論文

Historical Influences on Australian English: A Comparative analysis with American English

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1． Introduction

British English and American English constitute two sets of "standard English" today. British English is followed in most of English-speaking member countries of the British Commonwealth including Australia, and American English, or sometimes referred to as North American English, is the norm in the United States and Canada.

This paper examines the differences between Australian English and American English and studies the historical factors that have influenced the development of Australian English in comparison with the development of American English. Why has English in Australia stayed in the British English family while English in America took a diverging path to a different standard? What historical factors contributed to these differences? Which factors were common to both languages and which were peculiar to one? These are questions this paper seeks to explore.

Section 2 compares both Australian English and American English with British English, and analyzes differences in pronunciation, spelling, grammar, and vocabulary. In all four aspects, Australian English is found to be much closer to British English than American English is, despite the common origin of both languages. In Section 3, three key historical factors, namely, relationship with England, immigration, and new culture, are discussed. Each of these factors had a strong impact on the different degree of divergence from British English displayed by Australian English and American English. Section 4 then focuses on the aspect of vocabulary, with a particular focus on Australian slangs. Five factors of influence are identified, some of which are common to both Australian English and American English, and others are peculiar to Australian English. These five factors are: contacts with indigenous people, discoveries on a new continent, characteristics of a penal colony, gold rush, and the First World War.

In Section 5, the concluding section of this paper, dynamic nature of languages is discussed. The relatively new and continuing trend of Americanization of Australian English is identified as a key impetus behind today's dynamism. The paper concludes with a perspective on potential convergence of these two languages.

2． Comparison with British English

Comparison with British English, the origin of both languages, offers a useful tool to discern the differences between Australian English and American English, in terms of pronunciation, spelling, grammar, and vocabulary.

Australian English does not differ significantly from British English in pronunciation, spelling, or grammar. In terms of vocabulary, there is little difference in written language but large differences exist in spoken language, especially in the use of slangs. Australian English is filled with slangs that are peculiarly Australian. On the other hand, there are large differences between American English and British English in all areas of pronunciation, spelling, grammar, and vocabulary.[1]

2. 1 Pronunciation

First, concerning pronunciation, Australian English is fundamentally same as British English, with an exception of pronunciation of "A". In Australian English, "A" is pronounced not as [ei] but as [ai]. Examples include "today", "stay", and "mate". It should be noted that little difference in pronunciation is found among different regions within Australia. Australia is surprisingly homogeneous linguistically despite its vastness.

In the case of American English, differences from British English exist not only in pronunciation but also in stress. In terms of pronunciation, the sound "R" is a case in point. It is almost always clearly pronounced in American English but not necessarily so in British English, as in the case of "here" and "girl". Another example is the sound of "T", which in this case is pronounced more prominently in British English than in American English, as in the case of "better" and "water". Pronunciation of [æ] as in "cat" is much more prominent in American English than in British English. As for stress, two examples can be cited. One example is words of French origin such as "ballet", "debris", and "baton". In American English, the stress tends to be placed at the last syllabus but not necessarily so in British English. Another example is words such as "address" and "princess" where the stress is placed at the first syllabus in American English but not in British English.

2. 2 Spelling

Second, concerning spelling, there is little difference between Australian English and British English. However, differences abound between American English and British English. A few examples are as follows: "-our" in British English vs. "-or" in American English as in "colour" vs. "color" and "labour" vs. "labor"; "-re" in British English vs. "-er" in American English as in "centre" vs. "center" and "fibre" vs. "fiber"; "-ise" in British English vs. "ize" in American English as in "organise" vs. "organize" and "capitalise" vs. "capitalize"; "-ce" in British English vs. "se" in American English as in "defence" vs. "defense" and "licence" vs. "license"; "-ou-" in British English vs. "-o-" in American English as in "mould" vs. "mold" and "smoulder" vs. "smolder"; and "-ll-"in British English vs. "-l-" in American English as in "counsellor" vs. "counselor".

