

Grammar Differences between British and American English

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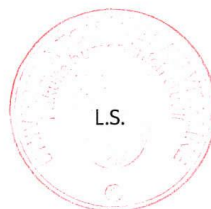
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ABSTRAKT

Cílem této bakalářské práce je zjistit, jak se gramatika britské a americké angličtiny liší, a ve kterých případech můžou být nalezeny rozdíly. Pro lepší přehlednost práce není rozdělena na teoretickou a praktickou část, a proto je praktická část přímou součástí té teoretické. Praktické příklady jsou použity z Britského národního korpusu (British National Corpus) a z Korpusu současné americké angličtiny (Corpus of Contemporary American English). Tato práce také stručně popisuje obecné rozdíly mezi americkou a britskou angličtinou.

Klíčová slova: americká angličtina, britská angličtina, gramatika, rozdíl

ABSTRACT

The aim of this bachelor thesis is to find out how the grammar of British and American English differentiates, and in which cases the differences are found. For better clarity the thesis is not divided into a theoretical and practical part and therefore the practical part directly follows the theory. The practical examples are used from British National Corpus and Corpus of Contemporary American English. Marginally the thesis describes general differences between American and British English.

Keywords: American English, British English, grammar, difference

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INTRODUCTION

This bachelor thesis focuses on differences occurring between American and British English grammar. For better clarity, the thesis is not divided into a theoretical and practical part, and therefore the practical part directly follows the theory.

The very first part of the thesis outlines how English language has developed in particular areas where English has become a national language. All the historical circumstances have affected different variations of English spoken on different continents. Therefore each variation of English can be considered as unique with its own characteristic features.

The subsequent section concentrates entirely on two variations – American and British English. It delineates some general differences in spelling, pronunciation and vocabulary between those two variations. All the differences distinguish British English from American English as well as the grammar does.

The main part focuses on the topic of the thesis – the grammar differences between American and British English. All the different grammar phenomena are structured according to parts of speech which they relate to. These parts of speech are nouns, adjectives and adverbs, pronouns, verbs, and prepositions. The theory of each category is compared with the practical examples.

The last part of the thesis is dedicated to American English, more precisely to its ethnic variation – Black English. It defines how Black English has originated and what grammatical differences occur between American and Black English.

In conclusion, the main aim of this bachelor thesis is to discover the grammatical differences between American and British English and if some phenomena are typical only for American English or British English. The theory is compared and contrasted with the Corpus – British National Corpus (BNC) and Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) – as it is the practical part of the thesis. Subsequently it should be proved if the theory corresponds with the practice.

1 VARIATIONS OF ENGLISH

English language is “the world’s most widespread language” (Peters 2004, 182) with many variations. English is spoken in all continents and it is the language of science, technology, international organizations etc. English is a national language not only for British Isles and North America but Australia, New Zealand, Canada or South Africa too. Although these variations are very similar and have many features in common, each variation is unique and was influenced by different circumstances in the past, therefore there can be found differences in vocabulary, pronunciation or grammar. (Peters 2004)

1.1 English in historical perspective

All variations of English arose due to British colonization when British brought their language to different continents. At this point each variation started developing and it was influenced by different issues happening at that time in that certain place. Therefore each variation might be unique with different features.

1.1.1 British English

History of British English language can be divided into three main periods: Old English, Middle English and Modern English. Old English appeared during Germanic invasions into Britain, probably around the year 410 A.C. Germanic tribes represented by Anglo-Saxons brought their language into Britain and these were the beginnings of English. The period of Old English lasted from 410 to 1066. Not only Anglo-Saxons influenced the language. The Vikings and Danes did so as well as Latin and Christianity. (Fennell 2001, O’Driscoll 1995)

The year 1066 was the beginning of Middle English. In this year, Normans invaded Britain and French had great influence on English. Actually this influence is still present in today’s English because many formal vocabularies are of French origin. In Norman period the peasants spoke English and the lords spoke French. That was the first time when class system appeared. By the end of the period, English became dominant and more spread. The Modern English is dated from the year 1500. Thanks to William Caxton and his introduction of printing press, English started to be used by more authors, taught at schools and during British Colonization, English quickly spread to the whole world. (Fennell 2001, O’Driscoll 1995)

1.1.2 American English

British brought their language – English – to the New World in 1607 when they settled there and set up a colony known as Jamestown. In 1620 another British colony was set up by Puritans in the New World. In 17th century many British immigrants came and they brought different dialects as they were from different parts of Britain. In 18th century many settlers from Northern Ireland came and the language was much more diverse. But not only British influenced the language. In the New World there were present Spanish, French as well as Dutch or German immigrants. Moreover in 18th century the population of Africans was increasing rapidly. At this time North America was multilingual and all these languages influenced contemporary American English. (Crystal 2003)

1.1.3 Australian English

English got to Australia thanks to James Cook in 1770. From that moment mostly inhabitants of British Isles moved there. The huge immigration started in 19th century and continued quickly. People from Ireland and London shifted the most and therefore Australian language has their trails. But Australian English was influenced by Aboriginal language too and moreover in recent years AmE has influenced AuE. Therefore the lexicon is very rich and diverse because not only that AuE took over vocabulary from other variations but many words were established due to the unique fauna and flora found only in Australia. (Crystal 2003)

1.1.4 New Zealand English

The history of English in New Zealand is very similar to Australia. James Cook discovered New Zealand probably in 1770 and Europeans started settling there in 1790's. However the hugest immigration from Europe started in 1840. New Zealand English is influenced by BrE, AmE as well as AuE and Maori language and all this makes from New Zealand English a unique variation. New Zealand English differs from other variants mainly in pronunciation and vocabulary. (Crystal 2003)

1.1.5 Canadian English

English first appeared in Canada in 1497 thanks to John Cabot. The most of British people moved to Canada in the middle of 18th century, when French people were deported to Canada from the United States, because French supporters of Britain did not like the new United States. Present-day Canadian English and the grammar are very similar to

English spoken in North America. Canadian English is therefore influenced by AmE as well as BrE and French language (primarily the vocabulary). (Crystal 2003)

1.1.6 South African English

British came to South Africa, more precisely to Cape Town in 19th century. But before British arrival, Danes people conquered the land. However since 1910 South Africa was under British reign as British won the war over Danes. Thanks to referendum in 1961, South Africa became an independent republic. Today there are two official languages – English and Afrikaans. English in South Africa is influenced by Afrikaans as well as by African languages (mainly vocabulary). (Millward, Hayes 2011)

2 THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AMERICAN AND BRITISH ENGLISH

This chapter is dedicated to present the general distinction between American and British English. The purpose of this chapter is to describe briefly spelling, pronunciation and vocabulary differences between those two variations.

