

A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN BRITISH AND AMERICAN VARIETIES: A CASE-STUDY OF ENGLISH ACCENTS

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Abstract

The objectives of this research were to figure out whether or not there were similarities, dissimilarities and possible learning difficulties faced by Indonesian Students in learning English varieties or accents, as well as its contribution to TEFL. This research used descriptive-qualitative method. The triangulation technique was used to collect the data, and to analyze the data, the researchers used descriptive analysis (i.e. identifying, classifying, interpreting, predicting and drawing conclusions). The results showed that British and American varieties had two similarities on meanings and word functions and four dissimilarities on diction, spelling, grammar and pronunciation.

Keywords: British, American, Varieties, Accents.

1. INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of this writing, this research describes about the language. Language is such an expression of human being life that it hardly seems crucial to define it. Whatever else people may do, when they come together, whether they play, fight, make love, or make automobiles, they talk and use a language. (Fromkin, et al., 2003, p.3). It means that a language has relationships with serious aspects of

human's life. It deals with human's psychology, physical activities, communication theory, anthropology and culture. A language enables people to communicate with their society. However, the ways to express the language is different from one nation to another.

As it is going to be concerned with the analysis of a language, it will be useful to start by defining what a marvelous attribute language is- and a

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language refers to. Richards, et al., (2002, p.283) define language as the system of human communication which consists of the structural arrangement of sounds (their written representation) into large units, e.g. morphemes, words, sentences, utterances, etc.” It means that language is a means or instruments of communication, which consists of spoken and written forms and arranged structurally.

In addition, Brown(2007, p.6) defines a language into some category, such as a set of arbitrary symbol, symbols of primarily vocal but may also be visual, having conventionalized meanings to which they refer, being used for communication, operating in a speech community or culture, being essentially human although possibly not limited to humans, and being acquired by all people in much the way; language and language learning both have universal characteristics, including such systems of phonemes, morphemes, phrases, clauses and context(discourse).

As one of the international and foreign languages in Indonesia, English is very essential to be studied after the students' language, Bahasa Indonesia. Yet, there are many problems or barriers of studying English such varieties (British and American English accents).

Indeed, ESL students, especially Indonesian students tend to be perplexed to comprehend how to distinguish British and American English and what English varieties or accents they use. One of the factual instances is that when a teacher of English asks his or her students to change a positive sentence as, “*you have money*” into negative and interrogative forms, the students usually answer “*you have no money*” and “*have you money?*”, Yet, the teacher usually says that the answers are wrong. He or she further states that the best answers must be “*you do not have money*” and “*do you have money?*”.

As the matter of facts, both the student's answer and the teacher's answer are correct. They have a slight difference. In other words, the students' answers in British English, while the teacher's answers in American English. This situation usually gets hotter and hotter when one side keeps on maintaining his or her own idea correct.

In relation to the illustration stated, four problems were formulated as follows: 1) what are the similarities between British and American varieties?. 2) what are the dissimilarities between British and American varieties?. 3) what are the possible difficulties faced by Indonesian students

in learning English accents? and 4) what are the contributions of Contrastive analysis between British and American varieties to the teaching English as a foreign language?. While, the purposes of conducting this research were to figure out the similarities, dissimilarities between British and American varieties, and possible difficulties in learning English accents, as well as its contributions to TEFL.

Additionally, the results of this study can give valuable knowledge for the researchers about English varieties, especially British and American, and also for students of English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Muhammadiyah Palembang.

It is hoped that the results of this research can be useful for all Indonesian students to enlarge their knowledge about English varieties or accents in line with British and American. Finally. It is also hoped that the results of thi reseach can uncover the possible difficulties faced by Indonesian students in learning English accents.

Contrastive Analysis

According to Keshavarz (2012, pp.14-16), contrastive analysis is essentially founded on the assumption

that languages can be compared and contrasted. He further describes five steps of contrastive analysis, such as selection, description, comparison, prediction and verification. In this context, contrastive analysis is such an analysis used to contrast two languages and analyzed them through procedural steps (i.e. selecting, describing, comparing, predicting, verifying) the data collected.

