



UNIVERSIDAD DE JAÉN
Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación

Trabajo de Fin de Grado

**Differences between
American and British
English**

Alumna: Lucía Pariente Fernández

Tutor: Prof. Dr. Alejandro Alcaraz Sintés
Dpto.: Filología Inglesa

Junio, 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. COLONIALISM	3
2.1 The spread of English	3
2.2 Settlements	4
2.3 The American role through the pass of time	5
2.4 American dialects	6
2.5 The two major varieties of English: American and British	8
2.6 The current situation of English	10
3. DIFFERENCES OF VOCABULARY	13
3.1 General classification of vocabulary	13
3.2 Coinings	15
3.3 Etymology of words	17
3.4 The controversy over Americanisms	22
3.5 Spelling	22
3.5.1 Spelling of compound verbs in American and British English	24
4. DIFFERENCES OF GRAMMAR	27
4.1 The most outstanding differences of pronunciation	27
4.2 Morphology	29
4.2.1 Irregular verbs' morphology	27
4.2.2 Changes of category. From noun to verb and vice versa	29
4.3 Syntax	30
4.3.1 The present perfect and the past simple	30
4.3.2 Regularization of irregular past tenses and past participle forms	31
4.3.3 Differences of the noun and pronoun	31
4.3.4 Reflexive structures: the omission of the reflexive pronoun	32
4.3.5 Differences of prepositions	32
5. CONCLUSION	35
REFERENCES	37

Abstract. This essay aims at explaining the differences between American and British English, including differences of vocabulary, spelling, grammar and pronunciation. There is an introduction dealing with the topic of colonialism that has been introduced because it is quite necessary to understand the whole process and how it all started. It also explains the influence other languages had on English or vice versa, and their visible effects nowadays which can be mainly perceived in vocabulary. In this essay can be also perceived how different dialect arises and how they have influenced but focusing on the main two dialects or varieties of English, which as mentioned before are the American and the British one.

Key concepts. Colonialism, Americanism, dialect, vocabulary, grammar, spelling, lingua franca, mother tongue, second language, foreign language, colony, variety, coining, etymology, register, inflection, morphology, syntax, settlement, British Empire, purist, conservative, Standard English, Received Pronunciation (RP), borrowing.

Resumen. El principal objetivo de este ensayo es explicar la distinción entre inglés americano y británico, incluyendo diferencias de vocabulario, ortografía, gramática y las más generales de pronunciación. Pero antes de empezar con ello, una introducción acerca del tema del colonialismo ha sido incluida ya que es bastante necesaria para entender el proceso completo y cómo comenzó todo. También explica la influencia que otros idiomas han tenido en el inglés o viceversa y sus efectos visibles en nuestros días que pueden ser percibidos a través del uso del vocabulario. En este ensayo también se puede percibir cómo has surgido diferentes dialectos y cómo han influido pero centrándose en los dos principales dialectos o variedad del inglés, que como se ha mencionado anteriormente son el americano y el británico.

Conceptos clave. Colonialismo, Americanismo, dialecto, vocabulario, gramática, ortografía, lengua franca, lengua materna, segunda lengua, lengua extranjera, colonia, variedad, acuñación, etimología, registro, inflexión, morfología, sintaxis, asentamiento, Imperio Británico, purista, conservador, inglés estándar, pronunciación aceptada/ recibida, préstamo.

1. INTRODUCTION

This essay deals with the differences between American and British English, which are the two main varieties of English. It is focused mainly on the differences found in vocabulary, spelling and grammar which are the most noticeable and create a clear distinction among them.

Although there are more similarities between British and American English than differences, it is very important to show them because they are two different varieties that can stand on their own and have their own cultures, histories, pasts and societies. So, they should not be mixed up because they are unique. This distinction is also very important for the educational background to know what kind of variety are we going to learn, to teach or to find in books, so I think that students should be aware at least of the most noticeable differences of grammar and vocabulary because probably in a near future they should face these aspects in certain situations of real life, it can be very practical and helpful.

Focusing on the essay itself, it is divided in three main parts. The first part is called *Colonialism* and deals with the issue of colonization, which is a basic and necessary aspect to explain the topic. Colonialism is the bridge between British and American societies. Within this part, it is explained how it all started, the very beginning, the first settlements of British people and other Europeans who influenced in this land as well, the role of America and its different dialects and the current situation of English.

In my opinion, this is a very practical and common topic nowadays because English has a lot of influence in society and the educational frame among others, it is the language through which people communicate, it is a lingua franca. This differentiation is something people should know because it is not an issue of registers and formality, it is rather an issue of expansion and evolution and American English has evolved, influencing in many aspects of daily life.

The second part deals with the differences of vocabulary and spelling. Within the differences of vocabulary there is a distinction of three types of vocabulary which is a more general classification, words that have been adopted from American English into British English and the other way round, words that have been created through the influence of other countries, words for specific purposes such as food, animals, work, trade, industry, etc. From vocabulary, an important section dealing with the etymology of words is included because it shows that each word has its own history which differentiate them from the rest, that is to say, it makes them unique. Differences of spelling are also included in this part, which shows the

differences of the words in both varieties at first sight. Moreover, the more general differences of pronunciation are included at least to know that they are also different in the way of pronouncing words.

The last part is concerned with the grammatical differences and it is divided in three main sections which are differences of pronunciation, morphology and syntax.

Examples has been included all over the work, especially in the second and the third parts of the essay, vocabulary and grammar, which are the parts that need them the most. These examples have been taken mainly from books such as *One Language, Two Grammars?: differences between British and American English* (Rohdenburg & Schlüter, 2009) and *British and American English* (Stevens, 1972).

2. COLONIALISM

2.1.The spread of English

Before the use of English language, it was Latin which was used by European scholars to communicate. English was only used in the English territory by its people but it was also used by settlers and it became to be spread, when they established in places far from their countries they became to denote differences of language in comparison with their local language because they acquired local expressions, words typical from those places so it could be said that here emerges the difference between American and British English.

The language we know today as English was developed by about 1400, out of the Anglo-Saxon dialects spoken in the southern part of England, with lots of borrowing from Norman French, the language of those who had conquered England in the year 1066. Wales, Scotland and Ireland were at that time separated countries whose inhabitants spoke Celtic languages. On the other hand, the North American territory was unknown to Europeans and Australia had not yet been discovered. American English begins in Elizabethan times, around the year 1600 when English-speaking settlers began to live on the Atlantic coast of the American continent.

The history of English language does not only comprise the history of the British Isles and North America although the British Empire had a lot of influence but it is a kind of international history in which many cultures and people have influenced so it could be said that the history of a language is closely related to the people who speak it. In this case, English history is closely related to the contact of different cultures during the last 1,500 years. Moreover, there are also many factors such as economic, political or social among others that have influenced language.

English is one of the most important languages of the world and one of the main reasons of it is the spread of the British Empire, as mentioned before, this fact influenced because nowadays there are about 380 millions of speakers of English around the world (UK, EE. UU...). As a result of all this, English is also associated with the term *lingua franca*, because it acts as an international language which establishes communication with people all over the world.

2.2.Settlements

By the end of the 15th century, when Columbus arrived in the New World in the year 1492, Spain was the highest empire of the world and there were some territories, such as India, which were very attractive for many countries and people all over the world, concretely for British people and it is here where whose history in America begins.

The first settlements were Plymouth and Jamestown in North America, a process of colonization started in this area and it is a step that contributed and made English language important. Later on, British settlers founded colonies in America in which English became to be used as the language of education, law, administration and other areas. In the case of the American territory, colonists multiplied and established there whereas Native American Indian people became to disappear. Moreover, in most places English was established as a foreign language because it was used by non-English speaking people in these areas.

