ENGLISH LEXICOLOGY

Lecture 7.
English Lexicon: Varieties and Dialects

1. Dialectology: basic notions
2. Standard English
3. English as a *lingua franca*
4. English in the UK:

- varieties of English, their lexical features
- dialects of English, their lexical features

5. English in the USA:

- local dialects in the USA, their lexical features
- British English *vs* American English

6. Other World Englishes: Canadian English, Australian English, New Zealand English, South African English etc.

Assigned Literature

- Ginzburg – P. 200-209.
- Arnold – P. 262-271.
- Rayevska – P. 284-291.

Recommended sources:

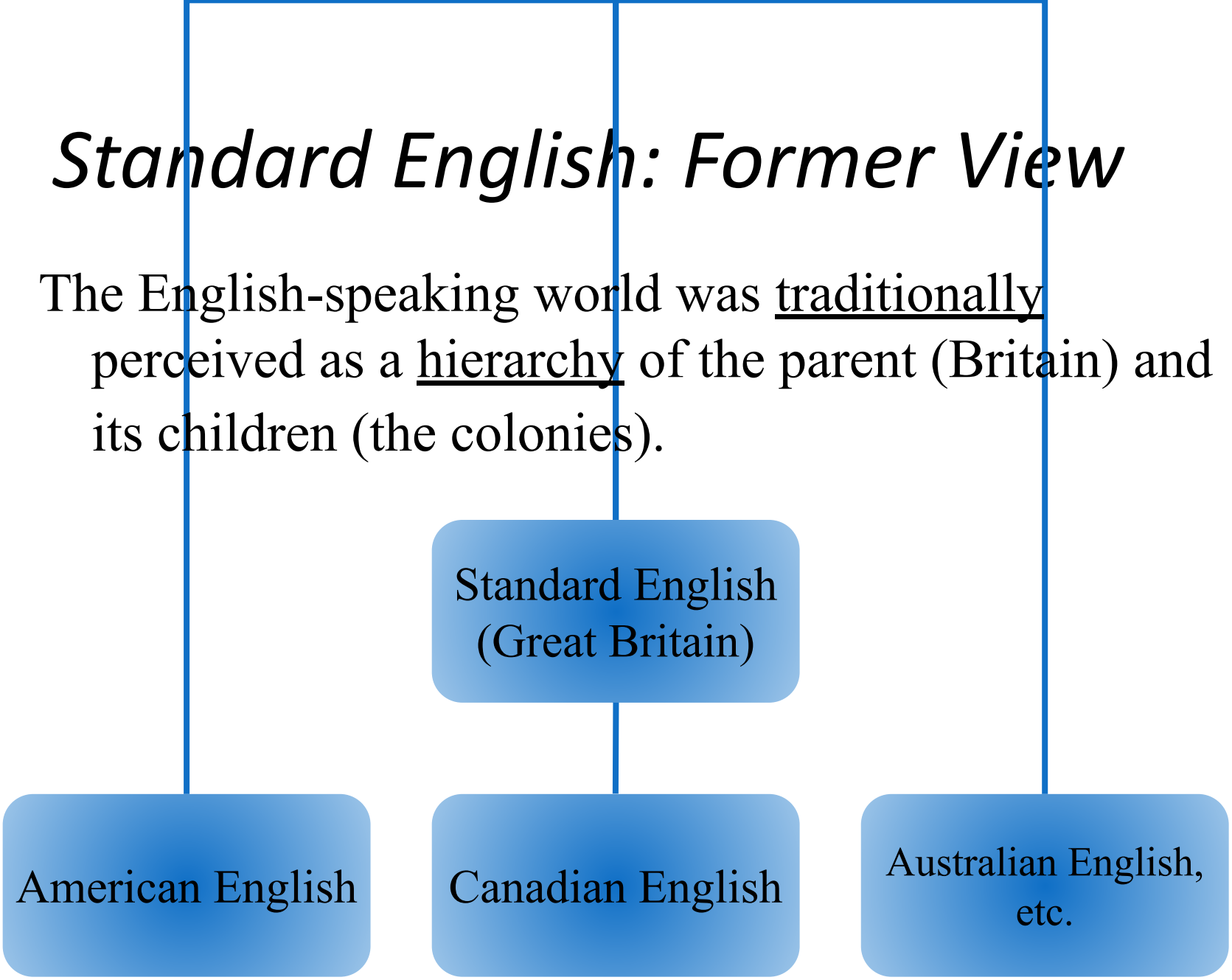
- Melchers G., Shaw Ph. *World Englishes*. – NY: Routledge, 2013.
- Crystal D. The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language. – Cambridge University Press, 1995. – P. 306-343.
- Nikolenko A.G. English Lexicology. Theory and Practice. – Vinnytsya : Nova Knyha, 2007. – P. 314-415
- http://eleaston.com/world-eng.html#dialect