Furthermore, Kridalaksana (2008, p.135) says that contrastive analysis is such an analysis which is conducted to find out the differences and the similarities of sounds in two different languages. In this context, contrastive analysis such a comparative study of two languages carried out to figure out the similarities and dissimilarities of language components or aspects. Additionally, Tarigan (2009, p.3), defines contrastive analysis as a transferring analysis which is parsed and formulated in the form of a theory of stimulating psychology which is legally practised in the 1950s as an application of structural linguistics in language teaching, and based on some assumptions, as follows:

- 1) there must be an interference of L1 in learning a new language (target language);

2) some problems faced in learning a new language (target language) can be

predicted by using a contrastive analysis;

3) a contrastive analysis can be used as a guidance for a teacher, especially a

teacher of English, in teaching pronunciation, in term of phonology.

In this case, contrastive analysis is like transferring study that is conducted to find out the interference of native language or L1 to the target language (language being learnt), and its problems.

Like other experts, Richards, et al., (2002, p.119), contrastive analysis is the comparison of two languages, for example, the sound system or the grammatical system. It was firstly developed and practised in the 1950s and 1960s, as an application of structural linguistics to language teaching, and is basically based on the following assumptions, as states below.

a) the main difficulties in learning a new language are caused by interference from the first language;

b) those difficulties can be predicted by contrastive analysis;

c) teaching materials can make use of interference.

In brief, contrastive analysis is the study of comparing two languages and conducted based on such important

assumptions as the effect of L1 to the language learning materials.

Variety

Crystal (2008, p.509) delineates variety as a term used in sociolinguistics and stylistics to refer to any system of linguistic expression whose use is governed by situational distinctive language. In this case, variety has something to do with distinctive features of language in society in line with regional and occupational as British English variety. While, Bayley and Lucas (2007, p.5) testify variety involves different ways of saying the same thing. In other words, variety means the different ways of uttering of the same expressions of two or more people.

Neufeldt and Guralnik (1988, p. 1476) elaborate that variety is a number of different things thought of together having special characteristics like accent and dialect. It means that variety is such an accent or dialect which has particular features that is used by a group of community in a certain area.

Accent

Swann, et al., (2004, p.2) define accent as a variety of speech differing from other varieties in terms of

pronunciation (including intonation) and which identifies a speaker in terms of regional origin, social standing and possibly ethnicity. It means that accent is considered as features of pronunciation and other language areas such as vocabulary and grammar. In addition, Richards and Schmidt(2010, p.3) delineate accent as a particular way of speaking which tells the listener something about speaker's background, as instanced of a person's pronunciation, as:

- 1) the region or country they come from (i.e. an American accent)
- 2) what social class they belong to (i.e. a lower middle class accent)
- 3) whether or not the speaker is a native speaker of the language (i.e. she speaks English with an accent/with a German accent)

Richards and Schmidt(2010, p.3) further state that accent in the written form of some languages, particularly in French a mark which is placed over a vowel. An accent may show the difference in pronunciation as in French sound /prés/ which means "meadow". The acute accent on the /e/ indicates a different vowel sound from that in /près/ which means "near" with a grave accent. Another one is a difference in meaning without any change in pronunciation (i.e.

in French /ou/ which means or and /où/ which means "where". In this context, accent has something to do with the dissimilarities of two or more varieties in line with pronunciation whether or not change the meaning.

Moreover, Crystal (2008, p.3) states that accent is the cumulative auditory effect of those features of pronunciation which identify where a person is from, regionally or socially. In conclusion, accent refers to the pronunciation features that show somebody's hometown and his social life.

British English

According to Sulaiman (2015, p.vii) British English is derived from the United Kingdom which includes Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland where English is spoken widely, and for some people the term "British English" is misleading one, but the facts state that it still remains and it describes the way in which English spoken in the UK. It means that British English is a very initial English language that was spread all over the UK areas and now spoken by all countries in the world.

Hornby (2010, p.178) defines British English is the English language as spoken in Britain and certain other

countries. In this case, British English is firstly used and developed in Great Britain, now known as England. On the other side, Kernerman (2010, p.441) states that British English is an English language used by the people in Great Britain that is different from American English such in spelling (i.e. programme & program).

American English

Widarso (2002, p.41) states that American English is English Language that is used by American which used to be brought to America just after the year of 1500, and it tends to be more popular than British English, since it is simpler to be used by many people. In brief, American English is such a very popular English variety or accent since it is simpler than British.

On the other side, Kernerman (2010, p. 441) says that American English is such an English language which is more famous than British English, and it is used specifically by American people.

2. METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

This research was conducted to find out the similarities, dissimilarities and some predictions of possible learning difficulties, thus the researchers used the

descriptive-qualitative method, since it was to describe the existing phenomenon having no manipulated data. Tavakoli (2012, pp.160-161) states:

A descriptive research is similar to qualitative research because it deals with naturally occurring phenomena, using data which may either be collected first hand or taken from already existing data sources such as data from other studies, student records, and so on, without intervention of an experiment or an artificially contrived treatment. It differs from qualitative research in that it often begins with preconceived hypotheses and a narrower scope of investigation and uses the logical methods of inductive or deductive reasoning to arrive at the generalizations, and it is sometimes divided into correlational research and ex post facto research, and other descriptive research that is neither correlational nor designed to find causation but describes existing conditions, such as survey research and case study.

From the stated theory, it is known that descriptive research is like qualitative research which uses description and interpretation of the indication in linguistics components,

especially English varieties or accents. In deed, the researchers used triangulation technique to collect the data (i.e. documentation, observation, interview). Then, the researchers analyzed the data through descriptive analysis (i.e. identifying, classifying, interpreting, predicting and drawing conclusions) (Syahri, et al., 2017, p.95).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This research has two kinds of data sources to be analyzed. The primary data and the secondary data. The primary data was a handbook of English-Indonesian Words & Expressions written by Sulaiman (2015) which had something to do with British and American English, while the secondary data were such dictionary books as written by Hornby (2010), Neufeldt and Guralnik (1988), Richards et al., (2002), etc. The research shows the characteristics of British and American varieties in relation to some of parts of speech (i.e. noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction), and some other aspects or word functions, such as date and time, irregular verbs and auxiliary verbs. To be detailed, Table 1 presented.

Table 1. The Characteristics of British and American Varieties

No	British	American	Part of Speech
1	flat	apartement	N
2	building	Block	N
3	pavement	sidewalk	N
4	road	Route	N
5	roundabout	traffic circle	N
6	film	Movie	N
7	headmaster	principal	N
8	dowse	Douse	V
9	practise	practice	V
10	paralyse	paralyze	V
11	sceptical	skeptical	Adj
12	Ill	Sick	Adj
13	public	Private	Adj
14	state	Public	Adj
15	to-day	Today	Adv
16	learnt	Learned	I V
17	shall	Will	Aux
18	in merdeka street	on Merdeka street	Prep
19	one hundred one	one hundred and one	Conj
20	2 may or 2 nd may	may 2	N

Note: N (noun), V (verb), Adj (adjective), Adv (Adverb), Prep (preposition), IV (irregular verb), Conj (conjunction), Aux(auxiliary)

From Table 1, it was found that British and American varieties have their own special characteristics. Yet, they still refer to the same meanings but different from functions. Instead, they also have similarities. To be clear, Table 2 illustrated.

Table 2. The Similarities between British and American Varieties

No	British	American	Fuction	Meaning
1	Mark	Grade	N	nilai
2	Tap	Faucet	N	keran
3	Maths	Math	N	Matematika
4	behaviour	Behavior	Adj	sikap
5	honour	Honor	Adj	terhormat
6	Grey	Gray	Adj	abu-abu
7	plough	Plow	V	membajak
8	queue	Stand	V	antri
		In line		
9	Post	Mail	V	mengirim surat
10	ring	call(up)	V	menelpon
11	learnt	learned	IV	belajar
12	to-day	today	Adv	hari ini
13	in Rose street	on Rose street	Conj	jalan Rose
14	Shall	will	Aux	akan

From Table 2, it was clear that there were two similarities between British

and American varieties, in terms of meanings and functions, there were also four dissimilarities between British English and American English, in terms of diction, spelling, grammar, and pronunciation. To be distinct, Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6 illustrated.

Table 3. The Dissimilarities between British and American Varieties in Term of Diction

No	British	American	Function	Meaning
1	full stop	period	Adv	titik
2	Term	semester	N	semester
3	tin	can	N	kaleng
4	Shoping trolley	Shopping cart	N	kereta belanja
5	shop	store	N	toko
6	picture	movie	N	film
7	jumper	sweater	N	sweter
8	lift	elevator	N	tangga berjalan
9	lorry	truck	N	truk
10	Mackint o	raincoat	N	Jas hujan
11	polo-neck	turtle-neck	N	sweter
12	Post	mail	N	surat
13	public lavatory	Rest room	N	toilet
14	Railway	railroad	N	Jalur