2.1 Spelling differences

English spelling developed gradually throughout the history and was influenced by more languages. The distinction between American and British spelling is quite significant. It is said, that there are some regular rules applied distinguishing AmE and BrE spelling as well as irregular exceptions. (Peters 2004)

These regular rules are e.g. **-er** (BrE)/ **-re** (AmE) – *center* (BrE)/ *centre* (AmE), **-our** (BrE)/ **-or** (AmE) – *colour* (BrE)/ *color* (AmE), or **-ogue** (BrE)/ **-og** (AmE) – *catalogue* (BrE)/ *catalog* (AmE). (Crystal 2003, 307)

Crystal (2003, 307) states some other examples like *aeroplane* (BrE)/ *airplane* (AmE), *cheque* (BrE)/ *check* (AmE), *draughty* (BrE)/ *drafty* (AmE), *paralyse* (BrE)/ *paralyze* (AmE), *programme* (BrE)/ *program* (AmE) or *tyre* (BrE)/ *tire* (AmE). As well there are presented some spellings that are acceptable in both variations like *axe* (BrE, AmE)/ *ax* (AmE), *ensure* (BrE, AmE)/ *insure* (AmE), *kilogramme* (BrE)/ *kilogram* (AmE, BrE) or *renegue* (BrE)/ *renege* (AmE, BrE).

2.2 Pronunciation differences

Related to pronunciation, there can be found as well some differences. According to Crystal (2003), BrE – Received Pronunciation (RP) pronounces final [–r] as *r-less*. This is not typical for AmE – General American (GA). It means, for example, that the word *near* would be pronounced as /nɪə^r/ in RP and as /nɪr/ in GA according to Cambridge Dictionaries Online.

Crystal (2003) as well states some other words which have individual pronunciation. To mention some of them, for example:

asthma – pronounced with /s/ in RP and with /z/ in GA

progress – pronounced with /əʊ/ in RP and with /ɑ/ in GA

route – pronounced with /u/ in RP and with /aʊ/ in GA

tomato – pronounced with /ɑ:/ in RP and with /eɪ/ in GA

Cambridge Dictionaries Online correspond and all words stated above are pronounced differently in those two variations.

Another contrast may be in words which are pronounced with /ɑ:/ in RP while in GA there are pronounced with /æ/. To give the example, *advance* is pronounced as /əd'vɑ:ns/ in RP whereas as /əd'væns/ in GA. Other words can be: *dance*, *castle*, *sample* or *vast*. The pronunciation of these words is confirmed by Cambridge Dictionaries Online too. (Crystal 2003)

Crystal (2003) says that there are as well words that have different stress in RP or GA. Interesting is that GA influences RP and British young generations tend to use words with GA stress rather than RP stress.

2.3 Lexicon differences

According to Crystal (2003) lexicon differences can be distinguished in three ways. Firstly some words are typical only for AmE, others are typical only for BrE and some words are established in both variations. Millward and Hayes (2011) say that there are the most noticeable lexical differences for food, clothing and transportation.

For example related to food, *aubergine* in BrE is *eggplant* in AmE, *biscuit* in BrE is *cookie* in AmE, or *chips* in BrE are *french fries* in AmE. Regarding clothing, it can be mentioned *jumper* in BrE and *pullover sweater* in AmE or *vest* in BrE and *undershirt* in AmE. Concerning transportation, *high street* in BrE is *main street* in AmE, *lorry* in BrE is *truck* in AmE or *roundabout* in BrE and *traffic circle* in AmE. All these examples are stated by Millward, Hayes (2011).

3 THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AMERICAN AND BRITISH ENGLISH GRAMMAR

This chapter focuses on grammar differences between American and British English. The chapter is divided in sub-chapters and each sub-chapter represents a different part of speech depending on which category the difference belongs to. Most of the examples are used from British National Corpus (BNC) and Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), other examples are from the cited sources.

3.1 Nouns

A noun is a part of speech that describes physical things like *tree*, *table* (concrete nouns) or it describes abstract things like *love*, *sadness* (abstract nouns). Nouns can be countable or uncountable.

3.1.1 Concord

The main point where AmE differs from BrE related to nouns is the concord. Concord is an agreement of subject-verb in number (singular or plural) and person (first, second and third). There is a difference between AmE and BrE in using the concord with collective nouns. It is said that AmE prefers to use collective nouns with singular verbs whereas BrE has no preference. (Peters 2004, Huddleston, Pullum 2005)

Preferred by AmE: “*The committee has interviewed her.*” (Huddleston, Pullum 2005, 89)

“*The committee have interviewed her.*” (Huddleston, Pullum 2005, 89)

Preferred by AmE: “*The jury is still deliberating.*” (Huddleston, Pullum 2005, 89)

“*The jury are still deliberating.*” (Huddleston, Pullum 2005, 89)

According to the examples above, AmE would use the first case while BrE would be opened to both possibilities.

3.1.2 Plural Nouns as Pre-modifiers

Another difference between AmE and BrE related to nouns is when plural nouns are used as pre-modifiers of nouns. It is said that BrE has tendency to use plural nouns as pre-modifiers of nouns more than AmE does. However some plural nouns as pre-modifiers are

common in both variants, some of them are typical only for BrE. (Biber, Conrad, Leech 2002)

Plural nouns common in AmE and BrE:

“*sales force, sales increase, savings banks, women candidates, women drivers*” (Biber, Conrad, Leech 2002, 275)

Compared to Corpus, it shows that the plural noun *women* followed by a noun has probably the same frequency in BNC as well as in COCA. This works for nouns *sales* and *savings* too. Therefore in the examples below, there are shown typical plural nouns for both BrE and AmE.

“*It may be the oldest sales slogan in the book: Try it before you buy it.*” (BNC)

“*The Prime Minister told parliament that he was against freezing savings accounts or monetary reform...*” (BNC)

“*Gallup poll shows women approval rating of Barack Obama is increasing.*” (BNC)

Plural nouns typical only for BrE:

“*drugs administration, drugs business, careers office*” (Biber, Conrad, Leech 2002, 275)

Corpus confirms this theory. The noun *drugs* followed by a noun, is much more frequent in BNC than in COCA. This works for *careers* too. In this case the examples below represent typical plural nouns for BrE.

