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### EXPLORING LINGUISTIC VARIATIONS: AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF THE LEXICAL AND ORTHOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BRITISH AND AMERICAN ENGLISH

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#### ABSTRACT

In this era of globalization and trading among different countries, the necessity and insistence for erudition in English have widely increased. The English language is being employed as a mutual language despite differences in customs, social activities, districts, practices, and eccentric factors. Therefore, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the world's population has gotten more condensed, approachable, shared, and familiar for everyone on the planet. Everyone must get oneself acquainted with English for effective communication as it is regarded as an international language (Rao, 2019). It is frequently observed that there are misperceptions as well as exploitation in dealing with two major dialects of English- American English (AmE) and British English (BrE) (Scotto & Carlo, 2013). Following a concise discussion of the major

historical elements that have contributed to the distinction between the two dialects of English i.e., British, and American, the present research focused on these two varieties as well as their lexical and orthographic differences. The study's purpose is to know whether non-native students of the English language are well acquainted with the distinctions between these two prominent dialects of the language. To achieve the desired goal, a questionnaire with a dichotomous format was specifically designed to gain the required information. The questionnaire contained 14 vocabulary and 15 spelling items of both varieties. The respondents were undergraduate students at Ghazi University, D. G. Khan. To evaluate and analyse the outcomes of collected data, the SPSS software was employed. The study's outcomes demonstrated that the pupils possessed greater lexical comprehension in contrast to disparities in their orthographic abilities.

## INTRODUCTION

The word "language" is derived from the Latin word "lingua" which means "tongue" or "speaking." Language as typically the arbitrary system or technique of human communication. When speaking or writing, it makes use of vocal sounds or constructed words (Robins, 1999). We are not sure if other than humans, other animals genuinely have any language, even though they all communicate with one another in some way, whether on land, in the sea, in the air, or anywhere else. This gift can only be given to humans. Linguists and language scholars believe that only the human larynx can produce meaningful speech (Anderson, 2018).

No language is completely logical and definitive. However, cultural evolution also changes the nature of languages. Sometimes social changes take place and affect language as well (David Crystal, 1997).

Due to the enormous range of linguistic variants and dialects that occur, it is impossible for an individual to develop complete proficiency in all of them. However, as English is currently being regarded as the sole lingua franca or universal language, it is necessary for individuals to achieve expertise in this particular language. According to statistics, there are about 350 million people who speak English as their first language, another 300 million who speak it as a second, and English is now the most widely taught foreign language in more than 100 countries, including China, Russia, Germany, Spain, Egypt, Brazil, and others (Crystal, n.d.). Nevertheless, it is ordinary to find the two most influential variants of English- British and American English being handled incorrectly and inadvertently, which may be avoided. This is the main reason why the majority of the noteworthy variations between the two are covered.

British English is frequently regarded as the most esteemed variety of English. American English was seen as less polished, less cultured, and not much beautiful than British English and European teachers were not allowed to teach with an American accent (Alftberg, 2009). The majority of textbooks used in schools around the world now are still focused on British English (Tottie, 2002). This research is interested in the histories of British English and American English. Its main objective is to look into the historical development of British English to assess its similarities and differences with American English.

Additionally, a comprehensive examination of the disparities in orthography and lexicon between British English and American English is also highlighted. Here, the major stress of this study lies in the linguistic distinctions between the two primary national variants of English, namely British English and American English. Furthermore, it delves into the historical intricacies that extend beyond these distinctions to provide a more thorough insight into the subject.

British victories formed colonial rule in the world not only but English language replaced the languages of marginalized countries and their educational system. English language not only influenced on education but also turned the socio-political history of occupied and British controlled areas. British officials wisely converted the medium of education to English and it was considered as a tool for modern knowledge (Sabiha,1993).

Due to this problem some advocates of the regional languages claim and highlight the need for the development of local or regional languages for official and educational process. language is seen as the strongest symbol of group solidarity and cultural identity. they feel pride in the mother tongue (Sabiha,1993).

### ***Research Objectives***

1. To explore the history and development of British English and American English chronologically.
2. To describe the genesis of variations in lexical and orthographical items between British English and American English historically.
3. To analyse how far the students are able to differentiate between words from British and American English.
4. To know the extent of knowledge of both dialects among the students.
5. To know the differentiations of English variants with regard to spoken and academic purposes.

