considered systematized. Some of the most significant spelling differences include AmE -or compared to BrE -our in color/color, AmE -re compared to BrE -er in center/center, AmE -log compared to BrE -logue in catalog/catalogue, and AmE-ense compared to BrE-ence in license (noun)/licence (noun).

However, the pattern can be reversed in some cases, such as in BrE practice(verb), whereas in AmE it is spelled practise (verb), and the usage of a double 'l' in AmE versus a single 'l' in BrE, as in travelled/traveled. Although there are rare outliers, such as AmE fulfill vs. BrE fulfill, AmE spellings are often shorter.

In AmE, the -ize ending is the most common spelling, as in fraternize, jeopardize, militarize, and so on, whereas in BrE, the -ise ending is more common, however there are

variants in BrE and both variations are sometimes permitted, as in organize/organize, naturalize/naturalise, and so on.

Nonetheless, some spellings must be taught because they lack a pattern and cannot account for a systematic nature. The differences are given through these examples, are, AmE check while BrE cheque, AmE plow while BrE plough, and AmE tire while BrE tyre.

11. Punctuation

Modiano (1996) highlights some general elements of the punctuation differences between AmE and BrE. When writing compound nouns in BrE, hyphens are more commonly employed, whereas in AmE, they are written with two words; for example, BrE cooperation and AmE cooperation. When writers divide a word at the end of a line, one of the significant differences is that in BrE, the technique for dividing a word is based on morphological breaks in a word, such as structure. AmE, on the other hand, is syllabic, as evidenced by the word structure. Word-processing tools and new technologies, on the other hand, have virtually eliminated the need for word division because they automatically modify the margins.

12. Stress

Tottie (2002) recognizes the differences in stress between AmE and BrE, despite the fact that the patterns are systematic to some extent and may be classified by syllables, suffixes, and whether or not a word is a loan word.

	AmE	BrE
corollary :	[ˈkɔrəˌlæri]	[kəˈrɒləri]
laboratory :	[ˈlæb(ə)rəˌtɔri]	[ləˈbɒrət(ə)ri]

Even though the majority, endings of words are stressed on the first syllable, there is still a difference in pronunciation. AmE has a full vowel in the second syllable from the end, but BrE has the same vowel shortened or not uttered at all, as in:

	AmE	BrE
commentary :	[ˈkɒmənˌteri]	[ˈkɒmənt(ə)ri]
category :	[ˈkædɜˌɡɔri]	[ˈkætəɡ(ə)ri]

Conclusion

Although there are numerous differences between American English and British English in terms of grammatical and lexical structures, they are relatively comparable to one another and can comprehend each other in everyday speech, although difficulties may arise when new learners begin to study English. Based on the finding, it is revealed some information about the American and British English that there are twelve differentiation between them, that is Past and Past Participle Forms of Verb, Past Simple Vs Present Perfect, Subject-verb Agreement, Prepositions, Vocabulary Differences, Writing Dates, Articles, Auxiliary verbs, Tag questions, Spelling, Punctuation and Stress. In future research, it might be an interesting issue to be investigated by others. So it is suggested to the learners so that they may take this issue for being their another research. They can learn to comprehend this more, therefore, there will be no lack in using the American and British English vocabulary or even having problem in related to differentiate the American and British English vocabularies.

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