2.2 ENGLISH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND CANADA

OBJECTIVES

This practice session traces the spread of English in North America. It looks at variation and change in English, their sources and social meanings, and how they have been studied by linguists.

IN THIS SESSION, YOU WILL STUDY:

- about the transportation of English to North America and the establishment of the first colonies at the beginning of the 17th century;
- about differentiation and diversity in the American and Canadian population;
- some processes of naming in American and Canadian Englishes;
- about the diversity of forms of the English language in North America;
- about the distinctive features of Standard and nonstandard English in the USA and Canada.

OUTLINE

1. Sociolinguistic situation in North America.
2. English in the USA.
   2.1. Standard American English.
   2.2. Nonstandard varieties.
3. English in Canada.
   3.1. Standard Canadian English.
   3.2. Nonstandard varieties.
4. Distinctiveness of American and Canadian English varieties on individual levels.

SELF-STUDY INSTRUCTIONS

Reading for this session on your own, **it is important to give attention to the following facts**.

- The establishment of the first British settlements in North America at the beginning of the 17thcentury was the first stage of developing English into an international language.
- The pattern of colonization in the south differed slightly from that in the north of the USA due to the transportation of slaves from Africa. In some regions, for example in South Carolina, slaves outnumbered free people.
- The introduction of African languages influenced the new forms of English spoken in North America and the Caribbean.
- American English became differentiated from British English and the internal differences arose due to the colonial ‘lag’.

- The language of the settlers was becoming more conservative. It contained such features as the pronunciation of /r/ in /car, far/ like it was generally pronounced in Elizabethan English. Although the speech of Londoners was gradually becoming *r*-less, English in America preserved it.
- The internal differences in American English were developing, for example as a result of closer ties with England. That is why on the east coast the r-less tendency was strong.
- Another important factor that influenced the diversity of dialects in North America was the contact with other languages and cultures.
- There several major dialectal areas in the Unites States including northern, southern, western and central dialects.
- Canadian English is variable across Canadian provinces and territories (Newfoundland English, South Shoreline English, Ontario and Quebec English, Northern territories English, English of British Columbia).

RECOMMENDED READING

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English Around the World: Sociolinguistic Perspectives / Edited by Jenny Cheshire. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2012. P. 13-34, 87-150.

Trudgill P. A Glossary of Sociolinguistics. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2003. 148 p.

INTERNET RESOURCES

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Canada on strike funny remix. 2008. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LyP_m4TMZBQ

Chambers J.K. English in Canada. *Canadian English: A Linguistic Reader*; ed. by Elaine Gold and Janice McAlpine Kingston, Ontario : Queen's University, 2010. Occasional Papers # 6. P. 1–38. http://www.queensu.ca/strathy/apps/OP6v2.pdf

Clarke S. The Role of Irish English in the Formation of New World Englishes: The Case of Newfoundland. *Canadian English: A Linguistic Reader;* ed. by Elaine Gold and Janice McAlpine Kingston, Ontario : Queen's University, 2010. Occasional Papers # 6. P. 112-130. http://www.queensu.ca/strathy/apps/OP6v2.pdf

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Hickey R. Variety studies. https://www.uni-due.de/ELE/VarietiesOfEnglish.pdf . P. 27-40.

Hitz E. How are American English and Canadian English different? PhraseMix LLC, 2017. http://www.phrasemix.com/answers/how-are-canadian-english-and-american-english-different

Katalin B. B. Beginner's English Dialectology: An introduction to the accents and dialects of English. Budapest : AD LIBRUM, 2008. P. 44-60. Access mode : http://mek.oszk.hu/15100/15126/15126.pdf

South Park S12, E4 – Canada on Strike. watchcatoonsOnLine, 2017. Access mode : http://watchcartoonsonline.eu/watch/south-park-s12-e4-canada-strike/

The urban / rural distinction and so much more: Monophthongal (ow) in Minnesota. New York University: Department of Linguistics. http://www.linguistics.as.nyu.edu/docs/IO/24538/Nguyen_Abstract.pdf

IMPORTANT CONCEPTS AND TERMS IN THIS SESSION

- Canadian English;
- Eastern US English;
- English of British Columbia;
- General American;
- Newfoundland English;
- non-rhotic;
- North American English;
- Northern territories English;
- NYC (New York city) English;
- Ontario and Quebec English;
- South Shoreline English;
- Southern US English;
- Standard American English;
- Standard Canadian English.

SELF-STUDY ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment 1. Compare the phonetic transcriptions of British and American pronunciations of the following sample text from *English* by S. Ager (Ager, 1998-2007). Consider the pronunciation of vowels and consonants. Also, pay your attention to stress peculiarities. Find out about the differences between British and American versions. Which of the versions will it take slightly longer to read aloud (provided the reading speed is the same).