As it has been mentioned, English language was introduced in America by English colonialists in the 17th c. but focusing on the settlements, three periods of European settlements should be distinguished:

- From the first settlements of Jamestown in 1607 up to the end of the colonial times.
- With the expansion of the 13 colonies into different areas, they settled along the Atlantic seaboard, which was divided into three sub-areas that are: New England, Middle Atlantic States and the South Atlantic States. It all started around 1620 when colonizers brought slaves to these areas and later on the amount of people ascended. Something remarkable is that in the Middle Atlantic States, the invasion was difficult because there were settlements of Dutch people, so they didn't make it easy for English immigrants.

In relation with the occupation of the different areas, certain zones were occupied only by a group of immigrants from the same place but other territories such as Pennsylvania were occupied by a mixed population, that is to say people who came from different places.

- Since the Civil War started.

Dealing with colonization, a main classification should be made because there were two types of colonization:

- Settler colonization consisted on British explorers that during their journeys occupied some lands where there were Aboriginal people but they occupied and make them of their property, a big amount of local people died because they could not face European

diseases that explorers transmitted so as a consequence of this, the local population decreased. These settlers imposed English as the main language little by little so their local languages disappeared as well.

- Exploitation colonization did not consist on the establishment of colonies on these lands but on the appropriation of raw materials, spices, some natural resources and slaves. The strategy was to send trading companies to those areas that they got access and control the things mentioned before little by little.

2.3.The American role through the pass of time

The occupation of the territory of the United States was not only made by English immigrants but also by German, Scottish, Dutch or French people. Furthermore, this occupation was not completely European, it was also made up by Africans, who occupied these territories due to slavery and with a huge number of people, 25 millions of African Americans lived in the U.S.A. As a result of this, there was a mixture of different kind of immigrants but it was not till the 19th c. when the uniformity of American English became to be recognized.

British Empire was very important for many reasons but one of the most important in relation with the topic is that they established English as the main language of the world, as an international and official language. But as it happened with other empires, the British one also declined, so how can it be that English is the international language? Basically because of the American Empire, they were the responsible of the survival of the English language that was used very frequently in different areas such as trade or technology.

The real change in the American society occurred when the 13 colonies insisted in obtaining the independence of the country from British people, they were too patriot to depend on them so they wanted to obtain independence in all aspects (political, cultural, language...). In relation with the aspect of language, a person should be mentioned, Noah Webster, he was too interested in this issue so he wrote *The American Spelling Book* (1783) or *An American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828), with them he had a persistent purpose, that of making a distinction between British and American language and their orthographies. He was sure that associations, art or science would introduce words in American English that would provoke the differentiation from the British language, in fact, institutions, customs, laws, etc., introduced new terms in this American society, terms that were unknown for the British society, for example: *congress*, *senate* or *court* among others.

Thomas Jefferson thought that Americans were more tolerant of innovations in speech than the people of England and that these innovations might eventually justify calling the language of America by a name other than English. (Baugh 2002: 364)

Thomas Jefferson supported these ideas as well and some people thought as him, they thought that American English would flourish as a different dialect of English, different from British English.

2.4.American dialects

The American linguist Hans Kurath provided a map in 1949 of the Atlantic States which showed the three main dialects and regions of this time: New England dialect, Southern dialect and General American (or Northern, Southern and Midland). These dialects present certain features but it does not mean that all of the inhabitants who speak these dialects have these features, there is people that do not share these features although the majority does. This division tends to be very abstract because it is based on data.

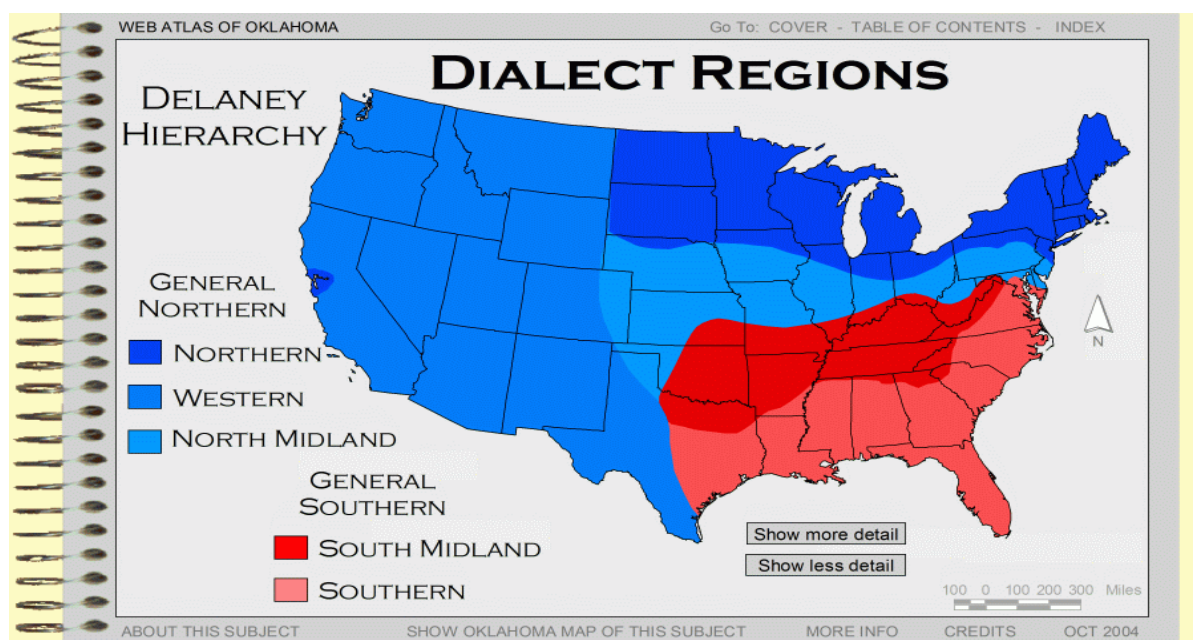


Table 1. Map of North America with the main dialectal regions.¹

¹ The map has been obtained from: *Speech Buddy*. Website. <<https://goo.gl/Lxqojc>> in order to show the big dialectal regions in the North American territory.

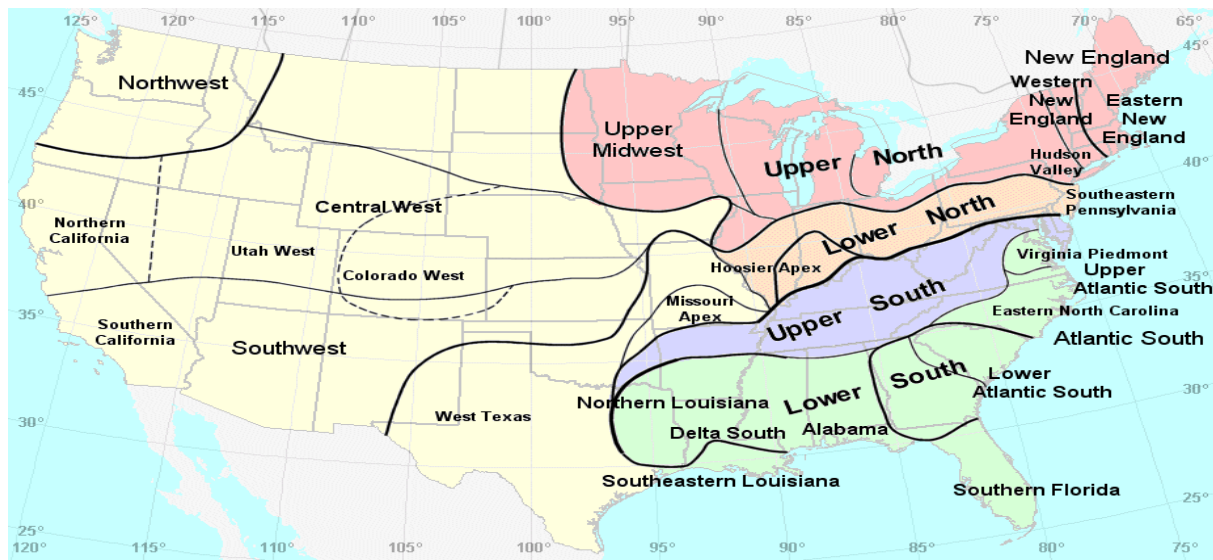


Table 2. Map of the main dialects spoken in North America²

According to Baugh (2002: 376-390), another deeper division can be made in relation with dialects which is classified in 9 different groups depending of the area:

