Problem of mixing American English and British English in University of Kordofan and Elobeid Secondary schools.

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Abstract: The study investigates the attitudes of professors of English language in University of Kordofan and teachers in the secondary schools in North Kordofan state towards the British or American English in the Sudanese syllabus. The study aimed at tracing the phonological and structural differences between the two varieties to support language perfection. It also aimed to find out whether these varieties are reflected in the Sudanese syllabus. The study hypothesized that mixing American and British English in educational institutions hinders developing a linguistic competence. The study has been conducted during (2015 – 2017) in University of Kordofan. The descriptive Analytical approach has been followed, for the data collection and analysis; the tool was a questionnaire.

The sample of the study was (30 out of 120) English language teachers and university professors. For the validity and reliability, Pearson (r) and the standard deviation were used. Varieties of English occur in the Sudanese syllable because English is spoken in different parts of the world differently, all respondents agreed, the main varieties of English language in the Sudanese syllable are British and American 70.00% of respondents agreed, 30.00% were disagreed. 86.70% of respondents agreed that Received Pronunciation (RP) is suitable for the comparison between varieties of spoken English Worldwide, 10.00% were disagreed, and 03.30% were not sure. 33.3% were agreed that mixture of British English and American English threatens English Language Learning, 53.40% were disagreed and 13.30% were not sure. 56.70% of respondents were agreed that confusion and misunderstanding is created due to the use of British English and American English, 40.00% were disagreed and 03.30% were not sure.

Study recommended; native speakers are important in the field of teaching English. Teachers and learners should trace one English variety in the same context. Teachers should be trained to strict on one variety of English. Courses, seminars and workshops in the varieties of English for English language teachers’ good opportunity to refresh the linguistic knowledge.

المستخلص:

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تبحث الدراسة في تحديد مواقف أساتذة جامعة كردفان ومعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في المدارس الثانوية في ولاية شمال كردفان تجاه استخدام الإنجليزي البريطاني أو الأميركي في السياق السوداني للغة الإنجليزية. وقد هدفت الدراسة لمعرفة أثر الاستخدام المزدوج للهجتين في الإرباك وعدم الفهم لدى الدارسين وخلط معاني المفردات بين اللهجتين.

افتتحت الدراسة أن خلط بين الإنجليزي البريطاني والإنجليزي الأميركي في مؤسسات التعميم يعيق من تقدم الكفاءة المغوية. إن مقارنة الفروق بين الإنجليزي البريطاني والإنجليزي الأمريكي من شأنها أن تدعم تجديد اللغة. وقد أجريت الدراسة في الفترة (2015-2017) في جامعة كردفان وبعض المدارس الثانوية بمدينة ألأبيض.

الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي لجمع وتحليل البيانات عن طريق استبانة. وحجم عينة الدراسة (30 من 120). لاختبار الصدق والثبات استخدمت الدراسة معادلة بيرسون (r) إلى جانب الانحراف المعياري. من الضروري لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية الإلمام بالظروف اللغوية بين الإنجليزي البريطاني والإنجليزي الأمريكي. وقد خلصت الدراسة إلى أن طريقة نطق الكلمات كافية للتميز بين اللهجتين لدى 86.7% من المستفيدين و10% منهم لا يوافقون على ذلك. كما أظهرت الدراسة إن نسبة 33% من المستفيدين يعتقدون أن خلط اللهجتين يهدد تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة كردفان والمدارس الثانوية، وأن 53% لا يوافقون الرأي و 13% منهم لا يدرون. كما وجدت الدراسة أن نسبة 56.7% من المستفيدين يعتقدون أن خلط اللهجتين في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية يحدث إرباكاً وعدم المقدرة على الفهم الصحيح للغة الإنجليزية، غير أن 40% منهم لا يوافقون على ذلك بينما 3% لا يدرون.