“*Mr Burke said Jason had already passed five other drugs tests before the Olympic Games.*” (BNC)

“*So I'm going to say that the jobs number is going to determine the narrative of this campaign.*” (COCA)

3.1.3 Articles

Related to definite article *the*, it is said that BrE uses definite article more than AmE does. It means where it is not necessary AmE does not use the definite article. Below examples demonstrate that while BrE uses the definite articles in these phrases, in AmE it

is not essential to use them. There may be some semantic exceptions, when the definite article *the* can be omitted, common for both variants. The omission depends as well on the intended meaning. (Algeo 2006, Peters 2004)

“*all the afternoon (BrE) x all _ afternoon (AmE)*” (Algeo 2006, 49)

“*the once (BrE) x _ once (AmE)*” (Algeo 2006, 43)

“*at the university/hospital (BrE) x at _ university/hospital (AmE)*” (Peters 2004, 49)

To summarize it, there are three points where American English can be distinguished from British English regarding the nouns. The first point is the concord. While AmE prefers to use collective nouns as singular, BrE does not have a preference. Another point is the use of plural nouns as pre-modifiers of nouns. This pattern is said to be more preferable in BrE. The last is the use of definite articles. Generally AmE tends to use definite articles only if necessary. It means in BrE, the articles occur more than in AmE.

3.2 Adjectives, Adverbs

An adjective is a part of speech that extends the meaning of the noun and denotes its particular property as well as it intensifies the noun. Adverbs are derived from adjectives and have a similar function as adjectives.

3.2.1 Good

The case where AmE differs from BrE is the use of *good* as an adverb. It is said that in AmE conversations there is becoming more popular to use *good* as an adverb while this tendency is not preferred in BrE conversations. BrE uses *well* as it is the right grammatical form for an adverb. This tendency of using *good* as an adverb can be applied to informal spoken AmE. (Biber, Conrad, Leech 2002, Ronald Carter, Michael McCarthy 2006)

According to BNC and COCA, the difference is not so noticeable. It is actually vice versa. *Good* as an adverb is more used in conversations in BNC than in COCA. On the other hand *good* as an adjective is generally more frequent in COCA but focusing on spoken language, it is slightly more frequent in BNC.

Good as the adjective: “*We get the people in position tactically. We get a **good** view of the house.*” (COCA)

Good as the adverb: “...keep pushing yourself because you want someone to say, you know, you did **good**.” (COCA)

In the Oxford Dictionary there is *good* acceptable as an adverb but only for the informal language. This might explain why the theory of *good* as an adverb is not confirmed in corpus since BNC and COCA do not distinguish a formal and informal spoken language.

3.2.2 Real and Really

Another case where AmE differentiates from BrE is the adjective *real*. *Real* is an adjective with the meaning “true, actual, genuine”. *Really* is used as an adverb or an intensifier with the meaning “truly, actually”. However *real* is becoming used as an intensifier in AmE, mainly in conversations. In this case *real* can be used as an adverb too. (Peters 2004, Biber, Conrad, Leech 2002)

When compared to Corpus, *really* as an adverb is generally more used in COCA but is slightly more frequent in BNC conversations. *Real* as an adverb occurs more often in COCA. It is mainly noticeable in the spoken language.

Real as the adverb: “Okay, you did **real** good, Paul.” (COCA)

Really as the adverb: “Well that's good, I think that's **really** encouraging because...” (BNC)

3.2.3 Other Adverbs

There are some adverbs that are more common in BrE conversation than in AmE conversation and vice versa. Related to time adverbs, it can be mentioned *yet*, *already* and *later*. *Yet* adverb is more frequent in BNC than in COCA. Although the difference is not so significant, *yet* is more preferable in spoken BrE. On the other hand *already* and *later* adverbs occur more often in spoken AmE. This tendency is noticeable mainly for *later* because in COCA it is much more prevalent. (Biber, Conrad, Leech 2002)

“...we haven't actually put the request in **yet** so...” (BNC)

“Okay. I'll see you **later**.” (COCA)

As for degree adverbs, *quite* is predominant in spoken BrE and BNC corresponds with it. Actually the distinction in use is very visible as *quite* is much more frequent in spoken BNC than in COCA. On the contrary *exactly*, *right*, *real* and *pretty* are degree adverbs dominating in spoken AmE. COCA confirms this tendency and it is the most noticeable for the adverb *pretty*. BrE does not use it in this sense so much as AmE does. Another point is the use of modifier *right* followed by an adverb. It is said that this tendency is much more common in spoken AmE. In COCA, *right* followed by the adverb is much more frequent than in BNC. (Biber, Conrad, Leech 2002)

“...we started to leave, leave **quite** early about eight o'clock...” (BNC)

“It's **pretty** hard to look at what the President's doing with drones and assassinating high-value targets...” (COCA)

Right + adverb: “In this scene **right here**, you are already in the midst of a real dog fight.” (COCA)

Regarding additive adverbs there is one typical for spoken AmE. It is the adverb *also*. *Also* occurs a lot more in COCA than in BNC. Speaking about other adverbs, *perhaps* dominates in BrE. Spoken BNC uses it more often than COCA. On the other hand the adverb *kind of* is characteristic for spoken AmE. In fact the difference in use of this adverb is very noticeable. COCA uses it more than BNC does. (Biber, Conrad, Leech 2002)

“... and it's **also** a reason why people don't seek help.” (COCA)

“And was it the first time that you **kind of** leaned on somebody else?” (COCA)

“**Perhaps** Pauline you've got some news on that?” (BNC)

To summarize it, for spoken AmE it is becoming more natural to use *good* and *real* in the role of adverbs. These adjectives are admissible to be used as adverbs in AmE while in BrE they function primarily as adjectives. As well there are some adverbs more common only in spoken BrE or only in spoken AmE. Referring to BrE, these are *yet*, *quite* or *perhaps*. Referring to AmE, these are *already*, *later*, *exactly*, *right*, *real*, *pretty*, *also* and *kind of*. In conclusion, the main distinction between AmE and BrE, related to adverbs, is in the use of certain adverbs.

3.3 Pronouns

Pronouns substitute for nouns or noun phrases. The categories of pronouns in English are personal pronouns (I, she etc.), possessive pronouns (mine, hers etc.), reflexive pronouns (myself, herself etc.), demonstrative pronouns (this, that etc.), indefinite pronouns (anybody, nobody etc.), interrogative pronouns (who, which etc.) and relative pronouns (that, whom etc.). (Peters 2004)

3.3.1 Reference

Related to the reference to somebody in plural, for AmE it is common to refer to *we* as *we all* or to *you* (plural) as *you all*. This is not applied for BrE. In other words, if referring to plural persons, AmE would use *you all* instead of the plain *you*, or rather *we all* instead of plain *we*. What is interesting, for Southern American English (Black English), it is typical to transcribe *you all* as *y'all*. (Biber, Conrad, Leech 2002)

If compared to Corpus, although *we all* is slightly more frequent in COCA, there is not so significant difference in use between COCA and BNC. It concerns as well the phrase *you all*. It means that the theory is not consistent with the Corpus and it may work otherwise in practice.