2. 3 Grammar

Third, concerning grammar, differences between Australian English and British English

are limited to details in spoken English. In Australian English, "She" can be used to replace "It" as in "She is a fine day today", and "but" is often placed at the end of a sentence to mean "no doubt about it" as in "He is a good person, but". Other examples include Australian usage of "different for", "usedn't to", "irregardless", and "youse" as plural of "you".

In American English, grammatical differences from British English are more systemic and embedded in written language as well. Three examples are cited here. The first example pertains to the past tense of verbs. In many cases, a past tense that ends with "-t" in British English has changed to a past tense that ends with "-ed" in American English. "Learn" ("learnt" vs. "learned"), "lean" ("leant" vs. "leaned"), and "smell" ("smelt" vs. "smelled") represent examples of this difference. The second example is creation of new verbs in American English. One way is usage of nouns as verbs as in the case of "to host" and "to pressure". Another is creation of verbs from adjectives or nouns. "Humidify" was born from "humid", and "hospitalize" was born from "hospital". The third example concerns the usage of "need" and "have" as an auxiliary verb. In an interrogative sentence that includes one of these words as an auxiliary verb, it is more common in British English to start the sentence with an auxiliary verb. An example is a sentence such as "Need I go?" or "Have you any money?" which in American English would more likely be in the form of "Do I need to go?" or "Do you have any money?".

2. 4　Vocabulary

Fourth, concerning vocabulary, while some differences exist between Australian English and British English, the magnitude of the differences is quite small compared to the differences that lie between American English and British English. However, in spoken language, Australian English differs significantly from British English, as many slangs exist that are peculiar to Australia. Chapter 4 discusses Australian slangs in greater detail. In American English, differences from British English in standard vocabulary abound. Different words are used to describe the same items. Examples include, with British English word coming first, "lift" vs. "elevator", "lorry" vs. "truck", and "mobile phone" vs. "cell phone".

3．　Historical Influence

As discussed in Chapter 2, significant differences exist between Australian English and American English in terms of their "distance" from British English, despite such common factors as the origin of the two languages and the two countries' large physical distance from England and heritage as an English colony. While Australian English has remained within the realm of British English, American English has diverged considerably.

Different historical experiences of Australia and the United States had large influences on the different development of languages in these two countries. Appendix 1 illustrates in a comparative manner key events in Australian and US history between the arrival of Captain Cooke and Endeavour in 1770 for Australia and settlement of Jamestown, Virginia in 1607

for the United States, up to 1901 when Commonwealth of Australia was established. Throughout this period, three factors exerted particularly important influences on the development of the languages: relationship with England, immigration, and new culture.

3.1 Relationship with England

Australia's continuing membership in the British Commonwealth exemplifies the nature of its relationship with England. To this day, Australia's formal head of state is Queen of England, who appoints Australian Governor General to represent herself.

This friendly and strong tie after independence stems partly from the nature of Australian colony. Since the arrival of the First Fleet and the first Governor Arthur Philip in 1788, Australia was used as England's penal colony. Half of the approximately 1,500 people that came with the Fist Fleet were convicts. Approximately 160,000 convicts were brought to Australia between 1788 and 1868 when penal transportation was ended.[2] While immigration of free people commenced in early 1790 and self-government was introduced in the 1820s, a large part of the colony's population consisted of convicts, officials of the English government overlooking these convicts, and soldiers of the English military. Even in the 1830s, convicts accounted for approximately one-third of the total colonial population.[3] As such, for a considerable period of time, the convict system and its strict functioning according to English rules played a central role in building the characters of the colony and shaping its future. Under these circumstances, little incentive existed among Australian colonists to seek divergence from England and English ways. Convicts, government officials, and free colonists remained good English subjects and were granted independence in 1901 with establishment of Commonwealth of Australia as a member of the British Commonwealth, continuing its respect for the English rule. It is no surprise that little divergence from the English way took place in Australia whether in its social system or in its language.