- *Eastern New England*: it is formed basically by the eastern area and among its features it can be found the retention of a rounded vowel due to the influence of British people who arrived there, it can be appreciated in words such as *hot* /hät/ or *top* /täp/. The use of “broad a” in words like *path* /path/ or *fast* /fast/ or the loss of the /r/ in words like *car* /ka:/.
- *New York City*: the most noticeable feature is the pronunciation of the /r/ which has increased since IIWW. There are also some pair of words which are pronounced in the same way, words such as *curl* /kərl/ and *coil* /koil/ because of the influence of vowels.
- *Upper North*: some of its features come from the original settlements. Probably its main feature is the retention of the postvocalic /r/ and the vowel /ae/.
- *Lower North*: this dialect shares a feature with that of the *Upper North*, which is the conservation of the /r/ in all positions.
- *Upper South*: this dialect has many things in common with some varieties of the Southern English.
- *Lower South*: it comprises a large area, so it is difficult to think that they all share the same features. In many areas the pronunciation of the final or preconsonantal /r/ has

² The map has been obtained from: *The Washington Post*. Website. <<https://goo.gl/hx9F9I>> in order to show the main dialects spoken in the North American territory.

disappeared in words such as *car* /kɑ:/ or *hard* /hɑ:d/. Also groups of final consonants tend to suffer a weaker articulation or pronunciation especially in non-standard use, this can be appreciated in words like *last* (las') or *find* (fin').

- *General American*: at the beginning it was one of the main areas and dialects but little by little it became controversial because there were words that were not used by younger generations. Its main characteristics are: the use of the /a/ in words like *fast* /fast/ and *path* /path/, the unrounded vowel in *hot* /hɒt/, *top* /tɒp/ or the retention of the strong /r/ in all positions.
- *African American Vernacular English*: also called *Vernacular Black English*, this term was useful to identify the linguistic situation in areas like West Africa or the Caribbean during slavery. Pidgin English was the language used to establish communication between English-speaking Europeans and Africans. It is also a controversial variety. Its features are the reduction of final consonant clusters *list* (lis'), the use of the verb *to be*, they tend to delete it as a linker and as a helping verb (auxiliary), for example: *he is short* → *he short* or *we are speaking* → *we speakin'*. Other peculiarity is that there is no mark of the third person singular, for instance: *he talk* instead of *he talks*.
- *Hispanic American English*: is the result of languages that have been in contact with a bilingual culture, in this case in contact with the Spanish culture. The situation is difficult because it can be found in speakers who speak better Spanish than English and vice versa.

To conclude, there are a lot of varieties of dialects in America because of the spread of education and this shows the influence of colonialism in this land through the pass of time.

2.5.The two major varieties of English: American and British

English has been spread in many different countries so different varieties have emerged, but the two main varieties of English are American and British English because they are spoken by the major number of people in a wide territory although they are perceived very differently. For some people American English is like a degradation of the English language, it is seen as something negative for this language but for some others it is appreciated as a natural evolution of language, nothing problematic. According to Saraceni (2015: 62), the idea is that English acquires new forms as it naturally adapts to different environments. This issue is not only related with linguistics but with history or even politics. The original idea

was that up to the 19th c., the English of Europe (British English) was the oldest and real one but it was not up to American's independence that the role of language changed and it began the real distinction between British and American English so:

This is, in essence, the central idea: English is not one, but many, because its relocation in different parts of the world was made it capable of expression different national identities: American, Australian, Indian, Malaysian, Nigerian and so on. (Saraceni 2015: 67).

So the differences between British and American English make distinctions, clear cases of what would be the differences of dialects and accents in local territories but also the differences between spoken and written English, that is to say the register, which would indicate the level of the user, the fluency he has with the language in different types of situations, a clear example of this is the use of contracted forms only in spoken English whereas in written English it is much more appropriate not to use contracted forms because of the formality.

The point with this is that English is a very diverse language, it is not just a group of fixed forms, words or expressions but a language with its different dialects and accents, although it is not very noticeable by common speakers of English who has just learnt it with fixed patterns on grammar, vocabulary and oral expression.

As a general view, it is better to focus on the differences between British and American English which will show that English is not just a fixed language.

English can be used as a mother tongue or native language (L1), as a second language (L2) or as a foreign language but it depends on the country in which it is spoken. In countries such as North America, England, Canada or New Zealand, English is used as the mother tongue but in countries like Singapore, Hong Kong or Pakistan, English is used as a L2 because it is used only for specific purposes such as political or educational ones. On the other hand, there are countries that have their own languages and they do not use English for specific purposes so here it is used just as a foreign language, those countries are Brazil, Japan or Thailand for example. Something interesting to mention is that many of these countries are oriented toward American English (Canada) whereas some others are oriented toward British English (Australia, Africa...) or we could say that all these varieties of English can be classified into two big groups or families: American English and British English.

These two big groups can generate certain problems to students of English who can not distinguish between the two varieties of English and see them as two different languages

that have the same name, so here the teacher has an important role and must help students to distinguish both types and show their differences and similarities.

In relation with that, we should not classify one type of English as ‘good’ or ‘correct’ and the rest as ‘bad’ or ‘incorrect’, we should be aware that there exist more than one variety of English and that each of them has its own peculiarities in written and spoken English. Obviously it is important to distinguish between what is grammatical and ungrammatical from a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ English because the latter classification is rather subjective but we must not forget that languages change through the pass of time and there are certain aspects that are going to change as well but this does not mean that they were wrong, they were simply used in a different way. These changes are tied to social, political or economic factors, which influence on the evolution of language, but it must not be misunderstood the idea that change is something wrong or bad, changes show the evolution of language in this particular case.

In the past, it did not exist the standardization that today exists, there were different kinds of accents and dialects, probably the concept ‘standard’ emerged later. In relation with this the term ‘codification’ appeared, which is closely related to dictionaries and grammar books because they were created to establish norms, rules and they are used as a reference for many people that consulted them. They could be defined as powerful because they have established what is standard and not. One case in which this can be seen is the case of rhoticity in pronunciation, while British English nowadays tends to be non-rhotic in general, American English is rhotic, this means that they tend to use /r/ in pronunciation before consonants and after vowels if they appear at the end of a syllable. The evolution of this norm changed through the pass of time because during the 18th c., British English was rhotic but it changed and it was considered as wrong. So this particular case is an example of prestige which basically depends on the geographical area.

2.6.The current situation of English

20% of speakers of English are found in the U.S.A, this could mean that English is a global language and it is not reduced just to a simple area (Britain), language changes through the pass of time and it is something people (purists, conservatives) must admit.