*“What really matters is whether or not **we all** believe certain essentials about the sacraments.”* (COCA)

*“**We all** have the choice to be children of God.”* (BNC)

*“I’ve told **you all** a dozen times.”* (COCA)

*“I’ll bring **you all** the disk with all the formats and whatever on it.”* (BNC)

3.3.2 Personal Compound Pronouns

Another point where can be found a difference between AmE and BrE is the preference of personal compound pronouns. Personal compound pronouns ending with a suffix *-body* or *-one* have similar meaning but *-body* is said to be more common for conversation while *-one* is more common for written language. However it is said that *-body* is more common in AmE in general. (Biber, Conrad, Leech 2002)

Corpus confirms it as *anybody*, *nobody* and *somebody* are more frequent in COCA than in BNC. Nevertheless pronouns ending by *-one* occur more often in COCA and BNC compared to *-body*. On the other hand according to BNC and COCA, *-body* endings are

more frequent for conversations than *–one* endings. Meaning the theory is consistent with the Corpus. Examples below illustrate the typical *–body* suffix in AmE.

“Does **anybody** think to ask why motorists drive in the snow?” (COCA)

“But **somebody** else needs to stand up.” (COCA)

“It worked rather well, and there was **nobody** on the street suffering with no medical care.” (COCA)

To summarize the differences related to pronouns, it is not so much clear if AmE favours more *we all* and *you all* for the reference compared to BrE. However pronouns ending *–body* are more preferable for AmE in general, although both variations prefer them in conversation.

3.4 Verbs

Verbs express an action, a state or a change of the state. In a sentence they usually have a role of a predicate. Verbs in general express tense, mood, aspect and voice.

3.4.1 Regularity and Irregularity of Verbs

The first phenomenon, where verbs differ between AmE and BrE, is their regularity or rather irregularity. In English, the regularity or rather irregularity of verbs depends on how the verbs form their past tense and past participle. Regular verbs use the suffix *–ed* in both cases (e.g. *receive – received – received*), whereas irregular verbs have their own form for both cases (e.g. *go – went – gone*) (Algeo 2006). The irregular verbs can be divided into several groups according to how they are formed.

The applied division is in compliance with The Cambridge Guide to English Usage by Pam Peters (2004). However this thesis will focus only on groups where the British forms differ from American ones.

3.4.1.1 The First group of irregular verbs

In the first group the verbs have the same form for the present tense, past tense and past participle. It means they do not change their form any time. Verbs which belong to this group are *burst, cast, cut, hit, hurt, let, put, quit, read, rid, set, she, shut, slit, spit (BrE), split, spread, thrust, bid* (meaning “offer”), *cost* (meaning “lose”). The only exception is the verb *spit* which behaves in this way only in BrE. According to Peters (2004), the verb

spit has the same form in the present tense, the past tense and the past participle only in BrE. In AmE, the form for the past tense and the past participle changes – *i* vowel is replaced by *a* vowel.

However Cambridge dictionary disapproves it as well as Oxford dictionary does. The form *spit* > *spit* > *spit* is admissible only in AmE. BrE uses the form *spit* > *spat* > *spat*. According to BNC *spit* as the past participle is not used nearly at all. In COCA this form is used a little bit more however the form *spat* as the past participle predominates in COCA as well as in BNC. It is difficult to draw a conclusion in the case of the verb *spit* because opinions diverge. Nevertheless in accordance with Corpus this verb would be used as *spit* > *spat* > *spat* in both variations. The examples below illustrate the past form *spat*.

BrE: “Nick had **spat** it out like he'd thrown it up or something. Horrible!” (BNC)

AmE: “He **spat** on the ground.” (COCA)

3.4.1.2 The Second group of irregular verbs

Another group of verbs where AmE and BrE diverge is when the suffix *-t* is added to the stem in the past tense and the past participle. Verbs which belong to this group are *burn*, *dream*, *lean*, *leap*, *learn*, *spoil*. Pam Peters (2004) says that in AmE there is a tendency to use these verbs as regular while BrE uses them rather as irregular. It means AmE would use *-ed* suffix to form the past tense and the past participle while BrE would add *-t* suffix.

If focusing on each verb separately in BNC and COCA the tendency mentioned above is generally confirmed. AmE prefers these verbs as regular and does not use their irregular forms nearly at all. But regarding BrE and its use of these verbs as irregular, it is not so obvious. To give an example, it is illustrated on the verb *burn*. Although the difference is not so significant, according to BNC, BrE does use the regular form *burned* a little bit more than the irregular *burnt*.

In comparison with COCA, AmE prefers the regular form much more. It means both AmE and BrE prioritise the regular form of the verb *burn*. The verbs *dream*, *lean*, *learn* and *spoil* behave in the same way. Therefore from BNC and COCA it can be said that both variations prefer the regular forms to the irregular forms of the verbs.

“...that was when I **burnt** my arm...” (BNC)

“...but the wives of Cedarville banded together and **burned** it down.” (COCA)

“When we were kids we'd never of **dreamt** of this would we?” (BNC)

“It was true that as a young man he had **dreamed** of going to Alaska...” (COCA)

“She **leant** forward and smoothed the hair away from his forehead.” (BNC)

“He **leaned** over coldly and flicked on a switch...” (COCA)

“...but I had **learnt** from the sages how to set that right with splints and plasters.” (BNC)

“I mean I've **learned** something.” (COCA)

“The twist in her face wasn't ugly, but it **spoilt** what might have been beauty of a kind...”
(BNC)

“But the midfielder **spoiled** the moment by turning his header into the arms of Main.”
(COCA)

On the other hand COCA and BNC correspond with Pam Peters in case of the verb *leap*. It is the only verb from this group which is more frequent as irregular than regular in BrE while in AmE it is more frequent as regular verb.

BrE: “Armaiti had **leapt** out of bed and began to dance...” (BNC)

AmE: “...Hilary Clinton **leaped** out of the car and became involved in an animated conversation with the petrol attendant.” (COCA)

To summarize, AmE uses most verbs from this group as regular. Although, in BrE these verbs are used as regular too, the irregular form of them is used as well and it is better preserved than in AmE. The difference in the use of regularity or rather irregularity is not so much significant in BrE as it is in AmE.