In contrast, the United States not only won its independence by war against England but also fought the War of 1812 against England in its continuing conflict against its former mother country. This spirit of independence and defiance spread beyond the realm of political activities and social system to that of the language. Development of a new language was considered to form a natural component of building a new country. In Mencken's words, it was "the temper of those times"[4], where general hostility to all English authority culminated in the revolutionary attitude in the language as well.

This new spirit was best captured by Noah Webster, a prominent lexicographer, who was called "Father of American Scholarship and Education", in the following statement in 1789.

> "A future separation of the American tongue from the English [was] necessary and unavoidable. Numerous local causes, such as a new country, new associations of people, new combinations of ideas in arts and sciences, and some intercourse with tribes wholly unknown in Europe, will introduce new words into the American tongue."[5]

His belief was put in a concrete form when he published "An American Dictionary of the English Language" in 1828. This dictionary set the foundation of American spelling, proposing a new set of spelling which reflects the pronunciation more closely compared to British English.

In the political arena, Thomas Jefferson shared Webster's belief. In a letter from Monticello in 1813, he wrote, "the new circumstances under which we are placed call for new words, new phrases, and for the transfer of old words to new objects. An American dialect will therefore be formed."[6]

3.2 Immigration

Australia and the United States both represent new countries built on new continents which had been thinly populated by native people prior to settlement by European people. The growth of both countries has been achieved through immigration. However, the characteristics of immigration in each country showed considerable differences which influenced the languages.

In Australia, no European settlement had been present prior to English settlement. Furthermore, immigration from countries other than England remained limited during the following years. Available data show that non-English immigrants composed 7.2% of the overall population in 1861, half of whom were Chinese laborers brought in for gold fields. Not only was the non-English immigration small in numbers, they either formed separate enclaves or quickly assimilated so that the English language remained relatively unaffected by languages of different ethnic groups. For example, the Germans lived in "German villages" centered on the Lutheran Church, and the Chinese were mostly gold field laborers who lived near gold fields and had little contact with other Australians. Other ethnic groups including the Scandinavians and Italians quickly assimilated into the Australian society and adopted Australian English. In other words, Australian tendency to expect assimilation rather than accept differences effectively limited impacts of other languages on Australian English.

In the United States, English settlement on the continent's east coast developed side by side with settlements by other European countries, namely France near the Canadian border, Spain in Texas and the West, and Holland in New York. After independence, large influxes of immigration of non-English people continued. The significant sizes of non-English population, integration of non-English settlements into the newly established country, and interaction between English and non-English ethnic groups resulted in integration of numerous non-English words into the English language. For example, during the colonial times, words like "prairie", "portages", and "rapids" came from French. During the 19th century, words such as "ranch", "tornado", and "bonanza" were introduced from Spanish after the Mexican war and the gold rush in the 1840s, and German words such as "pretzel", "delicatessen", and "kindergarten" became part of American English after the 1850s. The trend has continued, followed by borrowings from African American Vernacular English

("jazz"), Italian ("pizza"), and Yiddish ("schlep").

In addition to such "loan words", spread of English among those immigrants also influenced the pronunciation of the language. As the government considered English as a tool to bring together different ethnic groups and promote their Americanization process, immigrants were immediately faced with the need to adopt English. This brought about an abundance of pronunciation influenced by different mother tongues. Interaction of those people who speak English with different accents and pronunciation encouraged gradual formation of new "standard" pronunciation, thereby contributing to the transition of American English pronunciation away from that of British English.

3. 3   New Culture

Under strong influences of England, Australia has fundamentally inherited English culture and social customs including the political system, education system, and sports. Therefore, the language within these spheres has remained unchanged, and Australian English has inherited most words that describe these institutions.