Standard English (SE): Features

- ✔ a variety of English with standardized pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and spelling that have no local base;
- ✔ used as the norm of communication by the government, law courts, and media;
- ✔ taught to native speakers in school and to learners of English as a foreign language;
- ✔ a canon of literature and translations;
- ✔ SE carries the most prestige within a country;
- ✔ most widely understood but only a minority of people within a country actually use it (e.g. radio newscasters, translators). Most people speak a variety of regional English, or a mixture of standard and regional English.

Standard English: Former View

The English-speaking world was traditionally perceived as a hierarchy of the parent (Britain) and its children (the colonies).



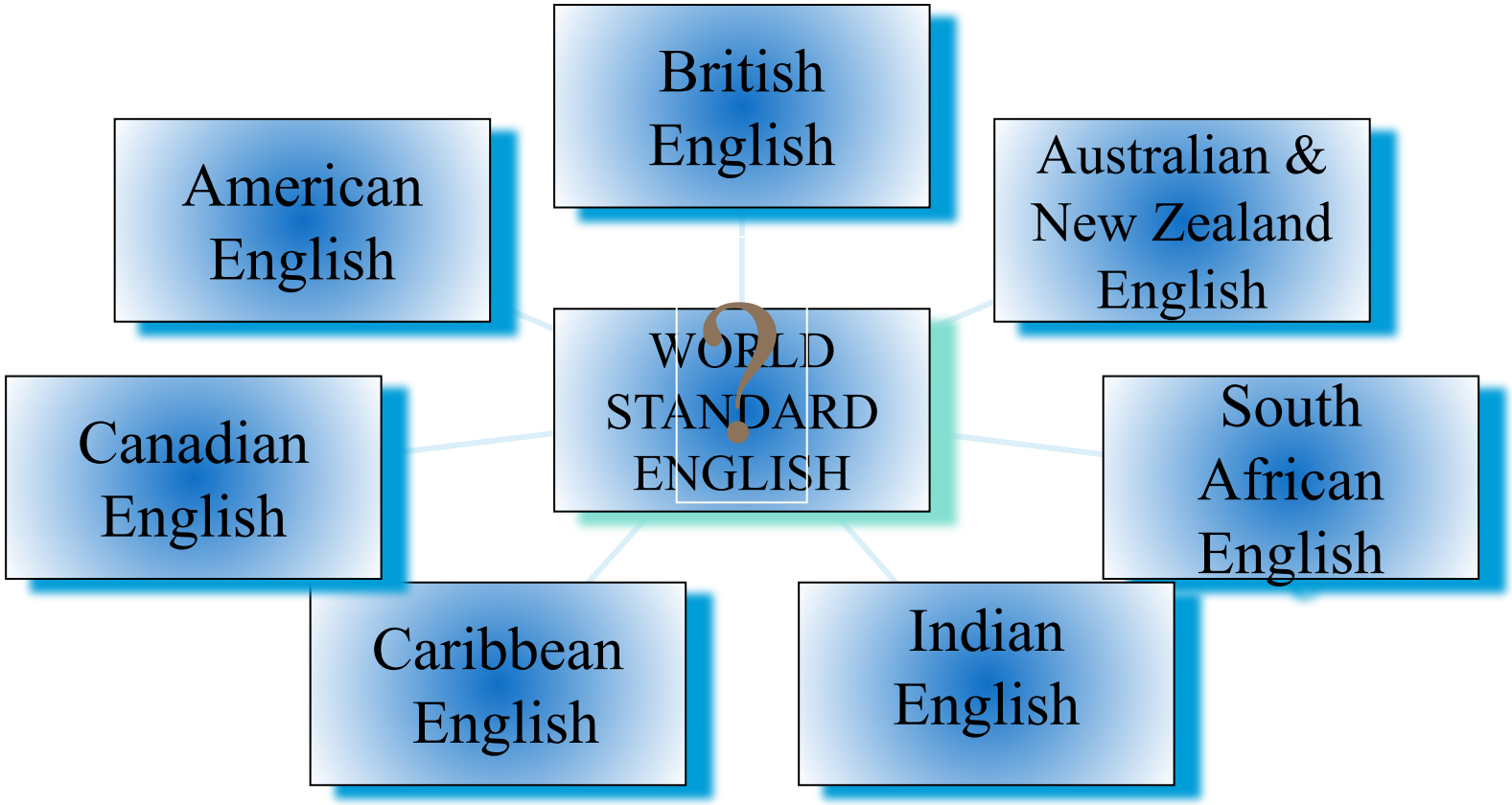
Standard English (SE): Current View

The English language is now seen rather as a family of varieties.