3.4.1.3 The Third group of irregular verbs

Next group of verbs, which differ in BrE and AmE, is when a double consonant changes into a single one and the suffix *-t* is added at the end of stem in the past tense and the past participle. Verbs which belong to this group are *dwelt*, *smelt*, *spelt*, *spilt*. According to Pam Peters (2004) the trend is very similar to the previous group. All these verbs are more or less used as regular in AmE but as irregular in BrE.

However the first verb *dwell* is an exception. Pam Peters (2004) says that the irregular form *dwelt* is generally more dominant and it is more preferable worldwide. According to COCA and BNC this trend is confirmed because the irregular form *dwelt* is more frequent in BNC as well as in COCA.

“*These two sons once **dwelt** together in the same family.*” (BNC)

“*...but she has never **dwelled** on their background or personal lives.*” (COCA)

When focusing on other verbs from this group, based on COCA and BNC, verbs *smell* and *spell* are much more frequent as regular in COCA and as irregular in BNC. It means BrE prefers to use them in the irregular form whereas AmE tends to use them in the regular form. The exception is *spill* which is more preferable in its regular form in both variations.

BrE: “*He had **smelt**, but only a few.*” (BNC)

AmE: “*She **smelled** warm and sweet, Like a marshmallow.*” (COCA)

BrE: “*His campaign headquarters in a Brynmawr back street echoed with his laughter as he **spelt** out his tactics.*” (BNC)

AmE: “*And Fleming says that's when Jeffery Locker **spelled** out that same bizarre plan...*” (COCA)

“*Only do it for a week, you've **spilt** that, Helen!*” (BNC)

AmE, BrE: “*A peal of laughter **spilled** from the werewolf.*” (COCA)

In conclusion AmE tends to use these verbs in their regular forms except the verb *dwell* . Whereas BrE favours to use them as irregular with the exception of *spill* since there is not so significant difference in the use of regular or irregular form. In the case of this group it is much more visible in BNC that BrE prefers the irregularity unlike the previous group of verbs.

3.4.1.4 *The Fourth group of irregular verbs*

For the following group of verbs it is typical that these verbs have a different vowel for past tense and past participle and moreover *-en* suffix is added at the end in the past participle. It means there is always a different form of the verb. Verbs which belong to this group are *drive* , *ride* , *rise* , *strive* , *stride* (BrE), *write* . However, only the verb *stride* differs

between AmE and BrE. According to Pam Peters (2004) *stride* is used with different forms for past tense and past participle in BrE but only with one form in AmE.

Compared with Oxford and Cambridge dictionaries, the dictionaries do not insist on this theory and both possibilities are acceptable. In comparison with COCA the form *stridden* is not found at all. In BNC *stridden* occurs but very rarely and only in the fiction prose. Therefore, it is apparent that the form *stridden* is not used in any variation, instead *strode* is used.

There is a special case for the verb *dive*. According to Pam Peters (2004), *dive* is used as regular in BrE and Oxford and Cambridge dictionaries confirm it whereas in AmE it is irregular. Relative to BNC and COCA, this theory is confirmed. *Dived* is much more frequent in BNC while *dove* occurs much more in COCA.

BrE: “One of the film crew **dived** in and carried her to safety and she was given the kiss of life.” (BNC)

AmE: “He dropped the vial of coke, and his hand **dove** under his jacket.” (COCA)

The last case, where BrE differentiates from AmE in the regularity or rather irregularity, is the verb *get*. Peters (2004) says that in BrE *get* has only one form for past tense and past participle. However in AmE there are two forms for past participle. Their use differs in the meaning. In AmE *got* form is used only when expressing the obligation or possession, while *gotten* form is used for the dynamism.

BrE: *get > got > got*

“We haven't **got** much time.” (BNC)

“We haven't **got** there yet.” (BNC)

AmE: *get > got > got/gotten*

“I've **got** a wonderful wife, two great kids and my parents are still alive.” (COCA)

“I really do wonder how we've **gotten** through it.” (COCA)

This theory is confirmed as well by Oxford and Cambridge dictionaries, where *gotten* is acceptable only in AmE. This can be applied for BNC and COCA too. *Gotten* is much more frequent in COCA than in BNC. Actually BNC does not use it nearly at all.

Generally speaking the main difference between AmE and BrE regarding the form of the verbs is in the use of the regularity or rather the irregularity. AmE tends to use the regular form of verbs while BrE is still conservative and uses rather the irregular form. However, it is not applied for all verbs. Nevertheless there are still on-going changes and more and more verbs are becoming regular. Although this tendency is more preferable for AmE, it is becoming popular in BrE as well as seen in some groups of verbs mentioned above. This trend may be quickened due to the influence of American media or American entertainment industry, as well as due to other social factors.

3.4.2 Auxiliary verbs

Auxiliary verbs together with other verbs (lexical or main verbs) create a verb phrase. There are two subgroups of auxiliary verbs: primary auxiliaries and modal auxiliaries. Primary auxiliaries are verbs – *be*, *have* and *do*. However these three verbs can be auxiliary verbs as well as lexical or main verbs. *Have* as a lexical verb has a possessive meaning, *be* as a lexical verb has an existential meaning and *do* as a lexical verb means “to work on something”. Regarding the auxiliaries, the verbs *be* and *have* signify the aspect and the passive voice. The verb *do* forms the interrogative and the negative. The auxiliary verbs function as operators. (Peters 2004)

3.4.2.1 Aspect

Related to the aspect, English has two kinds of aspect – **perfect** (finished action) and **imperfect or progressive** (continuing action). The perfect aspect is made of an auxiliary verb “*have*” and past participle “*-ed*” (e.g. *have arrived*). The progressive aspect is made of an auxiliary “*be*” and present participle “*-ing*” (e.g. *is arriving*). (Peters 2004)

At this point BrE and AmE diverge. British written language tends to use more often the perfect aspect whereas American spoken language tends to use more often the progressive aspect. In other words, AmE uses the progressive aspect much more in conversations than BrE does. But BrE uses the perfect aspect much more in written language, mainly in news, than AmE does. Generally speaking, BrE prefers to use perfect aspect but AmE prefers to use progressive aspect. In passive, there is no significant difference between AmE and BrE. (Biber, Conrad, Leech 2002)

As stated previously, BrE prefers to use perfect aspect much more compared to AmE. In connection with the auxiliary *have* and the aspect, it should be mentioned, that BrE uses present perfect tense or past perfect tense where AmE uses simple past. It is remarkable

mainly with words *already*, *just* or *yet*. If any of these words appears, BrE would use present perfect tense whereas AmE would use past tense. (Biber, Conrad, Leech 2002)

BrE: “*They **had waited** four hours before seeing a doctor.*” (Peters 2004, 243)

AmE: “*They **waited** for hours before seeing a doctor.*” (Peters 2004, 243)

Focusing on the auxiliary verb *be*, the use of verb is the same and there is no grammatical difference, but there is one thing interesting regarding the negation of *be*. Peters (2004) claims that in AmE, it is more common to use a contracted form of pronoun in connection with the verb *be* and a separated negation *not* - *it's/we're/you're/they're not* than a pronoun in connection with a contracted form of the verb *be* + *not* - *it isn't, we aren't, you aren't, they aren't*. In other words AmE prefers rather *is not/are not* forms than *isn't/aren't* forms. This theory is not applied for BrE. BrE has no preference in usage regarding those contracted forms.