وقد أوصت الدراسة بالاستعانة بمتحدثي اللغة الأصليين في مجال تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية ليتمكن الدارسون من إتباع لهجة واحدة في السياق الواحد، على المعلمين بناء كفاءة خطابية ذات اتجاه واحد بخصوص لهجات اللغة الإنجليزية إلى جانب عقد دورات تدريبية وورش عمل لتشتيت المعرفة اللغوية والمخاطبة.

Introduction: English as universal and international language has its own variations; Varieties occur because English is spoken in different
parts of the world through colonialism, territorial expansion, urbanization and close cultural contact. Therefore English shows changes among native speakers. Among the main varieties of English language are the British English and the American English. Both are variants of the English language more similarly rather than different, especially scientific English. While there are certainly many more varieties of English language such as Australian English, Indian English, Canadian English, etc…, American English and British English are the two varieties that are taught in most ELT/EFL programs in Sudan. However, there are certain references in use. The most important rule of thumb is to be consistent in usage. Careful attention is paid to Received Pronunciation (RP) which considered as basis for comparison between varieties of spoken English. On the other hand, American English, in the US, is used with careful attention paid to General American English (GA).

American English has acquired its international significance when US assumed a more global role and political, economic, and technological development promoting US influence worldwide.

People consider American English asserts dominant influence on’ World English” or British English largely due to: American native population, wealth, magnitude of higher education, publishing industry, mass media and technology, influence of language on culture and habits, and international political and economic position of US. Differences of variety, dialect, accent, register, and style in British English differ from those of American English in some ways. If those differences are not well understood, the English users in Sudan interpret English incorrectly in some aspects. Among the principle differences between British and American English are vocabulary, spelling, number, business letter, grammar, and pronunciation. Besides some other important linguistic features that would be covered investigating this study. The problem also happens when an author writes a book whether scientific or educational in which diction is crucial. Therefore the English users must learn and apply the
vocabulary differences. The grammatical rules of British English differ from the American ones in some aspects. As the learners of English do not separate the Grammatical Differences between British and American English, it would be difficult to write or to speak English grammatically as demanded. Furthermore, teachers' pay little attention to those differences resulting in difficulties for the learners to differentiate them in a context so as to use the English language appropriately. There are many problems on account of the alternative use of both American and British English in the same stretch. The most important thing to remember is to be consistent and sticky, with the kind of English that is to be used in teaching, handling, presentation and lectures delivering in theoretical and methodological dimensions.

**Problem statement:** Study the problem of confusion and misunderstanding English language and the effects of mixing American English and British’s within students of University of Kordofan and Elobeid Secondary schools.

**Differences between British and American English**

Baker, M. (1) stated that, British English (henceforth BrE) is known to differ from Standard American English (henceforth AmE) in that it allows nouns that denote collections, such as committee, government, team etc to control plural agreement on the verb even when they are themselves morphologically singular.

**Relationship between British and American English**

ARNOLD (2) stated that, Before examining the essential differences existing between British and American English and exploring the way in which they are directly or indirectly reflected in the pairs of

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idioms in question, it appears perfectly reasonable to ask what the terms British and American English signify. One crucial dimension which presents itself is the geographical distribution. In this case, however, according to Arnold, “American English cannot be called a dialect”, for unlike the various dialects of English, “it has a literary normalized form called Standard American.” Therefore, a more appropriate term should be used and that is “variant or variety”.

As long as a diachronic perspective is adopted, then it is crystal clear that American English came into existence much later than British English. In fact, it was the actual British English that was transplanted to the New World and that later underwent a gradual transformation process under the immensely profound influence of the new environment.

The prior existence of British English seems to have had a tremendous impact on the way the British and American English were viewed. British English served as a touchstone and even nowadays remains fairly dominant, particularly in the ESL classes throughout the world, considering the disproportionate number of course books and materials from the United Kingdom. Yet another fact can be mentioned to specify the nature of the relationship between British and American English and that is the term Americanism, coined by John Witherspoon.

