

Lecture 11 The development of Word-stock and means of Word building at the end of the Middle English Period - at the beginning of the NEP

The end of the Middle English Period and the beginning of the NEP and further on witnessed an intensive development of the word-stock. It was connected with the general development of the country, its political and social development, the development of culture and education. The end of the Middle English Period witnessed the development of 3 sciences: theology, medicine and philosophy (many special terms except from Latin and Greek entered the E language and many of the have become international terms). But a real flourish is witnessed during the beginning of the new E period and all through the NEP => it's a period of European Renaissance which began in Italy and flourished in many other countries. Together with the Renaissance came great interest in culture, art, classical languages => the revival of learning and of interest for Latin; later Italian and still later French. In the Old English Period there were about 30000 words, whereas now we find about 50000 words.

Together with the development of the language there developed new ways of the formation of the new words (OE: affixation, sound gradation, word composition): 1) due to the fact that E has become analytical - conversion developed (many words are root words which may have diff. Functions) now it's the main way. 2) change of stress: present - to present. 3) shortening - Fridge. There appeared many synonyms: sometimes they borrowed words for the nations for which they had already words: native - colloquial, to begin - to start - to commence, borrowed - bookish (native) (early borrowed) (bookish) there have appeared many etymological doublets: they are words which have one and the same origin, but they were borrowed at the different chronological periods: capital - chapter (a later borrowing) [tʃɪp] - new affricate. There appeared etymological hybrids - many words were formed in which diff. Parts have diff. Origin: beautiful - beautiful American English Pronunciation. Words. Spelling. Grammar.

In broad terms, Canadian and American speakers tend to sound like one another. They also tend to sound different from a large group of English speakers who sound more British, such as those in Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. For example, most Canadians and Americans pronounce an r sound after the vowel in words like barn, car, and farther, while speakers from the British English group do not. Also, some British English speakers drop h sounds at the beginning of words, so that he and his are pronounced as if they were spelled ee and is. The English spoken in Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa sounds more like British English than American English does because these varieties have had less time to diverge from British English. The process of separate development began later in these countries than in North America. Although Canadians and Americans share many speech habits, Canadian speakers of English sometimes tend more toward British English because of the closer historical association of Britain with Canada. One prominent difference between American English and Canadian English is the vowel sound in words like out and house.

Americans often say that the Canadian pronunciation sounds as if the words were spelled oot and hoose.⁷⁴

In some cases there are differences between American English and British English in the rhythm of words. British speakers seem to leave out a syllable in words like secretary, as if it were spelled secretry, while Americans keep all the syllables. The opposite is true of other words, such as specialty, which Americans pronounce with three syllables (spe-cial-ty) while British speakers pronounce it with five syllables (spe-ci-al-i-ty). Vowels and consonants may also have different pronunciations. British speakers pronounce zebra to rhyme with Debra, while American speakers make zebra rhyme with Libra. Canadian and British speakers pronounce the word schedule as if it began with an sh sound, while Americans pronounce it as if it began with an sk sound. The most frequently used words are shared by speakers of different varieties of English. These words include the most common nouns, the most common verbs, and most function words (such as pronouns, articles, and prepositions). The different varieties of English do, however, use different words for many words that are slightly less common—for example, British crisps for American potato chips, Australian billabong for American pond, and Canadian chesterfield for American sofa.

It is even more common for the same word to exist with different meanings in different varieties of English. Corn is a general term in Britain, for which Americans use grain, while corn in American English is a specific kind of grain. The word pond in British English usually refers to an artificial body of water, whereas ponds also occur naturally in North America. British English chemist is the same as American English drugstore, and in Canada people go to the druggist. Many of the words most easily recognized as American in origin are associated with aspects of American popular culture, such as gangster or cowboy.

American English spelling differs from British English spelling largely because of one man, American lexicographer Noah Webster. In addition to his well-known *An American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828), Webster published *The American Spelling Book* (1783, with many subsequent editions), which became one of the most widely used schoolbooks in American history. Webster's books sought to standardize spelling in the United States by promoting the use of an American language that intentionally differed from British English. The development of a specifically American variety of English mirrored the new country's separate political development. Webster's most successful changes were spellings with or instead of our (honor, labor for the British honour, labour); with er instead of re (center, theater for the British centre, theatre); with an s instead of a c (defense, license for the British defence, licence); with a final ck instead of que (check, mask for the British 75 cheque, masque); and without a final k (traffic, public, now also used in British English, for the older traffick, publick). Later spelling reform created a few other differences, such as program for British programme. Canadian spelling varies between the British and American forms, more British in eastern Canada and more American in western Canada.

The grammar of educated speakers of English differs little among national varieties. In the speech of people with less access to education, grammatical variations in regional and social varieties of American English are very common as normal, systematic occurrences (not as errors). One major difference between British and American English is that the two attach different verb forms to nouns that are grammatically singular but plural in sense. In American English, the team is..., or the government is... (because they are viewed as single entities), but in British English, the team are..., or the government are... (because teams and government are understood to consist of more than one person). Sometimes function words are used differently: The British stay in hospital but Americans stay in the hospital.

Questions for Lecture 11

1. When did period of European Renaissance start?
2. Give examples of pronouns, articles, and prepositions.
3. Prove that Canadian and American speakers tend to sound like one another.
4. What are the changes in affixation, sound gradation, word composition?
5. What is the grammar of educated speakers of English differs little among national varieties?