For instance, BrE and AmE have their own varieties of SE.

All other countries can be grouped into those which follow AmE, those which follow BrE, and those where there is a mixture of influences.

Does World Standard English (WSE) Exist?



Problem: internationalism and national identity conflict.

English as a **lingua franca** (ELF)

(Latin: “Frankish language”) was first applied to a pidgin based on French and Italian in the Mediterranean.

- ELF is used as a common means of communication for speakers of different first languages.
- English is used as a *lingua franca*

- for international diplomacy;

- among airline pilots;

- for school / university instruction, etc.

- ELF is not neutral or culture-free but rather multicultural.
- English native speakers who are not familiar with ELF are at a disadvantage because they do not know how to use English appropriately in these situations.

Variety vs Dialect vs Accent

- **Territorial varieties** of English are regional variants of SE.

Features: their own literary norm, some minor peculiarities of the sound system, vocabulary and grammar.

- The varieties spoken in small areas are **local dialects**. A dialect in a larger area can contain several sub-dialects.

A **regional dialect**

- refers to features of grammar and vocabulary against a geographical background.

✔ includes a distinctive regional accent but the reverse does not necessarily follow.

A **regional accent**

- refers to features of pronunciation against a geographical background;
- may also convey social implications and be prestigious, neutral or low class.

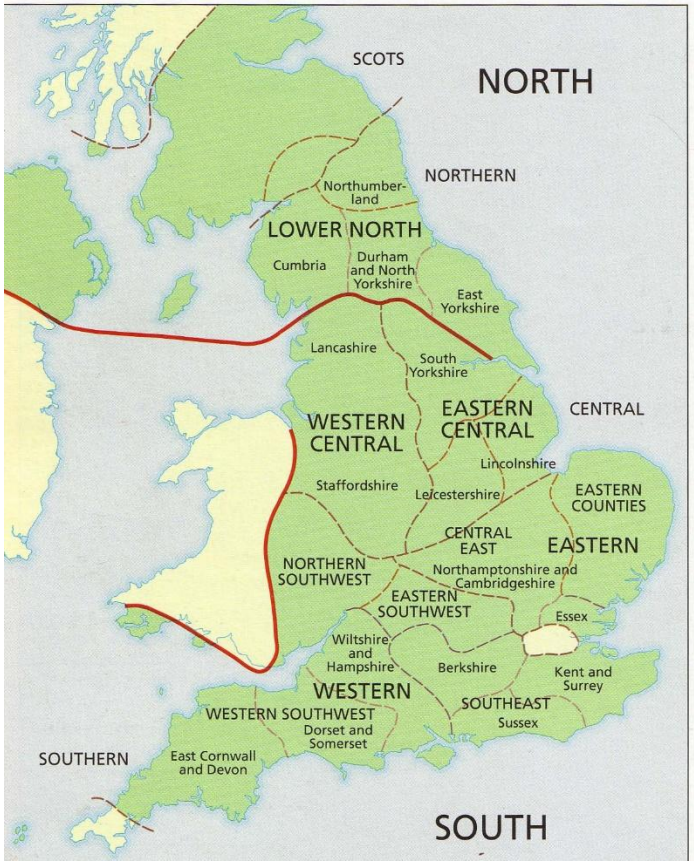
Local Dialects in the British Isles

The prestigious "**Received Standard**" with its accent called Received Pronunciation (RP), is rooted in south-east England (the London-Oxford-Cambridge triangle).

There are a few approaches to the dialect division of British English:

- two varieties, Scottish English and Irish English, and five groups of dialects: Northern, Midland, Eastern, Western and Southern (Arnold 1986);
- six distinct divisions: Lowland, Northern, Western, Midland, Eastern and Southern (Ginzburg et al. 1979).