According to COCA, the forms *'s not/re not* are much more used in AmE than the forms *isn't/aren't*. This is primarily obvious for the spoken AmE.

“***It's not** finished yet,” Lindy replied.*” (COCA)

“*He let us know that **we're not** going to let this affect our season,” Joseph said.*” (COCA)

Examples above illustrate more typical negative forms used in AmE.

“*The goal **isn't** to get to the game, the goal is to get to the finish line.*” (COCA)

“*Those who know Boenheim best **aren't** surprised.*” (COCA)

While these examples above illustrate less typical negative forms used in AmE.

In conclusion Peter's theory is confirmed in COCA since AmE prioritises rather contracted forms of the verb *be* and the separated negative *not* - *'s not* - than contracted forms of the verb *be* and the negative *not* – *isn't*.

3.4.2.2 *Verbs of Possession*

There are some differences between AmE and BrE regarding lexical verb *have* and its meaning of possession. The possession is usually expressed by *have got* in English. However this is more popular in BrE. AmE has another variant for expressing the possession. In AmE it is sufficient to use only the plain verb *have*. (Biber, Conrad, Leech 2002)

If the theory is compared with BNC and COCA, the forms *have got/’ve got* followed by any noun phrase are much more frequent in BNC than in COCA, mainly in spoken language. On the other hand *have* form followed by any noun phrase is more common in COCA. It means BNC and COCA correspond with that theory.

“*Well some of us **have got** spoons here.*” (BNC)

“*...and we **’ve got** people coming from all over the county and it’s costing us a fortune...*” (BNC)

Examples above are more typical for BrE whereas example below is more typical for AmE.

“*All plants and animals **have** stem cells.*” (COCA)

Nevertheless Peters (2004) states, that there is another option how to express the possession in AmE. It is more and more frequent for AmE to use only *got* when indicating the possession. This is not applied for BrE.

AmE: “*I **got** a book about it.*” (Peters 2004, 243)

If the possession is expressed by *have got*, *have* is the operator and question, question tag or negative is expressed by this verb (e.g. *Have you got...?*, *No, I haven’t.*). On the other hand if the possession is expressed by *have*, the verb *do* is the operator and question, question tag or negative is expressed by this verb (e.g. *Do you have...?*, *No, I don’t.*).

BrE: “*Yeah, I think, I **haven’t got** details of that, but...*” (BNC)

AmE: “*The women and the kids would like to join them, but many **don’t have** enough money.*” (COCA)

In conclusion there are more ways how to express the possession in English and each variation uses a different one. While in BrE dominates *have got*, AmE prefers the plain *have*. It means *have* as lexical verb is more favoured in AmE than *have* as the operator. Actually Biber, Conrad, and Leech (2002, 253) say that “it is the only option in American English and the preferred option in British English”.

3.4.3 Ain't

Ain't is a negative form used instead of *am not, is not, are not, has not, have not*. “*Ain't* seems to be more significantly embedded in American English than in British” (Peters 2004, 27). *Ain't* is used mainly in informal spoken language, newspapers and in songs. (Peters 2004)

Interesting is the fact, that when compared to Corpus, it works vice versa. *Ain't* occurs more often in BNC than in COCA, primarily in spoken language. That might be due to history. According to COHA, *ain't* started to be used more noticeably in AmE in 1830s and its use peaked in 1910s and 1920s. From that time it has been slowly declining.

“*Believe me, I ain't looking for any trip up the river.*” (COHA)

“*Well cos they finished, they ain't got enough money.*” (BNC)

3.4.4 Modal Auxiliaries and Quasi-Modals

These verbs express possibility, certainty or obligation as well as speaker's attitude. Modal auxiliaries are *can, could, may, might, must, shall, should, will* and *would*. Quasi-modal verbs resemble to modals in their meaning but they require auxiliary verbs (not applied for the verbs *dare* and *need* which can function as operators in those forms) to form questions or negatives while modal verbs are operators. Quasi-modals are *dare to, need to, ought to, used to, be able to, be about to, be going to, be likely to, be obliged to, be supposed to, be willing to, have to*. There are some differences between AmE and BrE in using the modals and quasi-modals however the differences are not so distinct. (Peters 2004)

3.4.4.1 *Must and Have to/Have got to*

The first case where AmE can be distinguished from BrE is the modal *must*. According to Peters (2004) BrE uses *must* more than AmE does. When compared to Corpus, this tendency is confirmed. *Must* occurs more frequently in BNC than in COCA. Concerning expressing the obligation, it is possible to use *have to/have got to* or the contracted form of *have got to* – ‘ve *gotta*. It is said that AmE prefers *have to* to *must* for obligations and *have to* over *have got to* (Carter, McCarthy 2006). Focusing on these quasi-modals and comparing them in Corpus, *have to* is more frequent in COCA than in BNC while *have got to* occurs more in BNC than in COCA. However the contracted form *gotta* is more frequent in BNC than in COCA and the difference is apparent mainly for spoken language.

Preferred modal verbs of obligation in BrE:

“The horrors **must** be stopped everywhere once and for all.” (BNC)

“And he said we **have got to** get on top of there and clean all the ovens.” (BNC)

“I think we’ve **gotta** look at the assessment.” (BNC)

Preferred modal verb of obligation in AmE:

“Sometimes you just **have to** make a better mousetrap.” (COCA)

3.4.4.2 *Shall, Will and Going to*

For all these verbs it is typical that they can express future. To start with *shall*, it is said that the use of it is much more preserved in BrE than in AmE. When compared to Corpus, *shall* is a lot more frequent in BNC and the difference is evident also for spoken language. Interesting is, when compared with Corpus of Historical American English (COHA), at the beginning of 19th century the use of *shall* was much more common. But when contrasted with 20th century the use of *shall* was declining and today’s use is rather rare in AmE. (Peters 2004)

“No don’t, let her sleep on, we **shall** lie better without her.” (BNC)

According to Algeo (2006) BrE prefers to use *shall* and *will* for expressing future while AmE favours *be going to*. In accordance with Corpus *going to* occurs more often in

COCA than in BNC. The curious thing is that contracted form *gonna* is more frequent in BNC than in COCA and it is remarkable for spoken language.