As time passed by, the differences between American and British English were noticeable, differences in spelling and pronunciation and new words appeared in American English that in British English did not exist, this was appreciated when Noah Webster wrote his dictionaries. Noah Webster wanted to show the differences between British and American

English, two different languages and two different nations. He also wanted to give prestige to American English because it was considered by many people as a corrupted language. Nowadays these differences are noticeable, in the cases of modals, pronouns, negation, etc.

It could be said that American English has had a big influence all over the world (its forms, spellings...), the reason of that is the huge widespread due to the influence of media, technology or television among other important areas which were developed.

3. DIFFERENCES OF VOCABULARY AND SPELLING

3.1. General classification of vocabulary

Something remarkable is that the differences of British and American English vocabulary are higher than those of grammar. So to make a clear comprehension and according to Strevens (1972: 54-60) a distinction should be made between three types of vocabulary:

1. The common word-stock
2. Common ideas, different words
3. Words with no counterpart

1. THE COMMON WORD-STOCK. As the word “word-stock” indicates, in this group it can be found the majority of words of a language, that is to say, its vocabulary, concretely those that are common in both types of English, not the different words but the similar ones, that are the majority of them. For example: *man, woman, tree, fish, hot, etc.* (Strevens, 1972: 54)
2. COMMON IDEAS, DIFFERENT WORDS³. In this group are included words which are different in both types of English but express the same idea or object. This type of vocabulary can be found in clothing, for example the British English (BrE henceforward) word *trousers* correspond to American English (AmE henceforward) *pants* but BrE *pants* only refers to *underpants*, this vocabulary is not only employed for clothing, there are other fields in which we can find it, for example: BrE *boot* is the AmE *trunk*, BrE *petrol* and AmE *gas* or *gasoline*, BrE *car* and AmE *auto* or *automobile*, in BrE *one hires a car* but in AmE *one rents a car*, in this particular case both words exist in both languages but they have different meanings, *to hire* in BrE is used for referring to cars, a temporal accommodation for a meeting or clothing among others but *to rent* in BrE is related with living accommodation. In AmE it happens the same, we know already the meaning of *to rent* but *to hire* is related with employment. Another interesting case that fixes in this group is the case of the educational system in both places, Britain and America. The term *school* would be the same for both types but inside of it, there are certain distinctions, for example a public school in BrE is what we know as a *private school*, whereas in America the free school is called *public*

³ All these examples have been taken from (Strevens, 1972: 55-59).

school. The universities in Britain are composed of three *terms* but in American universities there are only two *semesters* or four *quarters*. When British students take their first degree, they are called *post-graduate* whereas in America they are called *graduate*.

In relation with law, the word *attorney* is used for American English and according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, (s.v. *attorney* n. 3.), the noun developed this usage in “a professional and properly-qualified legal agent practising in the courts of Common Law”. For British English the word used is *solicitor*, which according to the *OED*, (s.v. *solicitor* n.3.a.), the noun developed this usage in “one properly qualified and formally admitting to practise as a law-agent in any court; formerly, one practising in a court of equity, as distinguished from an attorney”. But in relation with law, there is one term which is used in both types of English and is *lawyer* that is the most common one. The most common words of this type are shown here:

BrE	AmE
<i>car</i>	<i>auto or automobile</i>
<i>post-graduate</i>	<i>graduate</i>
<i>boot</i>	<i>trunk</i>
<i>railroad</i>	<i>railway</i>
<i>engineer</i>	<i>driver</i>
<i>conductor</i>	<i>guard</i>
<i>baggage car</i>	<i>van</i>
<i>sleeper (sleeping car)</i>	<i>tie</i>
<i>lorry</i>	<i>truck</i>
<i>petrol</i>	<i>gasoline or gas</i>
<i>motorway</i>	<i>expressway</i>
<i>lift</i>	<i>elevator</i>
<i>post</i>	<i>mail</i>
<i>flat</i>	<i>apartment</i>

Table 3. Table of the most well-known different words between British and American English (Baugh 2002: 395-397)

It could be said that this category is related with both societies and it shows the differences and similarities of them.

3. WORDS WITH NO COUNTERPARTS⁴. As the title of this group indicates, it can be found words in one of the varieties that have no equivalent or counterpart in the other variety. This occurs especially with animals, plants, places, materials, sports, monarchy, presidential government, etc., that are characteristic of just one place (in this case America or Britain), for example the word *everglades* which is a National Park of Florida, *canyon* which is characteristic of American English and is a geographical place like the Grand Canyon or *gopher*, that is a typical North American mouse. In British English there are words like *wicket* or *fast bowler* that are terms related with the British sport *cricket*, whereas *pitcher* or *home run* are terms typical of the American sport *baseball*. Another case is the vocabulary like *princess* or *duchess* which is much more related to British English because of its monarchy, for American English there are words like *precinct* or *primary* that are words related to presidential governments/ politics.

3.2.Coinings⁵

Apart from this classification of vocabulary between the American and British varieties of English, there are certain words or expressions in American English that tend to be questionable because of their crudity, in fact for British, American English tends to be vulgar, but this is just an opinion, something subjective because American English has developed new coinings, more than British. Moreover, they have been adopted into British English. There are a reasonable variety of examples:

- a. Older coinings:
 - ***Boondoggling***, which according to the *OED*, (s.v. *boondoggling*, n. derivatives) it means “a trivial, useless, or unnecessary undertaking; wasteful expenditure”.
 - ***Snollygoster***, which according to the *OED*, (s.v. *snollygoster*, n.) it means “a shrewd, unprincipled person, especially a politician”.
- b. Some recent verbs:
 - ***To blow one's top***, which according to the *OED*, (s.v. *to blow one's top*, 24i) it means “to lose control of oneself through anger, excitement, etc.”.

⁴ All these example have been taken from (Stevens, 1972: 59-60).

⁵ All These examples have been taken from (Stevens, 1972: 61-62).

- **To moonlight**, which according to the *OED*, (s.v. *to moonlight*, v.3.) it means “to do paid work in addition to one’s regular employment; to take on a subsidiary job in order to supplement one’s income”.
- c. Terms from Black English:
 - **Soul brother**, which according to the *OED*, (s.v. *soul brother*, n.2.) it means “in African- American usage: a black man or boy, especially as regarded by other black people”.
 - **Whitey**, which according to the *OED*, (s.v. *whitey*, n.1.) it means “a white person”.
- d. Recent film terms:
 - **Blue movie**, which according to the *OED*, (s.v. *blue movie*, n. special uses) it means “pornographic film”.
 - **Nudie**, which according to the *OED*, (s.v. *nudie*, n. a.) it means “a show film, or other entertainment featuring nude performers; a photograph or magazine featuring nudity. Also a nude or performer; a nudist”.
- e. Terms from jazz music:
 - **Cat**, which according to the *OED*, (s.v. *cat*, n.2.c.) it means “an expert in, or one expertly appreciative of jazz”.
 - **Gig**, which according to the *OED*, (s.v. *gig*, n.6.) it means “an engagement for a musician or musicians playing jazz, dance-music, etc.”.
- f. Miscellaneous terms (diverse terms):
 - **Handout**, which according to the *OED*, (s.v. *handout*, n.1.) it means “a quantity of financial or other material aid given to a person or people in need”.
 - **Lush**, which according to the *OED*, (s.v. *lush*, n. c.) it means “a habitual drunkard, one addicted to drink”.
- g. Terms related to drug addiction:
 - **Grass**, which according to the *OED*, (s.v. *grass*, n.1.e.) it means “marijuana, used as a drug”.
 - **Junkie**, which according to the *OED*, (s.v. *junkie*, n.) it means “a drug-addict; also occasionally, a drug-peddler”.