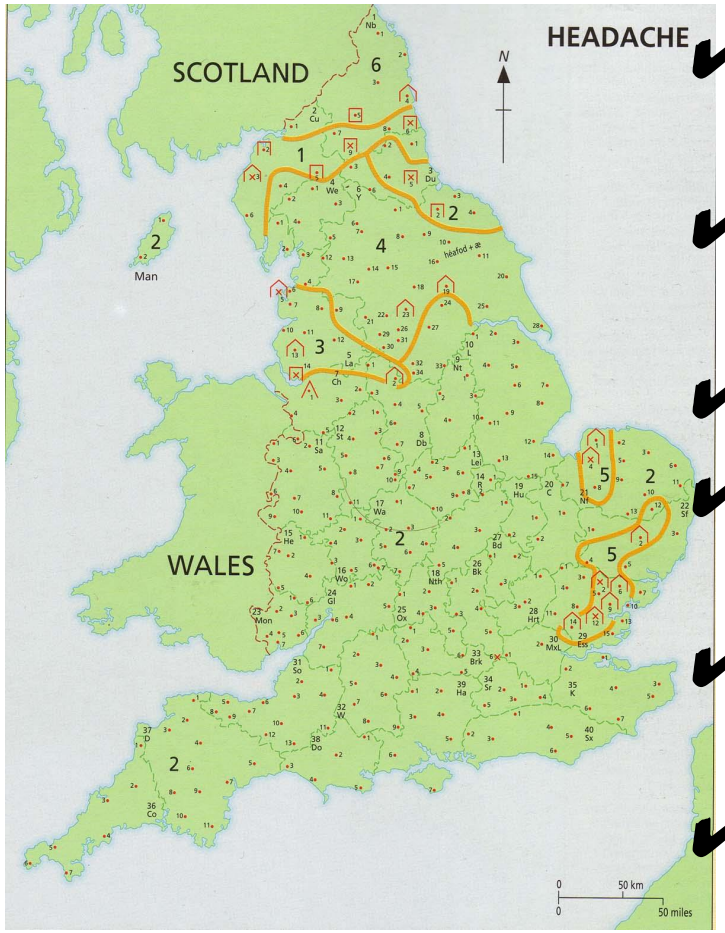
Local Dialects: Traditional



The British local dialects can be traced back to Old English and Middle English dialects (13).

<u>A major division is drawn between the North and everywhere else</u>.

Lexical Variation of the Word HEADACHE



- ✔ *headache* - throughout most of the country;
- ✔ *skullache* - the North, parts of East Anglia (5);
- ✔ *head-wark* - the far North;
- ✔ *head-warch*, mainly in S Lancashire (3);
- ✔ *sore head* –Northumberland (6);
- ✔ *bad head* - in adjacent localities to the south.

Cockney

(accent / dialect traditionally spoken by working-class inhabitants of London, esp. the East End)

Typical features:

- dropped H, as in *not 'alf* pronounced [a:f], ("not half”),
- diphthong shifts, e.g. [eɪ] to [aɪ] as in *bait* [baɪʔ])
- merger of /θ/-zd- with /f/, and [ð]-d- with /v/, hence [mæfs] for ‘maths’, [bɒvə] for 'bother‘;
- vocalisation of dark l, hence mɪowɔ: for ‘Millwall’;
- use of *me* instead of *my;*
- use of *ain't* instead of *isn't*, *am not*, *are not*, *has not*, and *have not;*
- use of "In'it" as a tag question: "*Good day today in'it*?”;
- use of double negatives: "*I didn't see nothing*”, etc.

cf. *Faw'y fahsan' frushes flew ova fawn'n 'eaf* (Cockney)

Forty thousand thrushes flew over Thornton Heath (SE)

Cockney is famously spoken by Eliza Doolittle in G.B. Shaw’s *Pygmalion*.

Cockney Rhyming Slang

Rhyming slang works by replacing words with short phrases that include a word which rhymes with the original one:

e.g. *boat race* (or just *boat*) – “a person's face”

plates of meat (or just *plates*) – “feet”

bees and honey (or just *bees*) -"money”

The origins of rhyming slang are disputed:

- used to maintain a sense of community; or
- in the marketplace for vendors to talk amongst themselves; or
- used by criminals to confuse the police and tax collectors.

Estuary English

Estuary English (the 1980s) is ‘a type of accent identified as spreading outwards from London, mainly into the south-east of England (esp. Kent and Essex), and containing features of both received pronunciation and such regional accents as Cockney’ (OED).

Estuary English is the result of a confluence of two social trends: an up-market movement of originally Cockney speakers, and a down-market trend towards “ordinary” speech by the middle class as opposed to posh RP.

Scottish English

Scottish English (Scots or the 'Scots language') is the most distinctive from SE (not to be confused with the Scottish Gaelic language, which is a Celtic language spoken in the Highlands).

Special status:

- strong literary tradition and the Bible (1983);
- its own dialects;
- vast lexicographic description: John Jamieson's *Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language* (1808-1825, 4 vols), *Scottish National Dictionary* (1976, 10 vols); *the Scots Thesaurus* (1990, 20 000 items).