BrE: “*She **will** always be good, I doubt not.*” (BNC)

BrE: “*So what's **gonna** be on this stall then?*” (BNC)

AmE: “*The President is **going to** lay out what he called a blueprint.*” (COCA)

3.4.4.3 *Would, Should*

Peters (2004) says that to signify prediction or volition in formal language, BrE tends to use *should* instead of *would*. This tendency is not typical form AmE. When compared to Corpus, the phrase *should like to* is more frequent in BNC than in COCA. It means that this theory corresponds with Corpus.

“*I **should** like to come.*” (Peters 2004, 498)

“*I **would** like to come.*” (Peters 2004, 498)

“*At two o'clock I **should like to** sit down at table.*” (BNC)

3.4.4.4 *Quasi-modals*

The first case in which AmE differs from BrE is the verb *dare*. Peters (2004) says that *dare*, as the operator, is more frequent in BrE than in AmE. Corpus agrees with this theory as *daren't* form is more frequent in BNC than in COCA. Actually the form *daren't* is not used nearly at all in COCA.

“*Who **dare** offer anything to her in such an orderly and wellgoverned house as yours...*” (BNC)

“*We **daren't** tell her, we were so frightened of her.*” (BNC)

Another verb which varies is *need*. *Need* used as the operator behaves in the same way as the verb *dare* does, and according to Algeo (2006), *need* is used more in BrE than in AmE. When compared to corpus, *needn't* form occurs more in BNC than in COCA and again, the difference is very noticeable.

“Well you *needn't* bother.” (BNC)

It is said that AmE uses *I guess* much more than BrE does. Actually when compared to Corpus, the difference is very significant. In COCA *I guess* is a lot more frequent than in BNC. On the other hand for BrE it is typical to use expressions like *I suppose* or *I reckon*. If compared with Corpus this theory is confirmed. *I suppose* is much more frequent in BNC than in COCA. Moreover *I reckon* is not found nearly at all in COCA while in BNC it is quite frequent primarily for spoken language. (Carter, McCarthy 2006)

Typical in AmE:

“*I guess I can stand somewhere.*” (COCA)

Typical in BrE:

“*I suppose anything's possible.*” (BNC)

“*I reckon you get one about every fifty yards, something like that.*” (BNC)

3.4.5 Subjunctive

Subjunctive is now used less than it used to be in the past. It is “used for special purposes such as expressing a wish or a hypothesis” (Peters 2004, 520). English has a present subjunctive and a past subjunctive. In present subjunctive there is no *-s* suffix on the verb in third person singular. Examples of present subjunctive of *be* verb: *I be, you be, he/she/it be, we be, you be, they be.* (Peters 2004)

“*The doctor insisted that she (not) be allowed out.*” (Peters 2004, 520)

“*They proposed that he come the next day.*” (Peters 2004, 520)

It is said that the present subjunctive is still used in AmE while in BrE it is declining. In BrE the subjunctive can be replaced by modal *should*. Related to the past subjunctive, there is no difference between AmE and BrE. (Peters 2004)

Should replacing the subjunctive in BrE:

“*The doctor insisted that she should (not) be allowed out.*” (Peters 2004, 521)

3.4.6 Interrogative Tags

Interrogative tags usually appears at the end of the sentence and they might “have either the rising intonation often associated with yes/no-questions, or the falling intonation associated with statements” (Algeo 2006, 293). The tags usually have the opposite polarity of the main verb in the sentence. (Algeo 2006)

“*Julia can help, **can't she?** James can't help that, **can he?**” (Algeo 2006, 293)*

Algeo (2006) says that question tags are rather typical for BrE than for AmE although they occur in both variations. Moreover AmE uses “*you know*” to emphasize as well as “*right*” tag is more common in AmE. (Algeo 2006, Carter, McCarthy 2006)

Typical question tags for AmE:

“*And didn't even seem embarrassed by it, **you know?**” (COCA)*

“*Well, it's not your responsibility, **right?**” (COCA)*

3.5 Prepositions

Prepositions generally specify the position or direction of something. In English there are some common prepositions like e.g. *about, at, between, by, with* and many others as well as there are complex prepositions. It means that they consist of more than one word, e.g. *in front of, instead of, on top of* etc. (Peters 2004)

The first difference between AmE and BrE is that in some cases in AmE, there might be no preposition while BrE would require a preposition. Peters (2004, 438) states these examples: “*cater **for** a party (BrE) x cater a party (AmE), provide us **with** a plan (BrE) x provide us a plan (AmE)*”.

It is as well said that there are differences in using prepositions especially for time expressions. While BrE prefers *at the weekend*, AmE favours *on the weekend*. With this theory Corpus corresponds as in BNC the expression *at the weekend* is a lot more frequent than in COCA. Meanwhile the expression *on the weekend* occurs more frequently in COCA than in BNC. (Carter, McCarthy 2006)

BrE: “*And if you didn't pay for it **at the weekend** you got no groceries next week.*” (BNC)

AmE: “I wouldn't come out of my house **on the weekend** for over a year.” (COCA)

Related to time expressions, Carter and McCarthy (2006) say that in AmE it is admissible to use *in + time* when negating. BrE would use *for + time* in such cases.

AmE: “I haven't played basketball **in two years**.” (Carter, McCarthy 2006, 888)

BrE: “I haven't played basketball **for two years**.” (Carter, McCarthy 2006, 888)

Further Carter and McCarthy (2006) claim that AmE tends to use preposition *through* in connection with time. This is not typical for BrE as it prefers *to* or *till*. To give examples, AmE would use “Monday **through** Friday” while BrE would be inclined to “Monday **to** Friday” (Carter, McCarthy 2006, 888).

Another interesting difference is the use of *on x in* prepositions related to the position, more precisely to the streets. According to Carter and McCarthy (2006), AmE tends to use *on* preposition with street names whereas BrE prefers *in* preposition.