These examples as mentioned before have been adopted into British English usage and users tend to consider them as slang because they sound as vulgar vocabulary but it is important to be aware that Americans are not so concerned about slang and formality.

Furthermore, these are words and expressions that are very well-known nowadays by almost all speakers of English, including British, of course.

According to Strevens (1972: 63-64), not all the words or expressions were taken from American English into British English but the other way round, there are words or expressions that have been borrowed from British English into American English such as:

- **Charwoman** (BrE), which according to the *OED*, (s.v. *charwoman*, n.) it means “a woman hired by the day to do odd jobs of household work”.
- **Opposite number** (BrE), which according to the *OED*, (s.v. *opposite number*, special uses) it means “a partner, a counterpart”.
- **Smog** (BrE), which according to the *OED*, (s.v. *smog*, n.1.) it means “fog intensified by smoke”.
- **To miss the bus** (BrE), which according to the *OED*, (s.v. *to miss the bus*, 13.e.) it means “to be too slow to take advantage of an opportunity”.

3.3. Etymology of words

In relation with the vocabulary, some words appeared because of the influence of English colonialists in America, British colonialists were impressed about the hills and mountains so there are terms like:

- **Bluff** (noun): first attested in 1666 with the meaning “a cliff or headland with a broad precipitous face” (*OED*, s.v. *bluff*, 1.a.), from *bluff* (adjective), perhaps from Dutch *blaf* (given by Kilian 1599, in *blaf aensicht* broad flat face, *blaf van vorhoofd*, rendered by Latin *fronto* ‘having a broad forehead’). This appears to be identical in sense with the English word; but, outside Kilian, nothing is known of it.
- **Foothill** (noun): first attested in 1788 with the meaning “any group of hills next to a mountain or mountain range” (*OED*, s.v. *foothill*, 1.a.), from *foot* (noun) + *hill* (noun).
- **Watershed** (noun): first attested in 1764 with the meaning “the line separating the waters flowing into different rivers or rivers basins; a narrow elevated tract of ground between two drainage areas; a water-parting” (*OED*, s.v. *watershed*, 1.a.), from *water* (noun) + *shed* (noun), perhaps after German *Wasserscheide* (14th c.).

Colonialists learnt words from **Native Americans** as well, words like:

- **Moose** (noun): first attested in 1614 with the meaning “the elk, *Alces alces*; the usual name for the animal in North America and New Zealand” (*OED*, s.v. *moose*, 1.a.), from Eastern Abenaki *mos*, from Proto-Algonquian **mo·swa*, in later use probably reinforced by or reborrowed < the identical word in southern New England Algonquian languages, e.g. Narragansett *moòs*.
- **Opossum** (noun): first attested in 1610 with the meaning “any of various small and moderate-sized marsupials, mostly arboreal, of the mainly neotropical families Didelphidae, Caenolestidae, and Microbiotheriidae, which typically have an opposable thumb on the hind foot and a prehensile and hairless tail” (*OED*, s.v. *opossum*, 1.a.), from the Virginia Algonquian noun *opassom* < *op-* white + *-assom* dog, doglike animal.
- **Raccoon** (noun): first attested in 1610 with the meaning “an omnivorous, cat-sized American mammal of the genus *Procyon* (family Procyonidae), typically nocturnal and often arboreal; esp. the common *P. lotor* of North and Central America, which was a foxlike face with a black mask and a bushy ringed tail. Also: any mammal of this family; a procyonid” (*OED*, s.v. *raccoon*, 2.), from Virginia Algonquian *aroughcun*, *aroughcune* (also transcribed as *rahaugcum*, *rarowcun*, *raugroghcum*, and *arathkone*), of unknown origin.

Their contact brought to English language a huge variety of words related with their way of life:

- **Canoe** (noun): first attested in 1555 with the meaning “a kind of simply, keelless boat: (a) originally applied to those of the West Indian aborigines, which were hollowed out of a single tree-trunk, and thence to those of other primitive societies, or of prehistoric cultures, of this construction; (b) extended to those of other societies and other construction, and used generally for any roughly-made craft used by American Indians, Malayo-Polynesians, etc.; most of these use paddles instead of oars, whence ‘canoe’ is sometimes understood to be any vessel propelled by paddles”, (*OED*, s.v. *canoe*, 1.a. & 1.b.), from Spanish *canoa*. *Canoa* continued in English use into the 18th c.
- **Toboggan** (noun): first attested in 1829 with the meaning “a light sledge consisting of a thin strip of wood turned up in front, used by the Canadian Indians for transport over snow”, (*OED*, s.v. *toboggan*, 1.), an adaptation of a North American Indian name in Canada of a sleigh or sledge; given in French spelling *tabaganne* by Le Clercq

Nouvelle Relation de la Gaspesie, 1692, p.70 (J. Platt in *Notes & Queries* 9th Ser. XII. 467).

- **Papoose** (noun): first attested in 1634 with the meaning “a young North American Indian child, esp. an infant carried in a papoose carrier. Now generally regarded as offensive”, (*OED*, s.v. *papoose*, 1.), from an Algonquian word.
- **Moccasin** (noun): first attested in 1612 with the meaning “a kind of soft-soled leather shoe originally worn by North American Indians, later also by trappers, backwoodsmen, etc”, (*OED*, s.v. *moccasin*, 1.a.), from Powhatan *mockasins*, *mawhcasuns* (plural; probably pidginized forms with English –s).

As they acquired some word from Native American, they also acquired some from other languages like Dutch, German, French, Spanish or African. European languages had a strong influence in the American language, in fact many words have been adopted from them. First of all, **French** words like:

- **Caribou** (noun): first attested in 1672 with the meaning “the North American Reindeer”, (*OED*, s.v. *caribou*), from Canadian French *Caribou*: probably of North American Indian origin.
- **Bayou** (noun): first attested in 1766 with the meaning “the name given (chiefly in the Southern states of N. America) to the marshy off-shoots and overflowings of lakes and rivers”, (*OED*, s.v. *bayou*), from American French, from Choctaw *bayuk*
- **Totem** (noun): first attested in 1609 with the meaning “the hereditary mark, emblem, or badge of a tribe, clan, or group of Indians, consisting of a figure or representation of some animal, less commonly a plant or other natural object, after which the group is names; thus sometimes used to denote the tribe, clan, or division of a ‘nation’, having such a mark; also applied to the animal or natural object itself, sometimes considered to be ancestrally or fraternally related to the clan, being spoken of as a brother or sister, and treated as an object of friendly regard, or sometimes even as incarnating a guarding spirit who may be appealed to or worshipped”, (*OED*, s.v. *totem*, a.), from Ojibwa, or some kindred Algonquin dialect.
- **Praline** (noun): first attested in 1714 with the meaning “a confection made by borrowing almonds or other nuts in boiling sugar; a nut prepared in this way. Now chiefly: a smooth paste made from this confection, often used as a filling in chocolates; a chocolate filled with this paste”, (*OED*, s.v. *praline*), from French *praline*.

- **Bateau** (noun): first attested in 1711 with the meaning “a light river boat; esp. the long tapering boats with flat bottoms used by the French Canadians”, (*OED*, s.v. *bateau*), from Old French *batel* ‘boat’.
- **Voyageur** (noun): first attested in 1793 with the meaning “a man employed by the fur companies in carrying goods to and from the trading posts on the lakes and rivers; a Canadian boatman”, (*OED*, s.v. *voyageur*), from French.
- **Cache** (noun): first attested in 1797 with the meaning “a hole or mound made by American pioneers and Arctic explorers to hide stores of provisions, ammunition, etc.”, (*OED*, s.v. *cache*, 1.b.), from French *cache*, from *cache* to hide.