Scottish English: Vocabulary

- ✔ Scotticisms in SE: *lassie, kilt, raid, tartan, wee*, *bonny* “handsome”, *loon* “crazy”, *glamour* “magic spell; charm”, *slogan* “a battle cry of a Scottish clan”, etc.

- ✔ Loans from other languages, esp. Gaelic, Norwegian, and French. E.g. Gaelic loans include *loch, whiskey*, *claymore* “a claymore mine”, *glen* “a small, secluded valley”, etc.

- ✔ the same word form as in SE but different in meaning: *scheme* “local government housing estate”, *mind* “memory, recollection”, *travel* “go on foot”, and *gate* “road”; idioms *to miss oneself* “to miss a treat”; *to be up to high doh* “to be overexcited”, etc.

Lallans (Lowlands of Scotland)

The dialects of south and central Scotland and Doric (rural dialects). Both Robert Burns and Robert Louis Stevenson used it to refer to the Scots language.

Nowadays it is viewed as a **standard literary variety of Scots** and the basis for a revival of Scots as a whole.

The term ***Lallans*** was also used during the Scottish Renaissance of the early 20th century to refer to *synthetic Scots* (Hugh MacDiarmid's term), i.e., a synthesis combination of various forms of the Scots language, both vernacular and archaic.

Irish English (Hiberno-English)

Since the 19th century, English has become the dominant language, with Gaelic found only in certain rural parts of the west (the Gaeltacht).

In the east, the link was the strongest with England, but in the north it was with Scotland (now Ulster Scots).

Irish English (Hiberno-English)

- the use of the word "aye" as a weak form of "yes": "It's getting late, is it?" "Aye, it is." or " It is, aye."
- "does be/do be" construction: "It's him I do be thinking of."
- "after" plus V-ing instead of past perfect: "Why did you hit him?" "He was after showing me cheek."
- “ye", "yis" or "yous" for the second-person plural. "Ye'r" "Yisser" or "Yousser" are the possessive forms, e.g. "What's ye'r weather like over in France this time o' the year?" and many others.
- *bog* “ground of marsh” from *bogach* “soft”;
- *whiskey* from Scottish Gaelic *uisge* beatha and Irish uisce beatha lit. 'water of life';
- *slob* “a lazy and slovenly person”;
- *shamrock* “clover”, etc.

Standard American English (SAE)

Standard American English is a variety of English used in the USA that has its own literary norm, which includes:

- General American accent (comes from Pennsylvania, Upstate New York and other rural areas of the Northeast);
- standardized vocabulary and conventions of use;
- standardized spelling;
- standardized grammar.

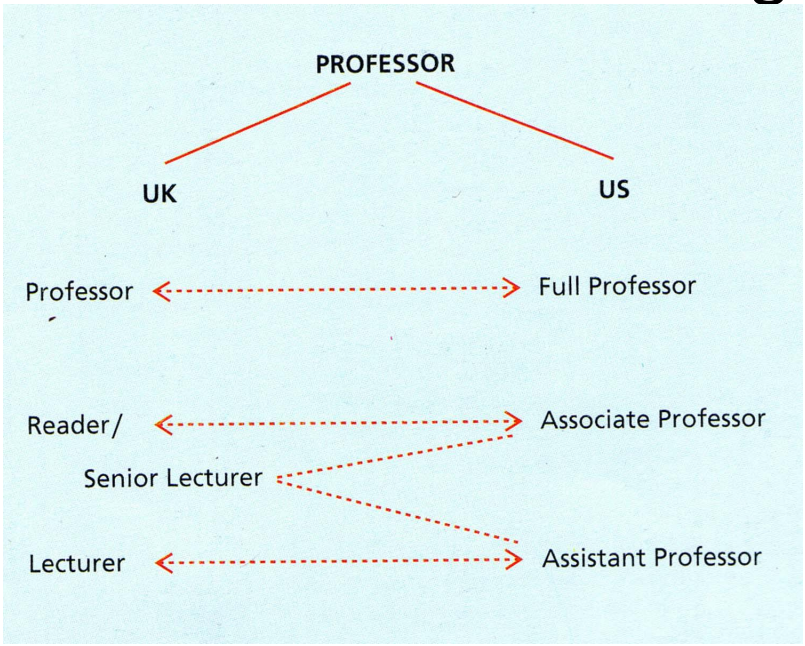
American English: Social and Cultural Background

- flora, fauna, and topography from Native American languages: e.g. *opossum*, *squash*, *moose* from Algonquian; *Iowa, Kansas, Michigan* (names of Indian tribes);
- vocabulary from other colonizing and immigrant nations: e.g. *cookie* (Dutch); *levee* (French); *barbecue* (Spanish); *chutzpah*, *schmooze* (Yiddish); *hamburger*, *sauerkraut*, *kindergarten* (German);
- Idioms: *hit pay dirt, strike it rich* (the California Gold Rush);
- political terms: *primary election*, *exit poll;*
- development of industry and material innovations: *parking lot, gas station, elevator;*
- education: *high school, freshmen, sophomore;*
- music: *disc jockey*, *jazz.*

Many of these words have been established in British English: *geek*, *nerd*, *school student*, and *24/7*.