AmE: “She lives **on Third Street** and I live **on Third Street** but we lived between different avenues.” (Carter, McCarthy 2006, 889)

BrE: “I think she was born **in Leonora Street** and then moved to Castle Street.” (Carter, McCarthy 2006, 889)

To conclude, some prepositions are more typical and more used in AmE while other prepositions are preferred in BrE. The preposition differences relate mainly to expressing time and position. In some cases AmE even do not require the preposition.

4 ETHNIC VARIATION OF AMERICAN ENGLISH

4.1 Dialect

Dialect is a language variation spoken in a particular region. In the broadest sense American English is a dialect of English spoken in the United States and British English is a dialect of English spoken in the United Kingdom. Both these variations have regional dialects determined by geographical borders. For example in United Kingdom there are regional dialects like Cockney in London area, dialect in South or North of England, Scottish English or Welsh English. Above them all there is Standard British English that is a standard dialect of British English. In United States, there are regional dialects as well determined by geography, like New York City dialect, Middle Atlantic dialect or Southern dialect. Above them all there is General American as standard dialect of American English. (Millward, Hayes 2011)

However in United States there exists a dialect which is not defined by geographical borders. It is Black English (BE). Black English is the ethnic variation spoken by African-Americans and so BE is determined by the social status. It is also said that BE is used mostly in informal and causal language. Meaning Black English would rather be spoken among communities than in official places. (Millward, Hayes 2011)

4.2 Black English

Black English may differ from AmE due to the history. One of the theories, why BE is unique and distinct from AmE, is the influence of slavery. In colonial period in 17th century African-American slaves were brought to North America, and they might have learnt English from their masters in wrong way. This might have been caused by separation of “white” and “black” people. And therefore Blacks passed the wrong variation to other generations.

Another theory says that BE is a creole of African languages and English. To explain, “the **creole** maintains a mix of elements from local languages, but over the course of time tends to add in lexical and grammatical features of the standard language on which it’s based” (Peters 2003, 423). It is not certain how BE developed or which theory is correct. It might be mixture of all of them. However BE can be considered as another variation of English, or rather as the ethnic variation. (Millward, Hayes 2011)

Millward and Hayes (2011) say that there are not really differences related to lexicon between BE and AmE. There are rather phonological and grammar differences. Therefore the focus is only on grammar differences between AmE and BE as the grammar is the topic of this thesis.

4.2.1 Grammar differences

It is said that the grammar patterns of BE can appear as well in other dialects of English. Therefore grammar differences stated below might not be typical only for BE. But such a grammar differentiates BE from AmE. (Millward, Hayes 2011)

Concerning the differences, for BE it is typical to use multiple negation.

*“He **don’t never** say **nothing**.”* (Millward, Hayes 2011, 332)

Related to the negation, BE also prefers to use *ain’t* to negate rather than auxiliaries.

*“I **ain’t** been told.”* (Millward, Hayes 2011, 332)

*“They **ain’t** never come back.”* (Millward, Hayes 2011, 332)

Another difference is that BE omits auxiliary *have* in the perfect tense. Not only that BE omits *have* auxiliary but as well BE generally deletes operators.

“We seen that before.” (Millward, Hayes 2011, 332)

AmE: *“We **have** seen that before.”*

“We been eating popcorn.” (Millward, Hayes 2011, 332)

AmE: *“We **have** been eating popcorn.”*

“He talking now.” (Millward, Hayes 2011, 333)

AmE: *“He **is** talking now.”*

“I tired.” (Millward, Hayes 2011, 333)

AmE: *“I **am** tired.”*

“We going home.” (Millward, Hayes 2011, 333)

AmE: *“We **are** going home.”*

Moreover for BE it is typical to omit *-s* to signify the plural number, *-s* to signify the possession or to omit *-s* in the third person singular.

"I got three sister." (Millward, Hayes 2011, 333)

AmE: *"I got three sisters."*

"That Jim bike." (Millward, Hayes 2011, 333)

AmE: *"That is **Jim's** bike."*

*"She **make** me breakfast every morning."* (Millward, Hayes 2011, 333)

AmE: *"She **makes** me breakfast every morning."*

Interesting is that BE uses the verb *done* as the operator to signify recent actions. On the other hand to signify the distant past, BE uses *been*.

*"That cat **done** bit me."* (Millward, Hayes 2011, 333)

*"He **done** broke the jar."* (Millward, Hayes 2011, 333)

*"That **been** gone."* (Millward, Hayes 2011, 333)

Another sign characterizing BE is that BE may double the subject in a sentence.

*"My brother, **he** took me."* (Millward, Hayes 2011, 332)

As well it said that BE uses an indefinite article *a* where AmE requires *an*.

"You want a orange?" (Millward, Hayes 2011, 332)

AmE: *"You want **an** orange?"*

To summarize, all these differences may appear as well in other non-standard dialects, not only in Black English, as mentioned before.

4.3 Grammar among Other Variations

Related to the other English variations in connection with grammar, it is said that Canadian English and Australian English are very similar to American English grammar

whereas South African English is closer to British English grammar. It may be due to the fact that AmE and BrE are the most dominant variations and other variations are rather influenced by them in terms of the grammar. On the other hand the vocabulary or phonology of these variations may vary noticeably. (Millward, Hayes 2011)

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to find out grammatical differences between American and British English. The theory in the thesis was compared with the practical examples from British National Corpus (BNC) and Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). In the most cases the theory corresponded with the Corpus.

The first chapter focused on the historical perspective of the English language and how the language developed in certain areas like in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, or Canada. There was as well mentioned English development in North America and in Great Britain. The historical development certainly influenced the language too.

Further section concentrated on general differences between American and British English, like spelling, pronunciation, or lexical differences. Those differences were mentioned briefly since this was not the main topic of the thesis. However those differences as well distinguish American English from British English.

The main part of the thesis focused on grammatical differences between American and British English. The chapter was divided into sub-chapters according to parts of speech which those differences related to. According to the survey, British and American English varies the most noticeably in the category of verbs. There can be found the most grammatical differences between those two variations. As for the example, American English generally prefers regular forms of verbs in the past tense and the past participle, or prefers the different usage of modal verbs in comparison with British English.

The last part was dedicated to the variation of American English – Black English. Black English can be considered as the ethnic variation of American English since Black English is characterized by social class rather than the geographical area where it is spoken - the case of dialect. Although there are as well grammatical differences that distinguish Black English from American English, Black English is rather informal as well as ungrammatical compared to the standard variation.

To conclude, according to the findings the grammar of British and American English differentiates and in some cases it may be more significant than in other ones. Not only the grammar differences but as well spelling or lexical differences distinguish American English from British English.

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