Dutch also influenced because they lived for a period of time in the zone of what we know nowadays as New York, as opposed to French, their settlements occurred later in the 18th c. There are words like:

- **Cookie** (noun): first attested in 1754 with the meaning “the usual name for a baker’s plain bun in Scotland; in U.S. usually a small flat sweet cake (a biscuit in U.K.), but locally a name for small cakes of various form with or without sweetening”, (*OED*, s.v. *cookie*, 1.), probably from Dutch *koekje*, diminutive of *koek* cake: this is apparently certain for U.S.; but for Scotland historical evidence has not been found.
- **Patroon** (noun): first attested in 1641 with the meaning “a person who gives financial or other support to a person, cause, activity, etc.”, (*OED*, s.v. *patroon*, 1.), apparently chiefly reflecting forms in other languages: French *patron*, Spanish *patrón*, Portuguese *patron*, Italian †*patrone*. After Dutch *patroon*, as used in the former Dutch colony of New Amsterdam (1655).
- **Santa Claus** (noun): first attested in 1773 with the meaning “the name of an imaginary personage, who is supposed, in the night before Christmas day, to bring presents for children, a stocking being hung up to receive his gifts. Also, a person wearing a red cloak or suit and a white beard, to simulate the supposed Santa Claus to children, esp. in shops or on shopping streets”, (*OED*, s.v. *Santa Claus*, a.), from Dutch dialect *Sante Klass* (Dutch *Sint Klaas*), Saint Nicholas.

There are also some **German** words because Germans established there, in different areas of the American continent. They contributed with words such as:

- **Hamburger** (noun): first attested in 1617 with the meaning “a native or inhabitant of Hamburg”, (*OED*, s.v. *Hamburger*, 1.), from German *Hamburger* a native or inhabitant of Hamburg in Germany.
- **Semester** (noun): first attested in 1826 with the meaning “a period or term of six months, esp. in German and U.S. universities and colleges, the college half-year”, (*OED*, s.v. *semester*), from German *semester*, from Latin (*curcus*) *sēmēstris* (period) of six months, from *sē-*, *sex* six + *mēnsis* month.

Some common words should also be included because they were borrowed from other languages such as:

Spanish:

- **Creole** (noun): first attested in 1697 with the meaning “a descendant of white European settlers (esp. Spanish or French) who is born in a colonized country”, (*OED*, s.v. *creole*, 1.a.), probably from different origins: Spanish *criollo*, Portuguese *crioulo* and French *créole*.
- **Patio** (noun): first attested in 1764 with the meaning “a roofless inner courtyard open to the sky, in a Spanish or Mexican house”, (*OED*, s.v. *patio*, 1.a.), from Spanish *patio* courtyard.
- **Plaza** (noun): first attested in 1661 with the meaning “a public square, a marketplace in Spain and Spanish-speaking countries”, (*OED*, s.v. *plaza*, 1.), from Spanish *plaza* open space, town square.

From **African** just few words survived, words such as:

- **Gumbo**⁶ (noun): first attested in 1805 with the meaning “a soup thickened with the mucilaginous pods of this plant”, (*OED*, s.v. *gumbo*, 1.b.), from the Angolan *kingombo*, the *ki-* being the usual Bantu prefix, and *-ngombo* the real word.
- **Okra** (noun): first attested in 1679 with the meaning “a tall plant of the mallow family, *Abelmoschus esculentus*, native to Africa and widely cultivated in tropical and subtropical regions. Also called bhindi, gumbo, lady’s fingers”, (*OED*, s.v. *okra*, 1.), from a West African language, probably Igbo *ókùrù*.

⁶ The word *gumbo* can be also written *gumboo*.

Afrikaans came from different places of Africa and they did not speak just one language, they were slaves, forced to speak in English, so this means that their languages were forbidden. Children (Afrikaans) were also obliged to learn English.

So, all this mean that origins are not so important as it is though in general but it is a matter of usefulness, how useful a word has become or how necessary is a word in order to express ourselves.

Although the majority of immigrants were obliged to speak in English, some of them who belonged to certain countries were able to introduce into American English certain words that had no translation in English, that is the case of some Italian words such as *pizza* or *spaghetti* that have survived nowadays, the same kind of phenomenon occurred with German, with words like *frankfurter*, *hamburger*, *delicatessen* or *poker*.

This is very important because some of these words are very common nowadays and are used all over the world.

3.4.The controversy over Americanisms

The word *Americanisms* refers to words that were used in AmE that were used in the 17th c. in English and are no longer used, so Americans were accused of corrupting the language and they had to defend themselves because their tendency was to use old-fashioned words. All this situation was connected with purism and the purist attitude. Purists tried to preserve the language as pure as possible and to avoid possible corruptions that do not follow the norm and that could alter its purity that is why it is connected with American English because they saw on it certain kind of corruption.

3.5.Spelling

Although differences of grammar and vocabulary between these two varieties of English are very noticeable and well-known, there are also differences of spelling that can be appreciated at first sight. They can be appreciated thanks to the American scholar Noah Webster, that as mentioned before was the creator of the first American dictionary *Compendious Dictionary of the English Language* (1806), on it there are spelling differences such as the deletion of *-u-* in words ending in *-our*, that is the case of words like:

BrE	AmE
<i>colour</i>	<i>color</i>
<i>honour</i>	<i>honor</i>
<i>harbour</i>	<i>harbor</i>

Table 4. Differences of spelling between BrE and AmE, the deletion of *-u-* in words ending in *-our* (Strevens, 1972: 64)

The deletion of consonant in words in which there are double consonants, that is the case of words like:

BrE	AmE
<i>traveller</i>	<i>traveler</i>
<i>cancelled</i>	<i>canceled</i>
<i>waggon</i>	<i>wagon</i>

Table 5. Differences of spelling between BrE and AmE, the deletion of consonants in words with double consonant (Strevens, 1972: 65)

The substitution of the ending *-re* by *-er*, for example:

BrE	AmE
<i>theatre</i>	<i>theater</i>
<i>centre</i>	<i>center</i>
<i>metre</i>	<i>meter</i>

Table 6. Differences of spelling between BrE and AmE, substitution of the ending *-re* by *-er* (Strevens, 1972: 65)

Finally, according to Strevens (1972: 65-66), the endings *-ize* and *-ise*, the former is common in AmE and the latter of BrE although both endings can be used in BrE, for example: *realize* (AmE) and *realise* (BrE). Although these are the most significant differences and examples of spelling between the two varieties, there are other cases in which is can be appreciated as well, for instance:

BrE	AmE
<i>catalogue</i>	<i>catalog</i>
<i>cheque</i>	<i>check</i>
<i>pyjamas</i>	<i>pajamas</i>
<i>defence</i>	<i>defense</i>
<i>syphon</i>	<i>siphon</i>

Table 7. Differences of spelling between BrE and AmE (Stevens, 1972: 65-66)

It can be observed that some words that are perfectly recognisable in British and American English are easily understood because are common, common in colloquial speech. Although there are other American words that are no easily understood in British English, words such as: *hootch*, *boob* or *grafter* among others, there is certain difficulty to distinguish sometimes in a pair of words which word is British and which one is American.

Differences of these types are visible in American English, others adopted in British English or simply they are shared by both types of English. But not only differences are related to spelling but with pronunciation too.