American English vs. British English

What's the equivalent of the word *professor* in American and British English?



American English vs. British English

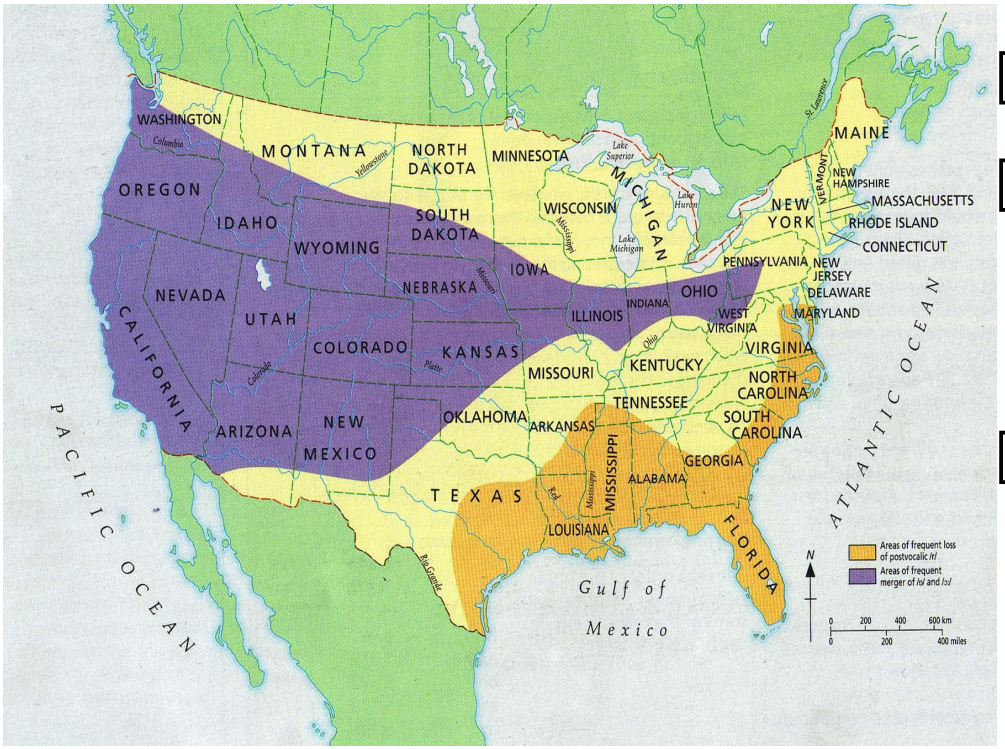
Deviations between AmE and BrE fall into the following groups:

- ✔ Some words reflect cultural differences and have no equivalents in British English (BrE): *Ivy League, Groundhog Day*.
- ✔ Different words refer to the same object: AmE *checking account* = BrE *current account*; AmE *station wagon* = BrE *estate car*.
- ✔ The same word has different meanings in AmE and BrE: AmE *flyover* = BrE *fly-past* ‘a ceremonial flight of aircraft’; BrE *flyover* = AmE *overpass* ‘one road is carried over another by a bridge’;

American English vs. British English

- ✔ Some words have one or more additional meanings that are specific to either AmE or BrE: *caravan* “group of travelers in a desert” (common to both varieties), BrE *caravan* “vehicle towed by a car” (= AmE *trailer*).
- ✔ Some words have the same meaning in both varieties and additional synonyms: both have *pharmac*y, but AmE has *drugstore* and BrE has *chemist’s*.
- ✔ Some words differ in frequency of their usage: *flat* and *apartment*, *post* and *mail*.

American Dialect Areas



- Northern
- Midland
  - North Midland
  - South Midland
- Southern

- The American Dialect Society: *The Dictionary of American Regional English* (V.1.- 1985, V.2. - 1991)

American Dialects: Appalachian English

Appalachian English a Southern Midland dialect spoken by “hill folk” descending from settlers from West Anglia, the Scottish Lowlands, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland. The dialect predates the standardization of American English and continues to be passed on orally.

