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Social and Regional Variations of English Language

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Abstract- Nowadays, English language is one of the most important languages in the world. It is spoken not only in English speaking countries, but also in other countries of the world. It is the official language of huge countries. However, it has several variations. So, sometimes it causes difficulties for linguists, interpreters and other researches.

In linguistics, dialect is the language that is used in certain area. Even when two people speak the same language, they may not speak it in the same way. In linguistics, we use the terms dialect and variety to describe the particularities of the speech of any regional or social group. Although all speech (and all language) belongs to one variety or another, the speech of the dominant class is popularly referred to as the standard and the speech of minority groups are labeled as dialects. Knowing the history of the different varieties of a language can tell us a lot about the history of a language, a region, and a people.

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Social and Regional Variations of English Language

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English language is not only the language of 300 million people who live in America, it is also the native language of England, Canada, New Zealand and so on. The main thought of linguists about the variations of English is as following. Despite that the English is the official language of the countries above, there are several ethnic groups who live in these countries. They have their own language and dialects. And such difference forms this or another variation of English language.

This article deals with the social and regional variations of English language. The main purpose of the research paper is to classify all the regional dialects and social variations of English language in different regions.

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I. Social Varieties

British English variation is traditionally called the Standard English (according to lexical and grammatical characters). It is the speech of upper-class Londoners which carries the Saxon elements. The pronunciation of poor-class is the Cockney accent which carries the mixture of Saxon elements. The Cockney dialect of London is the pure social dialect of England. It started to spread over from London in the XVIII- XIX centuries. So, the Cockney accent changed its social character. During those times the British English changed into views of social levels and all the people of different classes started to speak in Received Pronunciation (RP). People started to pay attention to their pronunciation. It is fact that before the World War the II all work places and jobs were closed to those ones who didn't know the Standard English. But this tendency, to our mind, is not correct according to linguists. Despite, that Standard English is accepted by everyone, the pronunciation doesn't carry an importance.

The history of Cockney dialect goes back to the period when Anglo-Saxons captured England. This fact tells us that there was another social dialect in London during those times. After the war, during the urbanization, the influence of Standard English to dialects increased. The word "Diglossia" started to be used in terminology and linguistics.

A. Wolfram, R. Shay and other linguists published different research papers about this theme. While speaking about social dialects in Great Britain we always talk about the upper and lower class speech. Prof. S. K. Alan published an article about upper and lower class speech and he reflected the characteristically features of these levels with a list of words. For example, when a person from lower class doesn't hear a question he says- pardon? However, the upper-class uses the question word- what or sorry? Upper and lower class differ from each other from their speech, table manners and so on. So, it is important to pay attention to these differences while speaking about social variations.

While speaking about the variations we have to point out our speech with children. Because, when we speak with children we choose special words. We speak in "their language". For example: dickey (bird), upsa (daisy), chap (boy), fellow (young man) and so on. Such variations and their increase form real problems for social linguists. It is difficult to speak about good research without paying attention to these problems.

II. Regional Dialects

Regional dialects in English language are very wide. These variations formed within long years after the results of the historical progress, in the beginning of XVIII century. Even in the United Kingdom there are England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland dialects. Today, English is spread over the whole world and it means that it has several variations in different places. The regional dialects reflect all the new words in the social lifestyle, in flora and fauna of these places. And such kinds of words being the dialect of one place are not understandable to another group of people who live in

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other place or otherwise, the new word is widely used and understood by everyone. It enters the dictionary of the language and stays there for a long time.

Nowadays, American and Australian varieties of English influence to Standard English language. The new words which are formed in American English influence to British English. The influence of American English is mostly reflected in Canadian English and this process is rapidly growing. The varieties of English language may be called either international variety (ex: British and American variety) or dialect variety (Cockney and Hampshire dialect). While speaking about variations we point out the northern and southern English, Irish English and Welsh English. It doesn't mean that there is only one English, one Irish or one Welsh accent in Great Britain. No, within one accent there are several accents which have their own specific phonetic characters.

While talking about the regional dialects it is interesting to speak about "Pidgin" English. (The mixture of Chinese and English). It was the language of sailors and merchants who travelled through the world and spread their new words. Such kinds of words influenced to English language from the XVIII century. For example, the word "bob", "bobbery" (noise, disturbance) were pidgin words and they transferred to English language. Now they are widely used in English. (Christopherson, "Pidgin English", 1969)

One period of Pidgin English was the times of slave commerce. During those times human bargainers sold black people to American plantations and with this way they influenced to the progress and spread of pidgin language and formation of new language variation. While working in these plantations these slaves used their own words during their speech and with this way they spread out new words to English language. Thus, new language variation- the pidgin or the language of black people from Africa (Black English) expanded through the world. For example: *poto-poto* (mud), *obcan-troki* (tortoise) and so on. (Steward, "Differences between Black English and Standard English" 1996) Even the merchants Jon Atkins made the tapes of the speeches of African slaves and that tape is now kept in the library of Washington University.