3.5.1. Spelling of compounds verbs in American and British English

As Rohdenburg (2009: 40-42) claimed, compound verbs can be found in three different forms, two of them are more frequent than the other, they are with just one-word or hyphenated, for example: *to earmark*, *to name-drop*. The other form is to find a compound verb of two words, this is the case of *to ski jump*. In AmE there is a tendency to avoid hyphenated forms whereas BrE tend to use hyphenated forms. For example: *to backpedal* (AmE)/ *to back-pedal* (BrE), *to shortchange* (AmE)/ *to short-change* (BrE). Of course, there are some exceptions: *to babysit* (AmE)/ *to baby-sit* (BrE) both forms are acceptable, *to key-punch* or *to keypunch* (BrE), also *to break-dance*, *to breakdance* and *to break dance* in AmE (different cases are possible); *to hot-dog*, *to hot dog* or *to hotdog* in BrE. Other possibility is that compounds verbs sometimes derive from compound nouns, so if the compound noun has a hyphen, it is formed by just one word, this form will be remained in the formation of the compound verb, for example: *to airlift* (verb)/ *airlift* (noun), *to lip-read* (verb)/ *to lip-reading* (noun).

If the noun is compound of two words then the compound verb is hyphenated, for example: *to hero-worship* (verb)/ *hero worship* (noun), *to pink-slip* (verb)/ *pink slip* (noun).

4. DIFFERENCES OF GRAMMAR

To begin with it is important to clarify that there are many dialects in English, so it would be better for us to distinguish between local dialects and the standard dialects which is what we know as Standard English. The local dialect can only be used in certain local territories with its own local accent, this does not occur with Standard English, which is the English used internationally and which can be spoken with a huge variety of accents. If this Standard English is spoken with an American accent, then it is called *General American* but if the accent used is British then it is called *Received Pronunciation* or *RP*. Apart from those two main accents, we can find cases such as that of Canada, Australia or West Indies, where they use the Standard English but with a regional accent. Here it is an example of the grammar of local dialects and Standard English:

BrE (Cockney) Dialect:

- 'Ere, what you done that for?
- I never done nothing. (Strevens 1972: 46).

Standard English:

- Here, what did you do that for?
- I didn't do anything. (Strevens 1972: 46).

If the speaker is only able to speak in the local dialect is because he probably belongs to a lower socio-economic class and has some limitations but if the speaker speaks with a Standard English is because he probably belongs to a higher socio-economic class and has more opportunities to communicate with people all over the world. But there is a third case that is the case in which the speaker can manage both dialects, so he has very few limitations and is able to communicate with a higher flexibility.

Analysing these two major dialects (American English and British English), the most outstanding differences are found in: pronunciation, morphology and syntax.

4.1. The most outstanding differences of pronunciation

Probably the most noticeable changes between American and British English were that of vocabulary but later changes of pronunciation were introduced and they should be mentioned:

- a) Differences in vowel sounds like *fast*, *path*, *grass*, *dance*. It also affected vowels before: *f* /f/, *sk* /sk/, *sp* /sp/, *st* /st/, *ss* /s/, */z/*, *th* /θ/ voiceless or /ð/ voiced and *n* /n/ (in New England the change took place but not in the rest of the territory that preserved its initial pronunciation). Sometimes there is a tendency to introduce an intermediate vowel in some words.

Word	BrE	AmE
<i>fast</i>	/fɑ:st/	/fast/
<i>path</i>	/pɑ:θ/	/path/
<i>grass</i>	/grɑ:s/	/gras/
<i>dance</i>	/dɑ:ns/	/dans/

Table 8. Pronunciation of words British and American varieties (Baught 2002: 373)

- b) The most outstanding difference in pronunciation is the treatment of the /r/ sound. English is said to have a Received Pronunciation (RP), so it is not frequent to use the /r/ sound in words except before vowels, this does not occur in American English, in which the /r/ is frequently pronounced. The reason why Americans pronounce the /r/ is because they have retained the old English pronunciation because of the north English influence.
- c) Pronunciation of /o/ in words like *not*, *lot*, *hot*, *top*. In England they are pronounced with an open /o/ but in America it is a close /o/ that tend to be similar to the pronunciation of the /a/ in *father*.

Word	BrE	AmE
<i>not</i>	/ nɒt/	/ năt/
<i>lot</i>	/ lɒt/	/ lăt/
<i>hot</i>	/ hɒt/	/ hăt/
<i>top</i>	/ tɒp/	/ tăp/

Table 9. Pronunciation of words British and American varieties (Baught 2002: 375)

- d) Americans tend to speak slowly and there is not too much variation in the intonation than in British English.

4.2. Morphology

4.2.1. Irregular verbs' morphology

Certain irregular verbs tend to show differences dealing with morphology when used in the AmE and BrE varieties:

- **To get: got/ gotten:** *gotten* is used in the North of England and North America with the meaning of “acquire/ obtain” and *got* with the meaning of “have/ possess”. In the case of American English the form *gotten* for the past participle is used, which does not exist in British English, instead of this the form used is *got*. *Got* was much more frequent than *gotten* which is considered as a case of post-colonial revival (what is seen as colonial conservatism in present-day AmE) than a case of colonial lag, so it can be considered as a morphological Americanism.
- **To have: do you have- have you got:**
 - a) Present in BrE and AmE:
Have you...? (meaning: “Do you own or possess in general?”)
 - b) Present in AmE only:
Do you have...? (meaning: “Do you own or possess at this moment of time?”)
 - c) Present in BrE only:
Do you have...? (meaning: “Do you habitually have...?”)
 - d) Present in BrE only:
Have you got...? (meaning: “Do you own or possess at this moment of time...?”)

There are clear distinctions and uses among them but some of these uses have changed through the pass of time, for example in the case of *Do you have...?*, it is used for both cases *c* and *d* with the same meaning because its usage has been spread among young people.

In the case of *to have* in questions, it is constructed with the past tense *Did you have...?* in AmE and *Have you had...?* in BrE. For example:

- *Have you had your holidays yet?* (BrE), (Strevens 1972: 48)
 - *Did you have your vacation yet?* (AmE), (Strevens 1972: 48)
- **Proven:** according to Rohdenburg (2009: 23), something new here is the ending *-en* which was introduced by the Scots during the 16th c. The use of this suffix is a tendency of the past participle in AmE. This is not a case of morphological Americanism because it is also used in BrE. It is also a case of post-colonial revival and it was used occasionally but the majority of times during the 17th c.

4.2.2. Changes of category. From noun to verb and vice versa

In relation with the category of differences of verbs, it must be included the tendency of American English of using nouns as verbs and verbs as nouns. For example:

NOUNS AS VERBS

<i>pressure</i>	<i>to pressure</i>
<i>radio</i>	<i>to radio</i>
<i>chair</i>	<i>to chair</i>

Table 10. The use of nouns as verbs in American English (Strevens, 1972: 49)

VERBS AS NOUNS

<i>to build up</i>	<i>a build-up</i>
<i>to count down</i>	<i>a countdown</i>
<i>to check up</i>	<i>a check-up</i>

Table 11. The use of verbs as nouns in American English (Strevens, 1972: 49)

Finally, there are differences of verbs in some idiomatic expressions, that is the case of the AmE *you have to be joking* which has suffered little change in BrE *you have got to be joking*. It could be said that American English has remained static for a period of time as opposed to British English.