### ***Research Questions***

1. Which variety of English do the students prefer?
2. Why do the students like using British or American English, or a combination of the two?
3. What are the varieties of lexical and orthographic items between British and American English?
4. Which variety does the student have more knowledge of?

### ***Chronological Study of Major Dialects of English***

#### ***1. British English***

In light of this fact, English in the British Isles has played a major role in the history of the English language. Overall, the history of the English language is the history of English in both Britain and the United States, on opposite sides of the Atlantic. The history of English is a history of both American English and British English in other words. The history of English in England, according to

Freeborn et al (1986) is mainly the history of the English language which began in the first half of the fifth century AD when settlers often known as “Angles” from the other side of the North Sea presented the English language to the British Isles. Britons, the residents of the British Isles spoke the dialect of Celtic, while the dialect of the language family known as West Germanic was spoken by the Anglo-Saxons or the Angle. With time, the nation was referred to as "Englaland, “and "Angle-land," and the language being spoken as "Englisc." "Old English" refers to the language of this early era, which lasted up until 1100 or 1150 AD.

The second part of the English language in England began around 1100 AD and persisted until 1500 AD known as the “Middle English” period. Throughout that time, the language perceived the incursion of Norman French. French was spoken by a minority of people during that time, but it had a noteworthy effect on all facets of life because the French had complete rule over England's political, economic, and cultural life. Millward (1996) proclaims that till the second half of the fourteenth century, the official language of England remained French. However, the two major events of the era, namely the Black Death and the Hundred Years War secured its demise and ensured the revival of English. Early modern English is regarded as the third period in the history of the English language which spanned the years 1500-1800 AD. During this time, a series of significant events occurred including the English Renaissance, the development of printing, exploration, and colonisation, and the American Revolution. The English language's development was impacted by these occurrences and influences. All these events and influences resulted in the growth of the English language.

The most recent period of English language history began in 1800 AD and continues today. Often referred to as the "Present-Day English" era, this duration encountered the development of both British and American English. In the history of English in England, one important facet is extremely vital to the history of the English language in general and the history of American English precisely. As the British began exploration and colonisation of various corners of the world. This resulted in the development and expansion of English as the official language for numerous individuals and nations. In connection with this, English was introduced to the United States through the exploration of the American Continent by the English and later by their colonisation of the region.

## 2. *American English*

North American Continent, which later became the United States starts its history with English with the arrival of English settlers who travelled to the New World from the British Isles. According to Dillard (1992), the arrival of the English language to North America, or what we must call the United States was the product of the general movement of the European Languages and their expansion throughout the world, notably to the newly discovered continent of America. He goes on to say that "the kind of English spoken throughout the time of exploration and colonisation was significant to the history of American English." The language that those British settlers from the British Isles brought

with them established the groundwork for what is now known as early American English to begin and flourish. It was Elizabethan English that was introduced by the English immigrants in the new American continent (Stevens, 1972). According to Millward (1996), the English speakers who immigrated to the North American Continent from Britain in the sixteenth century carried a variety of dialects with them. This greatly impacted how the English language spread throughout the New World.

Dillard (1992), in his book “A History of American English”, names some kinds. One of them is the Basque, a language, the colonists brought to the New World. Early North American languages were largely influenced by Basque through "maritime" forms of language, particularly in the area of vocabulary. Others are Indian Pidgin English and Iberian.

Another aspect that influenced the development of language in early North America is Pidgin English, which was brought to West Africa through slaves. Additionally, American Indian Pidgin English played a part in this by swiftly spreading and contributing.

Since Elizabethan times, Stevens (1972) explains that the American Indian had numerous effects such as naming places, animals, traditions, and plants that were in America but not in Britain. The process of deriving expressions and new words from the American Indian English Continent such as “totem, igloo, hook, skunk, kayak, and tomahawk.”

Another influence that American English had was from the French. Furthermore, the influence of the Spanish was also seen due to cultural contact since Spain invaded a large part of North America. For instance, Plaza, Creole, Bonanza, Sombrero and Sierra were added to American English from Spanish. Moreover, the existence of Dutch in the continent of North America devoted few words such as “sleigh, santa clause, dumb and boss”.

The voluntary and forced migration are the main reasons that influenced American English largely due to the interaction of various foreign languages. This foreign influence greatly affected the lexicon or orthography of American English rather than morphology and syntax.