Sample text

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.” *(Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)*

Phonetic transcription (British pronunciation)

[ɔːl ˈhjuːmən ˈbiːɪŋz ə bɔːn friː ənd ˈiːkwəl ɪn ˈdɪgnɪtɪ ənd raɪts ðeɪ ə ɪnˈdaʊd wɪð ˈriːzn ənd ˈkɒnʃəns ənd ʃʊd ækt təˈwɔːdz wʌn əˈnʌðə ɪn ə ˈspɪrɪt ɒv ˈbrʌðəhʊd]

Phonetic transcription (American pronunciation)

[ɔːl ˈhjuːmən ˈbiːɪŋz ɑːr bɔːrn friː ænd ˈiːkwəl ɪn ˈdɪgnɪtiː ænd raits ðeɪ ɑːr enˈdaʊd wɪð ˈriːzən ænd ˈkɑːnʃəns ænd ʃʊd ækt təˈwɔːrdz wʌn əˈnʌðər ɪn ə ˈspɪrɪt əv brʌðərˌhʊd]

Assignment 2. E. Hitz is an American who lived in Canada for eight years. She studied applied linguistics at the University of British Columbia, did research for the Dialect Topography of Canada project, and taught English in Vancouver and San Francisco. In her article called *How are American English and Canadian English different*, she points out at differences between Canadian and American pronunciation, spelling and vocabulary. Read the article and sum up about the differences.

Assignment 3. The way of speaking in Canada may sound strange and get confusing to the speakers of other English varieties. Americans often make jokes about Canadian English.Watch *Canada on strike funny remix* to find out about what words Americans like to joke about and how Canadians pronounce them. The show *South Park* is famous for making fun of Canadians and their accents. Watch one episode from an American adult animated sitcom *South Park* S12, E4 – *Canada on Strike* and follow the extracts from the script below. Comment on the units highlighted in yellow. Are they mocks on Canadianisms?

Mr. Mackey:	Students, quiet please, m'kay? As you may or may not know, today is Canada Appreciation Day.
Mr. Mackey:	M'kay, so we've been asked to show you a video from the World Canadian Bureau. Uh start the tape please?
Man 1:	*[wearing #10]* Nobody takes us Canadians seriousleh!
Lumberjack:	It's like the world doesn't respect Canada at all, eh?
Swiss Delegate:	Ahhh, when you say "Canada is on strike", what exactly do you mean?
Stephen Abootman:	What do you think it means?! *[pounds the table]* We're striking, buddih! No more! That's it! Until we get what we want
Terrance:	Look, buddih, me and Phillip need to go home for a bit.
Stephen Abootman:	Look, guy, we are to stay strong! If you don't stand with your fellow Canadians, then you are a rat!
Terrance:	Don't call me a rat, buddih!

Stephen Abootman:	I'm not your buddih, friend!
Phillip:	He's not your friend, guy!
Stephen Abootman:	I'm not your guy, buddih!
Terrance:	He's not your buddih, friend!
Weird Hat Guy:	*[pops in]* Yah, you think this is funnih?
Stephen Abootman:	Oh you do, huh?! *[muffles the phone, then tells the others]* They've had enough. … All right, we're prepared to end this strike! If you are agreeing that we should have more monihhh!
Kyle:	Huh? Well we don't really have that much money.
Stephen Abootman:	You listen to me, friend! *[walks away from the crowd so they don't hear him so loudly]* You'd better figure out a way to get us our fair amount of money…
Phillip:	Look, ah, Stephen, Terrance and I were talking andeh, well it's, it's starting to look like maybe we're not gonna win this thing, you know?
Terrance:	Yeah, let's give it up, guy.
Stephen Abootman:	Don't call me your guy! I'm not your guy, friend!
Terrance:	Well I'm not your friend,buddih!
Stephen Abootman:	Well I'm not your buddih, guy!
Stephen Abootman:	Well, we uh, we didn't get everything that we wanted, but... we negotiated hard and... we got these... *[holds up some coupons]* coupons to Bennigan's! ...
Stephen Abootman:	Don't look at that. Come on, friends, let's dance.
Phillip:	You had no idea what you were doing and now you're trying to make it look like you won so that we won't set you adrift!
Stephen Abootman:	Damn it friends, don't you see? We won for future Canadians, guy.So the little guy doesn't get pushed around anymore. This was a victory for Canada's respect. *[Terrance and Phillip don't believe what they're hearing]*

🗝 **Assignment 4**. Make up a glossary of the following terms: *non-rhotic, Standard American English; Standard Canadian English.*