- the conjugation of the verb "to be": "He **ain't done** it"; "**Them is** the ones I want“;
- the past participle in place of the past tense: *“I **gone** down to the meeting, but **wasn't nobody** there”;*
- ***touched*** [tɛtʃt] “**crazy**” - *That boy's touched. Don't pay him no mind.*
- **yonder**: a directional adverb further away than "here" or "there," "*He's over yonder.”*

Urban English

New York English is spoken by most Americans who were raised in New York City and much of its metropolitan area including the lower Hudson Valley, Long Island, and in northeastern New Jersey; one of the most recognizable accents within American English.

- "on line" as opposed to "in line"; "on accident" as opposed to "by accident";
- *punk* "weak" (in the African American and Latino communities); *nigger* "a term of endearment among poor inner city blacks" (through rap music) though it is unacceptable to the middle and upper classes.

American Slang

- **Slang** is language of a highly colloquial type, considered as below the level of educated standard speech, and consisting either of new words or of current words employed in some special sense.

The American language is very rich in slang. A good deal of slang words, widely known in the world by American songs, have reached British English, other varieties and other languages.

slang	meaning
Hit me!	Another alcohol drink, please!
Bubba	(Southern US) guy, fellow
tube	television
be down in the dumps	be in a bad mood
tough shit	bad luck
mad	very, as in "He's mad cute"
Park your butt!	Sit down!

African American English (AAE)

- *Just hang loose, blood*.

  (Stay calm, brother)

- *Hey big mama, my mama didn't raise no dummy*.

  (I am not a fool)

- *Cut me some slack, Jack*.

  (Give me a break, guy); *slack* "not tense or taut; loose: *a slack rope*)

- *Chump don't want no help, chump don't get no help*.

  chump "a stupid person"

Canadian English

Canadian English is subject to the conflicting influences of British and American English.

Canadians use *billboard*, *gas*, *truck*, and *wrench* from AmE rather than *hoarding*, *lorry*, *petrol*, and *spanner* typical of BrE.

On the other hand, they agree with the British in saying *blinds*, *braces*, *porridge*, and *tap* rather than American *shades*, *suspenders*, *oatmeal*, and *faucet*.

Canadian English

Unique features:

- the use of “eh?” either as a tag question or as an element in a narrative sentence “*He finally gets to the garage, eh, and the car’s gone*.”;
- borrowings from Native American languages: *igloo, kayak, kerosene, mukluk* “Inuit boot”, *parka*, and *skookum* “strong”;
- terms reflecting Canadian culture: *riding* “a political constituency”, *first nations* “the indigenous people”, the distinction between *prime minister* (federal) and *premier* (provincial);
- items to do with ice hockey, fur trading, lumbering, mining, and local fauna and flora.

Canadian Dialects?

Some scholars say there are no dialects in Canadian English, but others recognize several dialect areas with an appreciable amount of lexical divergence: *continuation school* “secondary school” (Ontario), professor “school teacher” (Quebec), salt-chuck “ocean” (Vancouver), etc.

The dialect of **Newfoundland** (or “the Rock”) displays many differences from the rest of English-speaking Canada.

Signs of Irish grammar: *yiz* or *youse* (plural of *you*); inflected *be* “*I bees here*”; perfective *after* “*I’m after losing it*”; *me* instead of *I*, e.g. *me goes shopping.*

Local vocabulary: *scoff* “large meal”, *praties* “potatoes”, *bake-apples* “a type of berry”.