According to The Oxford Companion to the English Language, it “refers primarily to English words and phrases that acquired a new sense (bluff, corn, lumber) or entered the language (OK, racoon, squash) in what is now the US, but also to features of pronunciation, grammar, and sentence structure” (McARTHUR)(3).

If checking the frequency of the word Americanism on the Internet using a Google search, the total number of results shown

on the statistics bar is approximately 6,840,000, while for the word Briticism, the search engine retrieves somewhere around 27,800 results.
Whatever may be stated to hold true for British and American English and the influence those two variants have upon each other, one fact cannot be disputed. The approach, which is habitually used, is fairly orthodox in that it views English as consisting of two standards, which are formally separated by an unbridgeable gulf.
In reality, the gulf between the eastern and western shores of the Atlantic Ocean is not so yawning in terms of language. Quirk (4) in A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language speaks about the paramount influence of mass communication and goes on to stress that “the pop music culture, in particular, uses a ‘mid-Atlantic’ dialect that levels differences even in pronunciation.” This argument appears to be strongly supported by the fact that “even though Americans and Britons are said to be ‘divided by a common language’, standardness is something they largely share with each other and with other varieties worldwide.
The information mentioned above aptly illustrates the two important facets of the linguistic relationship between British and American English, namely the similarity on a general basis and the divergence on closer inspection when juxtaposed. Despite being somewhat contradictory, those two facets go hand in hand with each other. In this, the focus is on the divergence that is the differences.

Differences between British and American English

universities usually teach British English. Only in recent years, some schools and universities include an analysis of the differences between the two ‘English’s because of the increasing possibilities of contact with the two varieties. Many internet websites have sections concerning this subject, to which people can contribute giving their own testimonies to the classification and description of the differences.

If learners of English were approached with the question whether British and American English are the same, it is extremely probable that the answer ‘no’ would far outweigh the answer ‘yes’. This is mainly due to the fact that almost every English textbook or course book touches upon the lexical differences, providing examples of pairs of lexemes which are used to denote the same items in the extra-linguistic reality, for instance lorry versus truck or flat versus apartment. However, it is necessary to remark that this is where the, say, systematic introduction of the differences between the two varieties of English language often ends.

From the linguistic point of view, there of course exists more than just one group of differences. Sections dealing with this area of study in various reference books show no apparent discrepancy in saying that the differences between British and American English can be conveniently divided into four general levels:

1. the level of pronunciation
2. the level of spelling
3. the level of vocabulary
4. the level of grammar

The following pages will be thus devoted to examining those levels separately, repeating an established pattern. A brief overview of the most essential differences at a particular level is presented first. Then follows a table showing the pairs of idioms, which differ in aspects that may be classified as belonging to that particular level. It should be strongly emphasized that these
Tables are by no means exhaustive and the final decision about what to include under the heading of each level is likely to slightly vary. The pairs of idioms (after further grouping) are listed alphabetically. In conclusion, there is a discussion of to what extent the general differences are reflected in the selected pairs of idioms and whether or not to formulate new kinds of differences.

**Differences at the level of spelling**

Quirk said that, Although it may be said that spelling or orthography is ”from most viewpoints the least important type of linguistic organization” the spelling differences between British and American English paradoxically “serve as emblems or shibboleths of linguistic nationalism” McArthur speaks about two important ways of classifying the spelling differences. For the purposes of this thesis only one of them will be introduced and that is the distinct division into “systemic or non-systemic differences” (McARTHUR 1992)

McArthur offers the following definition: “If a difference is systemic, it affects large classes of words; if non-systemic, it affects only one word or a small group of words” (McARTHUR 1992: 42). To put it in another way, the difference between favour and favor is systemic, for the identical spelling is used not only in the derived words such as favourite/favorite, favour able/favorable, favoured/favored and favouritism/favoritism, but it can be also used as a model for other words which contain the cluster –our in their internal makeup, for instance the word valour. In comparison with non-systemic differences, which are in most cases applicable to one lexical unit, e.g. Axe/ax, the systemic differences are “productive” (CRYSTAL)(6).