In the United States, on the other hand, a new political system, a new education system, and new sports were born. Accordingly, new vocabulary to describe the new culture also developed. In politics, words such as "pork-barrel", "steam-roller", and "caucus" represent certain aspects that are characteristic of the American political scene. A new American school system consists of "kindergarten", a word of German origin, "elementary school", "middle school" and "high school", rather than either the public school system of "primary school" and "secondary school" or the private school system of "pre-preschool", "prep school" and "public school" in England. In sports, baseball is the best example of American born sports. Many words that describe the rules and actions of the game such as "to steal the base", "to slam the pill", "double-play" represent new usage.

4 .   Vocabulary of Australian English

Overall, Australian English stands quite similar to British English, especially when compared to the large differences that lie between American English and British English. However, as discussed in Section 2, Australian vocabulary represents one aspect where significant differences from British English do exist. Origins of these differences can be traced to five historical factors, namely, contacts with indigenous people, discoveries on a new continent, characteristics of a penal colony, gold rush, and the First World War.[7]

4. 1   Contacts with indigenous people

First, contacts with the indigenous people led to integration of words from indigenous languages into Australian English vocabulary. Australia's indigenous population consists of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the former from mainland Australia and Tasmania, and the latter from the islands between the tip of Queensland and Papua New Guinea. At the start of the European settlement in 1788, an estimated indigenous population of

between 300,000 and 750,000 existed, speaking estimated 250 languages including about 700 dialects.[8]

Contacts with the indigenous people, especially the Aborigines on the continent with whom the settlers had more frequent encounters, introduced the settlers to a new set of vocabulary. As settlers attempted to understand the Aborigine languages, it was the words that pertained to tangible and visible items such as fauna and flora, landscape, and ceremony that proved identifiable. Words that describe the intangible and the invisible such as feelings and concepts either failed to make clear sense or raised little interest in settlers' minds. Thus, borrowings from Aborigine languages are almost exclusively nouns. Some examples are "kangaroo", "wallaby", "dingo", "boomerang", and "womerah".

Borrowings from indigenous languages are not unique to Australian English. In fact, American English is also filled with borrowings from the Native American languages. Similar to Australia's indigenous population, America's indigenous population also consisted of numerous tribes with numerous languages, and similar to Australia's settlers, settlers in America focused on words that describe the tangible and the visible. Examples include "hickory", "moccasin", "squash", "totem", and "raccoon".

4.2 Discoveries on a new continent

Second, discoveries on a new continent led to the need to describe the newly found items or experiences with the existing inventory of British English. Australia's huge undeveloped continent presented settlers with landscape and climate which were completely different from England and Europe, full of unseen fauna and flora that had no English name. As settlers sought for the right words to describe the new environment to convey to those back in England, they were forced to use imagination.[9] It was only natural that their efforts resulted in attaching new meanings to the original English words and changing their usage.

Thus, "creek", a small watercourse flowing into sea in England, has come to mean a stream or a small river in Australia. Similarly, "paddock" has expanded from a small enclosure for livestock in England to a large field in Australia. Moore lists many examples of fauna and flora named for resemblance to European fauna and flora, such as "ash" which is used in Australia to eucalyptus trees that produce timber resembling the European ash.

Early settlers in the United States faced similar experiences. Like Australia, America was a large undeveloped continent with features quite different from England. Interestingly, some words like "creek" cited above have gone through the same transformation of meaning in the United States as in Australia. Other examples include "corn" as general grains which meant wheat in British English and maize in American English as well as "robin" which describes a type of small bird with reddish breast in England but a type of large bird with reddish breast in the United States.

4. 3   Characteristics of a penal colony

Third, Australia's unique heritage as a penal colony has left a peculiarly Australian mark on its language, particularly spoken language and slangs. That is the influence of the flash language spoken by convicts. As discussed in the previous section, approximately 160,000 convicts were transported to Australia between 1788 and 1868 and formed a significant part of the colonial population. These convicts came largely from lower classes in large cities in England. English was poorly spoken by these convicts, and the main characteristics of their speech were those of Cockney from South-East England. Thus, "English" imported to the new colony was not wholly represented by the standard British English. It had another strong component in the "flash language of the convicts".