African, Chinese, German and Italian settlers also had an impact on American English. Till the twentieth century, this process of migration remained in the United States. During this period, American English borrowed new words and expressions in its vocabulary.

### ***Usage of English Variants in Academic field and Verbal Communication***

The English language has both British and American variants, which are used in both spoken and written forms, including academic contexts. Yet, the context and target audience may impact the choice of version. Both forms are used in scholarly circles, but their usage varies. British English, in particular, is more precise and formal, with a more complicated vocabulary and grammar. American English, on the other hand, is plainer and favours simpler vocabulary and sentence patterns.

According to Baugh's findings in 1935 (p. 106), refugees who moved to America from various parts of Europe were fleeing various problems in their native countries. Immigrants from Scandinavia, Norway, Germany, Ireland, Sweden, England, and a variety of other nations arrived in the United States, influencing the English language.

According to Pyles' findings in 1971, immigrants who come to live in America are frequently ambitious and diligent members of the upper-lower and lower-middle classes. Among these are educated professionals such as pastors, attorneys, and occasionally younger members of the nobility. This explains why American English is related to a certain sort of British speaking. Some linguists argue that American speech sometimes lacks the refinement that is still highly sought by people deemed cultivated.

While communicating verbally, the selection of English variety may be influenced by various variables, including the audience, context, and individual preferences. British English has a greater diversity of accents and dialects, and its communication style is more formal and respectful. In contrast, American English is noted for a few regional dialects, such as General American, Southern American, and New York City, and its communication style is frequently clearer and more casual.

According to Halliday et al. (1974), there is an increasing acceptance of American variations of English, which are now regarded as comparable to British English or even preferred above it in some countries. Generally, both British and American English is widely used in oral and written communication, with the favoured version varying depending on the occasion and target audience. Understanding the distinctions between the two styles and choosing the best style for the situation is critical.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

To examine which variety of English pupils use, British or American, a questionnaire was developed by the researchers. The questionnaire consists of a series of questions that assessed the respondents' proficiency and usage of orthographic and lexicon discrepancies between the two variations. Since British and American English are the most shared types being used by individuals all over the world, the researchers prepared a dichotomous format questionnaire with variants of BrE and AmE lexical and orthographical items and queries aimed at determining the typical preference of the students for both variants.

### ***Delimitation of the study***

This study is delimited into the following sections:

- The present study is restricted to the leading dialects of English, particularly British English (BrE) and American English (AmE), therefore eliminating other variations such as Canadian, South African, or Australian English.

- Another delimitation is that it primarily analyses the alterations of orthographic and lexical conventions between BrE and AmE while disregarding other linguistic aspects such as phonetics, morphology, or syntax.
- The last delimitation is that it took undergraduate students only as part of the study while ignoring other levels like matric, intermediate, or post-graduate.

### *Participants*

The participants of the current study were 70 undergraduate students from Ghazi University and the University of Education, Lahore, campus D.G. Khan.

A total of 70 participants were recruited from two universities, Ghazi University and the University of Education, Lahore, campus D.G. Khan. The sample comprised an equal number of male and female students, with diverse academic backgrounds. The participants were selected using a random sampling technique to ensure the representativeness of the sample.

### *Data collection*

While designing the questionnaire, the researchers made a deliberate effort in selecting vocabulary and spelling items for their questionnaire that they deemed the pupils would be acquainted with. This was done with the perception that unfamiliar vocabulary and spelling items could potentially generate invalid responses and thereby distort the outcomes.

Before the data collection, the participants were informed about the study's purpose and their right to withdraw from the study at any time. The study used a self-administered questionnaire to collect data on the participants' preferences and knowledge regarding the usage of both British and American English.

### *Data Analysis*

To analyse the students' knowledge regarding the difference in vocabulary and spelling of these two dialects i.e., British English and American English, the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. The use of SPSS in data analysis aided in providing a strong and trustworthy analysis, allowing for more exact inferences to be derived from the findings. Further study in this area might look at the influence of these changes on language acquisition and communication across the two dialects.