The list shown below comprises all the principle systemic differences according to McArthur, that is nine groups. Each of the

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group would, of course, require a more detailed characterization, but as a brief introduction here, it may be regarded as quite sufficient to reduce the McArthur’s presentation of systemic differences to the name of the group and a few representative examples. When endorsing a very generalized view, it is also possible to assert that, as far as the examples are considered, the alternatives stated first are British as are the spellings including the letters in round brackets (with the exception of number 5).

1. The colo(u)r group: arbo(u)r, armo(u)r, endeavo(u)r, favo(u)r, flavo(u)r, hono(u)r, humo(u)r, labo(u)r, odo(u)r, rigo(u)r, savo(u)r, tumo(u)r, valo(u)r, vigo(u)r.
3. The (o)estrogen group: am(o)eba, diarrh(o)ea, hom(o)eopathy, (o)esophagus, (o)estrogen, (o)estrous.
4. The (a)esthete group: (a)eon, arch(a)eology, gyn(a)ecology, (a)esthetics, an(a)emia, encyclop(a)edia, h(a)emophilia, h(a)emorrhage, medi(a)eval, pal(a)eontology.
5. The instil(l) group: distil(l), enrol(l), fulfil(l), instil(l).
9. The –og(ue) group: catalog(ue), dialog(ue), monolog(ue), pedagog(ue), prolog(ue).

The names and examples were all taken from McArthur (1992: 42-44). From the examples mentioned above, it may be inferred that “AmE spellings tend to be shorter than BrE spellings” (McARTHUR 1992: 44). Also, it is particularly relevant to say that in terms of the pairs of idioms selected for this thesis, some groups of systemic differences are obviously reflected in preference to others.
Groups 1 and 2 consist of systemic differences, those of the color and the centre/group respectively. Group 3 is then made up of non-systemic differences, out of which the differences between be burnt to a crisp versus be burned to a crisp and be spoilt for choice versus spoilt for choice could be dealt with at the level of grammatical differences, as they both represent the opposite poles of regularity and irregularity of verbs, namely the past participles. Given the information in the table, these also appear to be the only pairs of idioms under study, where American spelling is longer than British spelling.

**Differences at the Level of Vocabulary**

As the author of The English Word has it, British and American English differ “in pronunciation, some minor features of grammar, but chiefly in vocabulary” (ARNOLD 1986: 241). If one proceeds on the assumption that the lexical differences really occupy a preeminent position, then this should presuppose the existence of a detailed classification system.

There do exist systemic differences which are “due to two factors: source and subject” (McARTHUR 1992: 46), but to find traces of any categorization at least roughly similar to that of the spelling differences seems to be an impossible task. Strange as it may sound, materials almost invariably contain mere lists of pairs of lexemes. It seems therefore inevitable that only such pairs of lexemes, e.g. lorry versus truck, should be taken into consideration here, as those, if the constituents of an idiom, mirror the actual differences between British and American English with respect to vocabulary.

However, the poach that was chosen appears to contradict this in that it views the difference between chew the fat and chew the ragas lexical, for whichever direction British to American or American to British is taken, the change that occurs, is undoubtedly a change of lexical item, i.e. either fat for rag or rag for fat. The difference between those two equivalent idioms is lexical, even though the words
chew, the, fat and rag are widely used in both British and American English.

Adopting that particular approach, there are two basic processes taking place, namely substitution (groups 1 to 5) and addition (group 6). Substitution is defined here as replacing a part of word, the whole word or even a couple of words with a part of word, the whole word or a couple of words. Addition, in the context of this thesis, is used to address the situation when the difference lies in the fact that to a shared set of words another word or words have been added see.