No	British	American	Function	Meaning
1	colour	Color	N	warna
2	centre	Center	N	pusat
3	catalogue	Catalog	N	katalog
4	defence	Defense	N	pertahanan
5	judgement	Judgment	N	penilaian
6	pyjamas	Pajamas	N	piayama
7	honour	Honor	N	kehormatan
8	theatre	Theater	N	teater
9	armour	Armor	N	baju baja
10	labour	Labor	N	tenaga kerja
11	neighbour	Neighbor	N	tetangga
12	rumour	Rumor	N	rumor
13	cheque	Check	N	cek
14	programme	Program	N	acara
15	jewellery	Jewelry	N	perhiasan
16	storey	Story	N	cerita
17	tyre	Tire	N	ban
18	connexion	Connection	N	hubungan
19	sombre	Somber	N	muram

From Table 3, it was vivid that these instances were similar with their meanings. Yet, they were different from the dictionin term of function. Other differences between British and American varieties in line with spelling. To be specific, Table 4 stated

Table 4. The Dissimilarities between British and American Varieties in Term of Spelling

Kereta
api
ponografi
sampah
Tiket
Satu
arah
permen
kue
taksi
Bok
telepon
jadwal
senter
kotor
kereta
bawah
tanah
rompi
jalan
sebrang
Penjara
Sayuran
Sofa
Liburan
musim
gugur
Parkir
mobil
debu

15 record phonograph N
player
16 Rubbish garbage N
17 single one-way N
ticket ticket
18 Sweet candy N
19 Biscuits cookies N
20 Taxi cab N
21 telepho telephone N
ne box booth
22 time schedule N
table
23 torch flash light N
24 tramp hobo N
25 Under subway N
ground
train
26 waist vest N
coat
27 zebra pedestrian N
crossing crossing
28 gaol jail N
29 greens vegetables N
30 sofa coach N
31 holiday vacation N
32 autumn fall N
33 car park parking lot N
34 dust garbage N

20	plough	Plow	N	bajak
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From Table 4, it was known that these instances were similar with their meanings. They were different from the spelling only. Other differences between British English and American English bears on grammar. To be detailed, Table 5 stated.

Table 5. The Dissimilarities between British English and American Varieties in Term of Grammar

No	British English	American English
1	have you?	do you have?
2	have you ever?	did you ever?
3	she has learnt	she has learned
4	I live in Orchid	I live on Orchid
5	It's 2 October	It's October 2
6	we shall go	we will go
7	he should do	he do

From Table 5, it was vivid that these instances were similar with their meanings. They were different from the grammar. Other differences between British and American varieties related to pronunciation. To be detailed, Table 6 presented.

Table 6. The Dissimilarities between British and American Varieties in Term of Pronunciation

No	British English	American English	Function	Meaning
1	letter /letər/	letter/ledər /	N	surat
2	better /betər/	better /bedər/	N	lebih baik
3	bottle /bɒtəl/	bottle /bɒdəl/	N	botol
4	after /ɑ:ftər/	after /æ:ftər/	Prep	setelah
5	brass /bra:s/	brass /bræ:s/	Adj	kuningan
6	glass /gla:s/	glass /glæ:s/	N	gelas
7	pass /pa:s/	pass /pæ:s/ dia sudah belajar	V	melewati
8	last la:st/	last /læ:st/ hari ini tanggal 2 Oktober	Adv	terakhir
9	answer a:nsər/	answer /æ:nsər/ dia mengerjakan	V	menjawab
10	class /kla:s/	class /klæ:s/	N	kelas
11	grass ˈgra:s/	grass /græ:s/	N	rumput
12	past /pa:st/	past /pæ:st/	Adj	masa lalu

From Table 6, it was vivid that these instances were similar with their

pronunciation and spelling eventhough different from the functions. In relation to the similarities and dissimilarities between British and American varieties in term of English accent, the reseachers finally could predict the possible difficulties faced by Indonesian students when learning English in line with British and American, as follows:

- 1) they are difficult to differentiate English sounds, either British or American.
- 2) they are difficult to determine English spelling, either British or American.
- 3) they are difficult to distinguish what English grammar they use.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In this research, the researchers concluded that British and American varieties have their own characteristics in relation to some of parts of speech (i.e. noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction), and some other aspects or word functions, such as date and time, and irregular verbs, as well as auxiliary verb. In addition, they have two similarities in relation to meanings and functions. Yet, British English and American English also have some dissimilarities, in terms of diction, spelling, grammar and pronunciation. Meanwhile, some

possible difficulties faced by Indonesian students when learning English in term of British and American have something to do with differentiating the sounds, determining the spelling and distinguish grammar being used.

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