While accents and pronunciation of the flash language appear to have disappeared during the course of history, vocabulary originating from that language remains. The verb "plant" meaning 'to hide, conceal (especially stolen goods and horses)' is now used in a general usage without inference to stealing, as in "to plant Christmas presents". Another example is the verb "muster" which used to mean 'the assembling of convicts'. Its meaning has extended to 'the assembling of soldiers and sailors for inspection and counting' as well as 'the gathering of the livestock for counting and branding'. "Swag" which used to mean 'a thief's plunder or booty' now means 'rolled up bedding, belongings and other items carried by a drifter'. Some words have shown a more drastic change in the meaning. "Public servants" used to mean 'convicts'. Today, it means 'government officials'.

4. 4   Gold Rush

Fourth, gold rush, or yellow fever as it was commonly called in Australia, led to a large influx of immigrants in search of gold, who brought with them new words. After gold was first discovered in 1850, the population in Australia increased by 700,000 in the next decade. Many of these immigrants were gold searchers from the United States, where the gold rush had started earlier in California in 1849. The impact this sudden boom in gold mining had on Australian English was an increase of mining-related words, including some borrowings from words born from gold rush in California. In a sense, this proved to be the beginning of the process of Americanization of Australian English, a new influence on Australian English which continues today.

Similar to the case of words passed down from the flash language, many of these new words introduced during gold rush have lost their mining-specific features over time. An exception is the word "digger", which originated from digging deep holes in search of gold and continues to mean 'a miner on Australian gold fields'. "Fossick" meant 'to search for gold on the surface, sometimes in an unsystematic way' and 'to steal gold from other diggers, especially from an unattended claim.' It now means 'to rummage or search around, especially for a possible profit'. Only the first meaning has survived without reference to gold or mining. Another word "mullock" comes from 'waste material from a mine'. Today it means 'a mess or

nonsense' as in "a load of mullock".

4. 5   The First World War

Fifth, intense experiences of Australian soldiers fighting in Europe during the First World War produced many "military slang". The long distance from home, extremely close living conditions, and the extraordinary circumstances combined to unite the troops in common purposes and shared values, which led to emergence of new shared vocabulary. Among different arms of the military, it was the Army that produced the bulk of military slang. There were more soldiers in the Army, and they were the ones that engaged in the most ferocious trench war.

Among the new vocabulary, perhaps the most iconic is "Anzac". Originally an acronym for "Australian and New Zealand Army Corps", it quickly transformed to a term that symbolizes the virtues and valor of the members of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corp who served in the brutal Gallipoli campaign. Observance of Anzac Day remains an important annual event in Australia today. As Australian soldiers had to dig deep trenches in the fighting, "digger", which meant 'a miner on Australian gold fields' expanded its meaning to include 'an Australian soldier'. The term "Aussie" was also produced for 'an Australian soldier', and is now used more generally for 'an Australian' or 'Australian' as in "Aussie beef". In those trenches, a soldier's position was called "possie." "Possie" is now used to mean 'position' in general without the trench warfare relevance. Another interesting example is the word "furphy" which means 'a lie or rumor'. This originated from the company name Furphy, which was written on water-carts that came to military bases. It is thought that either drivers of those carts brought rumors or stories exchanged by soldiers around the carts were full of lies.

5 .   Conclusion

Each language has a dynamic life of its own and never remains static. Since its inception, a variety of factors such as environment, population, history, political and social structures, communication tools exert influences on the course of the language's development. Those factors themselves are intertwined with one another.

This paper has examined the dynamic life of Australian English as compared with an equally dynamic life of American English, with a focus on history's influence on its path. The wide breath of this theme has made it difficult to conduct an in-depth analysis on each of different factors that exerted influences on Australian English. As a result, this paper may appear to veer towards a general survey at the sacrifice of a close analysis on each different point it raises. Nonetheless, the overall analysis presents a useful framework to study the historical development of Australian English.