## *Differences Between American and British English*

### *1. Spelling*

<b>British</b>	<b>American</b>
ce ----- defence, licence	se ----- defense, license
ou ----- colour, favour	o ----- color, favor
P ----- zip	pp ----- zipper
mme ----- -programme	m ----- program
ise ----- realise, analyse	ize ----- realize, analyze
l ----- fulfil, skilful	ll ----- fulfill, skillful
ll ----- woollen, jeweller	l ----- woolen, jeweler
re ----- centre, litre	er ----- center, liter
en ----- ensure	in ----- insure
ogue--- catalogue, dialogue	og ----- catalog, dialog

In general, the British spelling takes longer than the American spelling to pronounce. The verbs of British English, prefer ‘-ise’ at the end while ‘-ize’ is preferred in American English for example organize/organise. It can be noted that the former one (i.e. ‘-ise’) is used in either language. Additionally, various lexicographers of British dictionaries usually prefer using ‘-ise’ with the verb.

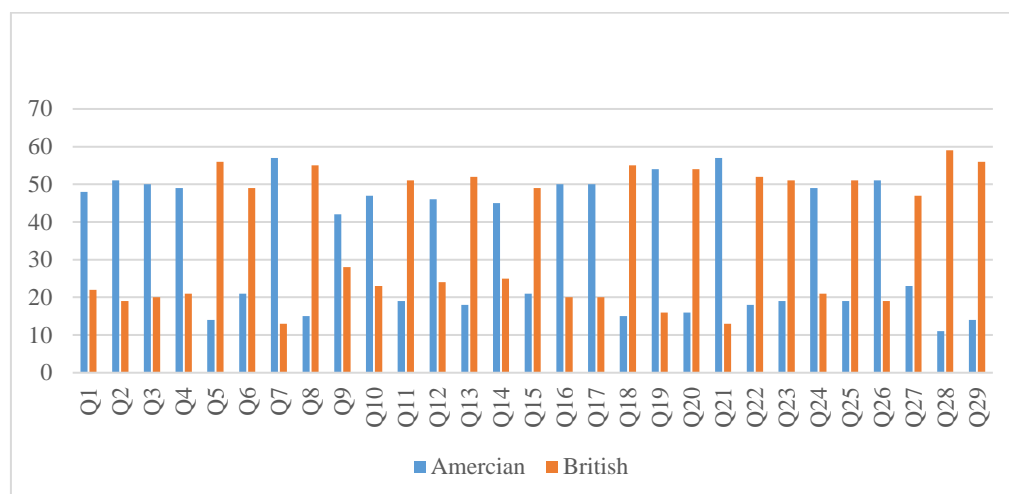
### *2. Vocabulary*

British	American
Lift	Elevator
mobile phone	cellular phone
Post	mail
Torch	flashlight
Waistcoat	Vest
Toilet	bathroom
Trousers	pants
Ill	Sick
Holiday	Vacation
Lorry	Truck
Lawyer	solicitor/barrister
Maths	Math
main road	high way
Patrol	gas/gasoline
Garden	Yard

The vocabulary of AmE is much easier to get the meaning than that of BrE. e.g., “truck” (AmE) in place of “lorry” (BrE) or “mail” (AmE) in place of “post” (BrE).



### Outcomes of Questionnaire



The outcomes of the research will be demonstrated and discussed in this part. These outcomes be shown in two separate parts: one for assessing lexicon and the other for assessing orthographic aptitudes. Furthermore, the potential influence of frequent exposure to the English language through numerous media forms internet, computer games, television, etc. in the pupils’ leisure time. This will also be discussed concerning the results.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Vocabulary:

Language is primarily articulated, and vocabulary plays a crucial part in maintaining the strength of the language. Due to extensive vocabulary borrowing from one another, the two varieties of English are now becoming increasingly expressive. Since, as Pakistani society, we follow the variety of British English. Our academic curriculum also teaches British English, so the pupils must have sufficient knowledge about all components of the British English language and get acquainted mainly with its vocabulary. The first half part of this questionnaire consisted of 15 impressions whose British and American English vary in lexical realization. Students marked the answers according to their knowledge of both varieties. The 70 students of undergraduate responded to the questionnaire. The results of these vocabulary-related questions displayed that most of the respondents were well familiar with the origin of both varieties. However, few of them were unaware of the correct variety.

### 2. Spelling:

The spelling difference between British and American English are appeared to create misunderstanding and difficulties among English language learners. Even though, English is the language that both the states i.e., British and America use. But, variations in pronunciation, vocabulary, and spelling are undoubtedly present. Since masses migrate from one place to another due to

various purposes which affect their whole lifestyle including their language. As a result, in the areas where the mean of communication is English, the mingling of both varieties of English can be observed among the consumers.