English-based Pidgins and Creoles

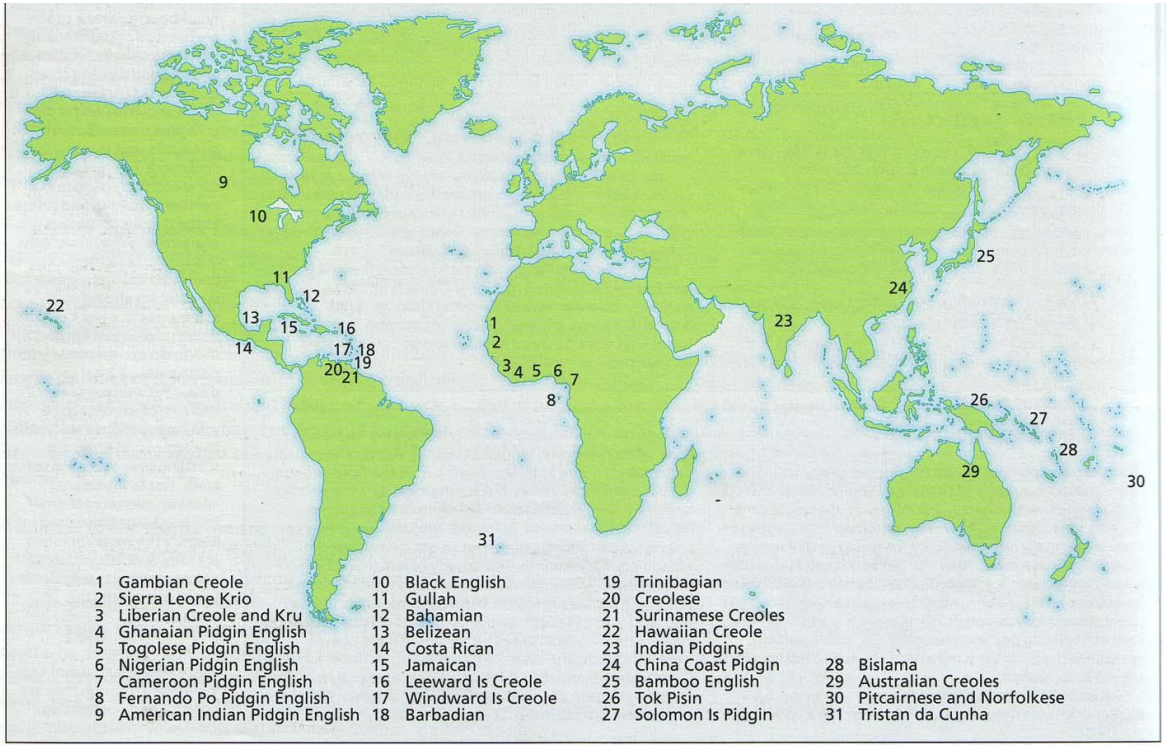
A **pidgin** (from *pigeon English*, from *pigeon* representing a Chinese pronunciation of "*business*") is a system of communication which has grown up among people who do not share a common language, but who want to talk to each other, usually for reasons of trade. Features:

- ✔ limited vocabulary;
- ✔ a reduced grammar structure;
- ✔ a narrow range of functions, compared to the languages from which they derived;
- ✔ they are the native languages of no one.

A **creole** (from Fr. *creole,* from Sp. *criollo* "person native to a locality") is a pidgin language which has become the mother tongue of a community.

Pidgins and creoles are <u>two stages in a single process of development</u>.

English-based Pidgins and Creoles



Three main areas:

- the Caribbean (Jamaican Creole, Gullah, etc.);
- West Africa (Gambian Creole, Togolese Pidgin, etc.);
- the West Pacific (Hawaiian Creole, etc.)

English-based Pidgins and Creoles

The grammatical features of various creole languages are similar:

✔ **Jamaican Creole**

Him go a school every day last year, now sometime him go, sometime him no go.

✔ **Guyana Creole**

Him a go school every day last year, now sometime him a go, sometime him naa go.

Cf.: **Standard English**

He used to go to school every day last year, now sometimes he goes and sometimes he doesn't go.

Lexical diversity is a major feature of creole languages: e.g. *calypso, guppy, dreadlocks, Rastafarianism* (from Caribbean English).

Australian and New Zealand English

The vocabularies of Australian and New Zealand English are very similar.

Both have been enriched by words and concepts from the hundreds of indigenous languages, mainly as:

names for places, flora and fauna, e.g. *dingo, kangaroo, bandicoot, kiwi, gum-tree, wattle*;

idioms, e.g. *to have kangaroos in one's paddock, lousy as a bandicoot*, etc.

Informal word-forms are common. Suffixes such as **-o** and **–ie**, as in *arvo* (afternoon), *reffo* (refugee), and *barbie* (barbecue), are freely attached to words even in more formal contexts.

Indian English

Together with Hindi, English is used across the country, but it can also be a speaker's second, or third language, and its features may depend heavily on their ethnicity and caste.

Some distinguishing features:

- ✔ the use of the present continuous tense and extra prepositions, as in '*He is having very much of property*‘;
- ✔ the use of *isn't it* as a ubiquitous question tag: '*We are meeting tomorrow, isn’t it?*‘;
- ✔ omission of a preposition or object altogether: '*I insisted immediate payment*‘;
- ✔ while double possessive pronouns - '*our these prices*' (instead of the British English '*these prices of ours*')

South African English

Since 1994 South Africa has had eleven official languages: English, Afrikaans (descended from Dutch), Zulu, Xhosa, and other largely regional African languages. English is the first language of only about 10 per cent of the population, but the second language of many others. The English of native Afrikaners has inevitably influenced the 'Standard' English of white South Africans:

- the affirmative no, as in '*How are you? - No, I'm fine*‘;
- the all-purpose response *is it?*, as in '*She had a baby last week - is it?*'