4.3. Syntax

4.3.1. The present perfect and the past simple

In English, there are two tenses used especially to express past events, they are the *present perfect* and the *past simple*. For example:

- *I **have played** football recently.* (Present perfect)
- *I **played** football recently.* (Past simple)

The present perfect became more frequent and also the past simple which became to be frequent from Old to Middle English period. Something remarkable is that the present perfect was more frequent in BrE than in AmE because it was the past simple which was used

in the latter one. According to Rohdenburg (2009: 231-236), the evidence of the use of present perfect in BrE is found in the newspapers of the time but with the development in the 18th c. of broadcasting the situation changed. In the Modern English period (19th & 20th centuries) the use of the present perfect suffered a decrease but among these two varieties of English is much more frequent used in BrE nowadays. Moreover, in the early Modern English period it was very frequent to use expressions of past time (yesterday, since, last Sunday...) to accompany the present perfect tense.

The decline of the present perfect is a real fact and probably the reason of this is that their differences have been reduced so much that now are difficult to differentiate and it is much more used the past simple.

The fact that the present perfect is not used in AmE as in BrE, is probably a reason that shows its evolution through the pass of time, at least in verb phrases but it can also be used to mark the difference and preserve the use of the present perfect in BrE, such is the case of adverbials like *just* which are better combined with the present perfect tense.

4.3.2. Regularization of irregular past tenses and past participle forms

Regular verb forms were much more frequently used in BrE than in AmE, this occurred before the second half of the 20th c., after this fact irregular forms increased in BrE and regular forms were treated as morphological Americanisms. According to *OEL*, the older an irregular form, the more frequently it will be used. Irregular forms are very tied to AmE since 18th c. so it is a case of post-colonial re-innovation instead of colonial lag.

4.3.3. Differences of the noun and pronoun

A common case is the use of *you and I* or *you and me*. Whereas in AmE we find *you and I* (both as subject and object) in BrE we find *you and me* when they refer to the object or complement. A distinction can be also made if there is variability or not when speaking or writing, sometimes in speaking is used the expression *you and I* and in writing *you and me* but if there is no variability, just one case is used for both which is *you and I* because it is very frequent in AmE.

Another case can be observed in journalism, when someone is named with any attribute we can find two options that are:

- In AmE, we find first the attributes of the person and the name, whereas in BrE we find first the name and later the attributes. For example:
 - *Bearded, 30-year old property millionaire Edward Johnson...* (AmE), (Stevens 1972: 50)
 - *Mr. Edward Johnson, the bearded 30-year old property millionaire...* (BrE), (Stevens 1972: 50)
- The other case dealing with this aspect is the case of *one...one* for BrE and *one...he* for AmE. For example:
 - *When one has seen the size of the problem, one realizes...* (BrE), (Stevens 1972: 50)
 - *When one has seen the size of the problem, he realizes...* (AmE), (Stevens 1972: 50)

4.3.4. Reflexive structures: the omission of the reflexive pronoun

According to Rohdenburg (2009: 167), the Danish linguist Otto Jespersen, analysed that AmE and BrE are different in the use of reflexive structures. For it he listed a group of six verbs: *empty (into)*, *trouble*, *qualify (for)*, *oversleep*, *overeat*, *overwork*. He appointed that the replacement of the reflexive pronoun by a zero variant was a tendency in AmE which started earlier in AmE than in BrE, we could also say that it affected it faster, for example:

- I *oversleep* **myself**. (BrE), (Rohdenburg 2009: 167)
- I *oversleep*. (AmE), (Rohdenburg 2009: 167)

Empty shows a clear contrast between the two varieties of English, for example:

- *The Thames **empties (itself)** into the North Sea.* (Rohdenburg 2009: 167)

This case/use of the zero variant was probably expanded in AmE because of the influence of American authors from the 18th c.

4.3.5. Differences of prepositions

According to Stevens, (1972: 50-52) prepositions suffer certain differences depending on the variety of English used, for example:

Different from; different than; different to. In British English the forms that are used are *different from* and *different to* whereas in American English *different than* is used.

The use of the preposition **on** for dates and days of the week is frequent in British English but there is no preposition for American English. For example:

- *I start my holidays **on Friday**.* (BrE), (Stevens 1972: 51)
- *I start my vacation **Friday**.* (AmE), (Stevens 1972: 51)

By day-days; by night-at night-nights. In American English there is no use of preposition, they just simply use *days* or *nights* but in British English it is used *by day*, *by night* or *at night*.

- *I watch TV **at nights**.* (BrE)
- *I watch TV **night**.* (AmE)

The case of home or at home. In American English there is no use of preposition when using the word *home* but it is used in British English. For example:

- *They were resting **at home**.* (BrE)
- *They were resting **home**.* (AmE)

All of the-all the. The former one is used in American English, whereas the other one is used in British English.

There are also a number of verbs that are followed by prepositions, the case here is that in American English it is used one preposition and in British English is used another one. For example:

- *I'll **check** that **out**.* (AmE), (Stevens 1972: 51)
- *I'll **check up on** that.* (BrE), (Stevens 1972: 51)
- *To **talk with** somebody.* (AmE), (Stevens 1972: 51)
- *To **talk to** somebody.* (BrE), (Stevens 1972: 51)

Other cases different from these mentioned before are:

- the use of the article **the** in the following expression:

- *He's in **hospital**.* (BrE), (Stevens 1972: 52)
- *He's in **the hospital**.* (AmE), (Stevens 1972: 52)
- The expression **to order something done**, has different uses. If it is used in British English, the verb must be in the form *to be* done, but if it is used in American English this does not occur. For example:
 - *The teacher **ordered homework to be finished** by the end of the class.* (BrE)
 - *The teacher **ordered homework finished** by the end of the class.* (AmE)

5. CONCLUSION

To sum up, the essay shows the evolution of English from the very beginning and how it has been adapted through the pass of time due to the contact between different cultures and societies and also due to different necessities, in fact English vocabulary has been expanding through different processes like the creation of new words, borrowings from other languages, etc. It also has been shown the differences of grammar and the alternatives that exist between these two varieties.

The main problems of this topic could be the confusion that this differentiation creates on people, who may not understand why there are two words with the same meaning or when they should use them, the same could happen with grammar or even pronunciation. Another problem would be that related with registers and the formality of language. Some people have considered American language as a corrupted variety of English, that is to say as a corruption of English language, for them it was too vulgar to use it whereas British English was the Standard variety with the Received Pronunciation because it followed the norm. To consider these ideas as correct it is an error because it is not a question of what is 'good' and 'bad' but a question of evolution through the pass of time. Each language and variety has its own history and is marked by different events which have made each of them unique.

REFERENCES

- Baugh, A. C., & Cable, T. (2002). *A History of the English Language*. 5th ed. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Crystal, D. 2012. *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Harper, D. 2001-2017. *Online Etymology Dictionary*. Website. <www.etymonline.com> (27/06/2017).
- Medina, J. R. B. 2002. *Languages of Discovery: A Comparative Linguistic Study of English and Spanish after the Discovery of America*. Alicante: Editorial Club Universitario.
- Momma, H., & Matto, M. (Eds.). 2009. *A Companion to the History of the English Language*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
- NOAD (*New Oxford American Dictionary*). 2010. Website <www.en.oxforddictionaries.com/english> (28/06/2017).
- OED (*Oxford English Dictionary*). 2010. Website <www.en.oxforddictionaries.com> (28/06/2017).
- Pearsall, J. 2014. *Oxford English Dictionary*. Website <www.oed.com> (27/06)
- Rohdenburg, G., & Schlüter, J. 2009. *One Language, Two Grammars?: differences between British and American English*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Saraceni, M. 2015. *World Englishes: A critical analysis*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Speech Buddy. Website. <<https://goo.gl/Lxqojc>> (20/06)
- Stevens, P. 1972. *British and American English*. London: Macmillan.
- The Washington Post*. Website. <<https://goo.gl/hx9F9I>> (28/06)