To know about their knowledge of spelling differences in both varieties, the researchers distributed a questionnaire among the students. The second part of this questionnaire consisted of 15 questions to which 70 undergraduate students responded. These questions included spellings of these varieties to get the idea of whether the students are aware of spelling differences in both variations and not. The results of the collected data demonstrated that the usage of both varieties in everyday life made the pupils less familiar with the differences in both versions of English. Moreover, they are unable to recognise the correct origin of particular words either from British or American English.

***Reliability of the Questionnaire***

The reliability of the questionnaire was measured through Cronbach’s alpha that was found 0.761 after identifying the reliability of the questionnaire it was sent to Ms. Mehreen Zafar and Dr. Sohail Akhtar.

The reliability of the questionnaire used in this study was measured through Cronbach's alpha, a statistical measure that examines the reliability of the questionnaire employed in this study. Cronbach's alpha was 0.761, suggesting a fair level of dependability.

<b>Reliability Statistics</b>	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.761	29

After checking the questionnaire's dependability, it was forwarded to Ms. Mehreen Zafar and Dr. Sohail Akhtar, both of whom are education experts. They were requested to examine the questionnaire for its content validity, clarity, and relevance to the study questions.

Ms. Mehreen Zafar and Dr Sohail Akhtar gave helpful comments that were used to improve the questionnaire. They proposed adding several questions on the participants' language backgrounds and exposure to British and American English. They also suggested that several of the questions be rephrased to increase clarity and readability.

The questionnaire was amended in response to their suggestions, and the final version was utilised for data collection. The questionnaire was amended to include 25 items about spelling and vocabulary variations between British and American English. The tasks were created to measure students' knowledge and awareness of these distinctions, as well as their ability to distinguish between the two dialects.

The employment of linguistics and language education professionals to examine the questionnaire increased the study's credibility and dependability. Their feedback was crucial in ensuring that the questionnaire was valid, relevant, and dependable and that it would give significant insights into the study issues. The improved version of the questionnaire offered a solid and trustworthy data-collecting instrument, allowing the study to efficiently meet its research aims.

### CONCLUSIONS:

As the world has become a global village, the necessity of mutual language is highly demanded by society. The most widely used language in this respect is English which is taken into considerable consideration. Among various varieties of English, British and American keep the distinction. Additionally, English is a vibrant and rapidly increasing language, hence any alterations to its variety should be embraced by a global authority. The number of variations among two varieties – BrE and AmE – can be noticed by considering the above discussion. Both varieties vary in terms of their vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling as well as in grammar. As both varieties are commonly used for communication, so the mingling of these two dialects does not cause hurdles every time. In Pakistani society, the British variety of English is commonly employed, therefore, it is mandatory for learners of foreign languages to get themselves acquainted with correct usage and the differences between both varieties. The survey of the study demonstrated that the learners are more familiar in terms of vocabulary differences rather than variations in spelling. To sum up this study, we may say that Pakistani students, due to a lack of knowledge of both varieties often use a mixture of both regardless of the fact that British is the kind standardised in our region.

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*Appendix*

Questionnaire
1. The word “vacation” is from _____ English.
2. The word “apartment” from _____ English.
3. The word “trunk” is from _____ English.
4. The word “garbage” is from _____ English.
5. The word “staff” is of from _____ English.
6. The vocabulary “autumn” is from _____ English.
7. The word “French fries” is from _____ English.
8. The word “anywhere” is from _____ English.
9. The word “motor” is from _____ English.
10. The word "apartment" is from _____ English.
11. The word “film” is from _____ English.
12. The word “purse” is from _____ English.
13. The word “ill” is from _____ English.
14. The word “semester” is from _____ English.
15. Spelling “colour” is from _____ English.
16. Spelling “program” is from _____ English.

17. Spelling “realize” is from _____ English.
18. Spelling “behaviour” is from _____ English.
19. Spelling “analyze” is from _____ English.
20. Spelling “zip” is from _____ English.
21. Spelling “flavor” is from _____ English.
22. Spelling “humour” is from _____ English.
23. Spelling “travelling” is from _____ English.
24. Spelling “license” is from _____ English.
25. Spelling “defence” is from _____ English.
26. Spelling “neighbor” is from _____ English.
27. Spelling “ensure” is from _____ English.
28. Spelling “programme” is from _____ English.
29. Spelling “learnt” is from _____ English.