Since the beginning of the European settlement in the 18th century, Australian English has continued to absorb impacts of a range of Australian historical experiences. Some of these

such as discoveries on a new continent were experiences shared with the United States. Others, such as the friendly relationship with England and the heritage as its penal colony, were not. Different historical experiences have paved a way for the two languages' divergent development paths, especially during the early years. As shown in the preceding discussion, Australian English has remained close to British English while American English has moved away.

In later years, however, signs of convergence in the form of American influence on Australian English have appeared, mostly in the area of vocabulary. This new trend which first appeared during Australia's gold rush has continued to intensify in recent years, buoyed by increased presence of the United States around the world and greater ease of communication made possible by advancement of technology. Peters claims that "the fact that American English has had so little impact on the essential system of Australian English (i.e., its grammar and phonology) shows how slight and temporary the 'Americanisation' is".[10] According to her, words and phrases taken from American English serve to "fill lexical gaps or to extend [our] lexical resources"[11].

To what extent these two languages may converge remains to be seen. As American hegemony weakens and its influences around the world begin to wane, the tide of Americanization may subside. Further, efforts by the Australian government to limit television air time of contents from the United States indicate that a conscious will exists in Australia to keep Americanization at bay. However, the interaction of these two languages will not disappear, and the host language will continue to accommodate influences of the other language. 'Americanization' will not remain 'temporary' as suggested by Peters but will stay. Furthermore, there is no doubt that Australian English and American English will both continue to evolve under separate and common historical influences in future years to come.

Appendix 1

Comparative History of Australia and the United States: 1607 - 1901

	Australia	United States
1607		Settlement in Jamestown, Virginia
1620		Arrival of Puritans at Plymouth - Mayflower
1634		Settlement in Maryland
1663		Settlement in North Carolina and South Carolina
1664		Purchase of New York from Holland
1681		Establishment of Pennsylvania by Quakers
1770	Arrival of James Cook - Endeavour	
1776		Declaration of Independence (13 states): July 4
1788	Arrival of first Governor Arthur Phillip - First Fleet: January 26 New South Wales claimed	
1790	First "free" immigration	
1803	Origin of the name "Australia"	
1812		War of 1812 against England Origin of the Star Spangled Banner and the National Anthem
1820s	From penal colony to colony under self-government	
1828		"An American Dictionary of the English Language" published by Noah Webster
1829	All Australia under English rule	
1830s	Settlement in South Australia	
1849		Gold Rush (California)
1850	Gold Rush	
1868	End of convict transfer	
1898		Spanish-American War
1901	Federation: Commonwealth of Australia	

Footnotes

[1] See Trudgill, Peter and Jean Hannah, *International English* (1982 and 1985), Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd., Japanese translation (1986), Kenkyusha Ltd. for a thorough discussion on this topic.

[2] See Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Government, Ancient Heritage, Modern Society, *Australia in Brief*. http://www.dfat.gov.au/aib/history.html

[3] Takeda, Isami and Kenichi Mori, *An Introduction to Australia* (1998), University of Tokyo Press, p. 8

[4] Mencken, H.L., *The American Language – An Inquiry into the Development of English in the United States* (1921),New York, Bartleby.com, 2000, http://bartleby.com/185/7.html

[5] Ibid., http://bartleby.com/185/1.html

[6] Ibid., http://bartleby.com/185/1.html

[7] See Bruce Moore, The Vocabulary of Australian English in *Australian National Dictionary* for a more comprehensive discussion of this topic.

[8] See Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Government, A Diverse People, *Australia in Brief*. http://www.dfat.gov.au/aib/society.html

[9] Arimitsu, Yasue, *Australian Identity – Struggle and Transformation in Australian Literature* (2003), University of Tokyo Press, p.12. Arimitsu describes this process as "translation", using English as a tool to describe Australia's natural environment as they apply to Europe's natural environment.

[10] Peters, Pam, "Australian English", *Americanisation and Australia* (Bell, Philip, Roger Bell, eds.) (1998). Sydney: University of New South Wales Press Ltd, p.38.

[11] Ibid., p.39

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