Group 1 encompasses all pairs of idioms which directly reflect the lexical differences between British and American English, with spanner versus wrench reflected in one example and arseversus ass in the remaining pairs of idioms. The words bum and mummy are both labelled as predominantly British (bum – “mainly UK informal”; mummy – “UK”) in the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, as opposed to fanny and mama which are labeled as predominantly American (fanny, meaning the body part a person sits on – “US old-fashioned informal”; mama – “UK old use or US informal”). Although the labels attached are not, to a certain extent, unambiguous, the idioms composed of these words were also included.

**Differences at the level of grammar:** Crystal (7) stated that, As was shown above, the differences between British and American English at the level of spelling and vocabulary assume considerable importance. Even though it has already been mentioned, it is worth stressing that, strange as it may seem, there are “relatively few grammatical differences between educated BrE and AmE” To put it differently, it could be justifiably claimed that “grammar is the

area of the underlying similarity”. Greenbaum\(^{(8)}\). If the assumption is accepted that vocabulary, as against syntax, is a set of single, say, unrelated units and syntax is a process of combining these units into a certain whole, in which the rules of normative grammar become apparent, then the words of Hudson that “vocabulary is a marker of divisions in society” (qtd. in Greenbaum) whereas “syntax is the marker of cohesion in society” Greenbaum seem to illustrate the point further in a more general way. Where the differences between British and American grammar do exist, they appear to be more often than not concentrated around one particular lexical category, i.e. verbs.

1. Shall and will
2. Should and would
3. Can and May
4. Must and have (got) to
5. Let’s not – Don’t let’s – Let’s don’t
6. Subjunctives
7. Perfectives
8. Time expressions

**Results and discussion:**
In table (1) all respondents (100%) agreed that Variety occurs because English is spoken in different parts of the world in different ways as a result of the mother tongue influence and other factors.

**Table (1) Varieties of English occur in the Sudanese syllable because English is spoken in different parts of the world differently.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data survey

In table (2) (70%) of the respondents agreed that, in Sudan the main varieties of English language are British and American, (30%) of English language learners disagreed. This clarifies that, the essential varieties of English language were British and American.

Table (2) the main varieties of English language in the Sudanese syllable are British and American.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data survey

In table (3) shows that the (86.00%) of respondents agreed that, Received Pronunciation (RP) is the base for comparison between all the varieties of spoken English Worldwide, (10.00%) of English language learners disagreed and (3.30%) were not sure. From the results it is clear that English learners and practitioners believe that RP English is Number one and prior to the other English’s.

Table (3) Received Pronunciation (RP) is suitable for the comparison between Varieties of spoken English Worldwide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In table (4) (33%) of respondents agreed, Mixture of the two versions (British English and American English) endangers English Language Learning process, (13 %) of English language learners disagreed about that, and (53%) of them were not sure. This means teachers should be aware when selecting the variety they should use.

**Table (4) Mixture of British English and American English threatens English Language Learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>53.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data survey

In table (5) (56.00%) of respondents agreed that, confusion and misunderstanding was created due to the use of British English and American English. (03.00%) of English language learners disagreed about that, and (40.00%) of them were not sure.

**Table (5) Confusion and misunderstanding is created due to the use of British English and American English.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>56.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data survey

**Conclusions and Recommendation:**

**Conclusions:**

1. Mixing British and American English in the writing process results in poor text which is not British neither American. One needs to be accurate in the use of the variety suitable for the context according to the audiences

2. Mixture of the two versions British English and American English endangers English Language Learning process. This means teachers should be aware when selecting the variety they should use.

**Recommendations**
1. Native speakers are important in the field of teaching English.
2. Teachers and learners should trace one English variety in the same context.
3. Teachers should be trained to strict on one variety of English.
4. Courses, seminars and workshops in the varieties of English for English language teachers’ good opportunity to refresh the linguistic knowledge.

REFERENCES