American linguist Steward made a lot of efforts to explore the differences between Black English and Standard English. Some words like *goeber* (peanut), *juke* (box) and others entered to the English language dictionary. The word *goeber* is, I think of, African origin. In Haussa (West African tongue), *guya* is ground-nut. (A.F. Chamberlain: Science, Vol. 12, No 284). Such kinds of words like *uh-huh* (yes) is understood in the U.S. either by black or white people. However, people from Great Britain don't understand and don't accept these words. (Steward, "Differences between Black English and Standard English", 1996)

One famous writer Daniel Defoe used the pidgin language in his works. For example, the speech of "Friday" in "Robinson Crusoe" is the real proof of this. Let's give some examples to Pidgin English.

a) Bonini Pidgin English

What he dat ditto? Can I eat'em or wear'em?

No fair- it be capt-crow.

Ya-ya, what me do to me god!

b) Jamaika Pidgin English

God bless massa. How poor massa do? Long live massa. Massa buy me, he won't kill me.

c) Grenada Pidgin English

What for me isn't free? No massa, shark never eat him negger here.

d) South America Pidgin English

Me no longer going, sir, and have a daughter.

e) South Carolina Pidgin English

All bery like you, what a many family you hat, massa.

First time, in 1734, the people in New England (Massachutset) heard Pidgin English from Chinese merchants. An American man named Merrison heard these sentences from the Chinese merchant: "You and I do flen, you belong honest man, only no get chance. All finishee, you get go, you please. (Marrison, "English as international", 1961, New-York)

The Chinese Pidgin English was widely spread in the west coast of America in 1849. The Chinese merchants and sailors played a great role for the spread of Pidgin English. They didn't just carry goods and different things; they also carried new language to the new land. Also, we can say that there were different nations like Germans, Douche, French and Spanish in that place. They interacted with native people and their speech, of cause, influenced to the native speaker's speech. In the XIX century Pidgin English was very popular on the west coast of America. (Cristopherson, "Dably Pidgin English", 1969)

As missioners wrote, the Africans were not only the people who spoke in Pidgin English. Recently, in Hawaiians and in America you can meet people who speak Chinese and Japanese languages. There are different variations of English there today. And such kind of mixture of languages is called "sandwich" island language. Let's pay attention to one Hawaiian proverb: "Fall into some of the holes and kill neck." (Bickerton, "Hawaiian Pidgin English", 1981)

Some linguists think that the Pidgin words belong to the place where they are formed, however, Wool ford Shows that these words are not the words that are formed separately, they are the lexical variations. (Wool ford, "American English, 1983) He belongs these terms to "two mouth taken" (stockings

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with two mouths). Owen gives this term as "drawers" as lexical variation. (Owen, "Pidgin and Maritime", 1982)

In order to differentiate the specific characteristics of various dialects, first of all we have to get information about the roots of the people who lived here. That's why the historical-geographical map of the U.S. was created after the studies of the people from different regions. It was founded that 1291 families firstly came to New England and 687 families came to Virginia from England. (H. Kurath, "Differences in Spoken American English"). The studies show that these families that came from England kept their dialects and pronunciation style. Despite the changes they tried to keep the original form of some words.

There are some Indian words in American dictionary as big canal, big chief, big heart, big medicine, big talk and big water and so on. In the United States there are several area names with words big, great and grand. Indians influenced a lot to English language as the first settlers to the United States. Also, they influenced to the languages of other nations. At the same time, Europeans saved the lexical foundation of their language with main role of patriotism of white people. So, as the sailor terms, the Pidgin English was brought to the new world and mixed with other variations, then travelled to other coasts.

The source of the first foreign words in Pidgin English goes back to Portuguese language. This fact shows us that the first people who settled in America from Europe were Portuguese people. They mixed with native Indian tribes, formed native pidgin groups and their dialect influenced to English language.

III. Summary

When a person talks, his or her dialect firstly depends on the situation or the speech manner. If his or her speech has official character, the speech manner will also carry the official character. Example: When we write an official letter we'll write "the person to whom I write". Otherwise, we'll write "the chap I write to" and so on.

Language varieties also depend on where you talk or whom you talk with. If you are in official meeting you have to speak in Standard English. When you chat with your friends you may speak in different variations or dialects of English. The main purpose is not to spoil the standard form of pure English language.

Ernest Weekly says: "100 or 50 years later there will be more new terms and words in English language. English language will accept not only the linguistic words, but also new words from different spheres." (E. Weekly, "Old and New English" 1986)

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