

Dialects of English

British and American English

Dialect

A dialect is:

any variety of a language which is shared by a group of speakers.

Dialects of English

Socially favored or “standard” dialects are dialects just as much as socially disfavored or “nonstandard” dialects are

The Popular Viewpoint

(Wolfram and Schilling-Este)

- We went to the Outer Banks of North Carolina for a vacation and the people there sure do speak a dialect.

“dialect” here means “not the same as us”

The Popular Viewpoint

(Wolfram and Schilling-Este)

I know we speak a dialect in the mountains, but it’s a very colorful way of speaking.

“dialect” here means “the way we speak is widely recognized as having unique features”

The Popular Viewpoint

(Wolfram and Schilling-Este)

The kids in that neighborhood don’t really speak English; they speak a dialect

“dialect” means “corrupted, deficient English”

The Popular Viewpoint

(Wolfram and Schilling-Este)

The kids in this school all seem to speak the dialect

“dialect” means “socially disfavored variety of English

Dialect Myths and Reality

MYTH:

A dialect is something that someone else speaks.

REALITY:

Everyone who speaks a language speaks some dialect of the language.

Dialect Myths and Reality

MYTH:

Dialects always have highly noticeable features that set them apart

REALITY:

Some dialects get more attention than others

Dialect Myths and Reality

MYTH:

Only varieties of a language spoken by socially disfavored groups are dialects

REALITY:

There are socially favored as well as socially disfavored dialects

Dialect Myths and Reality

MYTH:

Dialects result from unsuccessful attempts to speak the “correct” form of a language

REALITY:

Dialects result from successful attempts to learn the variety of language learners are exposed to

Dialect Myths and Reality

MYTH:

Dialects have no linguistic patterning; they are deviations from standard speech.

REALITY:

Dialects are systematic and regular. Socially disfavored dialects are governed by the same kinds of rules as other dialects

Intrusive [r]

The car is [r]
 The fur on the cat [r]
 but: The car will *[r]
 The car dealership *[r]
 The fur coat *[r]
 The fur comes from ... *[r]

Intrusive [r]

The car is [r]
 The car will *[r]
 The car dealership *[r]
 When the [r] is before a vowel, it is pronounced.

Why the [r] is called “intrusive”

Many speakers pronounce [r] before vowel initial words, even when there is no “r” in the spelling, and no [r] in the American pronunciation. [low back vowels only]

paw/claw __ is [r] __ grew...
 what I saw __ is [r] __ looked ..
 My grandma __ is [r] __ lives ..

2	ɪ	ɛ	ʊ	ɔ	ɒ	
i	heed	he	bead	heat	keyed	lower-case i
ɪ	hid		bid	hit	kid	small capital J
eɪ	hayed	hay	boyed	hate	Cake	lower-case e
e	head		bed			epitome
æ	had		bad	had	had	ash
ɑ	had		bad	had	had	script e
o	had		bad	had	had	(2) turned script e
ɔ	haved	have	bowd		could	open o
o	hood				could	epitome
oo	hood	hoo	boke		could	lower-case o
u	who'd	who	bood	hoot	could	lower-case u
ʌ	hudd		bud	hut	could	turned v
ɜ	herd	her	bird	hurt	could	reversed epitome
oɪ	hide	high	bide	height		lower-case a (+ i)
au		how	bowed		could	(as noted above)
ɔɪ		(a)boy	Boyd			(as noted above)
ɪə		here	beard			(as noted above)
ɪə		here	beard			(as noted above)
ɪə	hired	hire	beard		could	(as noted above)
ju	had	hue	Bude		could	(as noted above)

BrE Vowels

- cot, caught, cut, cart

BrE/AmE Vowels

BrE: vowels contrast
 I can do it
 I can't do it

AmE: no vowel contrast

“Flapping” in AmE

bitter [D]
bidder [D]
litre [D]
leader [D]

occurs where?

Not in:
tip, pit, still, hurt

between vowels

but:
deter *[D]
guitar *[D]

between a stressed vowel and an unstressed vowel.

BrE

No flapping:

bitter [t]
bidder [D]
litre [t]
leader [D]

Glottal stops

Some dialects of BrE (e.g. south London, Cockney)

have intervocalic glottal stops:

bitter [ʔ]
bidder [D]
litre [ʔ]
leader [D]

Glottal stops

Also word final glottal stops:

bit [ʔ]
hat [ʔ]
hurt [ʔ]

bid [d]
lead [d]

Syntax

Verbs like “give”

I gave the book to Mary

I gave Mary the book

I gave it to her \Rightarrow I gave it her

Syntax -- number agreement

- The man is proposing that
- The men are proposing that

- The government is proposing that
- The government are proposing that

Sg vs Pl

A singular noun like “man” refers to an individual

A singular noun like “government” refers to a group

AmE: this does not matter, agreement is Sg.

Sg vs Pl

A singular noun like “man” refers to an individual

A singular noun like “government” refers to a group

BrE: agreement is Pl. when the subject refers to a group.

“do” in BrE

AmE:

Have you cleaned your room yet?

No, but I will.

She hasn't accepted the job yet but she might.

“do” in BrE

BrE:

Have you cleaned your room yet?

No, but I will do.

She hasn't accepted the job yet but she might do.

Sg vs Pl

BrE: agreement is Pl. when the subject refers to a group.

The government are proposing that ...

The university have decided to

The team are happy....

Dialects of English outside the US

The Commonwealth

The UK

The "Queen's English"

The Queen delivers her annual Christmas speech in 1963:

"Received Pronunciation"

"Stirling University provide a free on-line phonology course for Received Pronunciation (RP), which is the most common form of English spoken in south England (it is sometimes referred to as Oxford English or BBC English):"

"Cockney"

A dialect spoken in East London (and parts of the Thames estuary)

Strict def: born within the sound of the Bow Bells - the bells of St. Mary-Le-Bow Church ("Bow Church") - in Cheapside, London EC2.

A fake Cockney accent, as used by some actors, is sometimes called 'Mockney'.

"Cockney"

Typical features of Cockney speech include:

Dropped [h], as in not 'arf (not half)
use of "ain't" instead of "isn't" or "am not"

“Cockney”

Glottal stop as discussed above:

bottle

but

but more extensive:

a drink

velar nasal and velar stop

- nothing → [nVfVnk]

“Cockney”

[f] replaces [θ] and [v] replaces [ð].

[ð] → [v]

bother [v], loathe [v], without [v]

[θ] → [f]

think [f], mouth [f], gather [v]

“Cockney”

[f] replaces [θ] and [v] replaces [ð].

[ð] → [v]

bother [v], loathe [v], without [v]

[θ] → [f]

think [f], mouth [f], gather [v]

One Fing 'n' Anuvver:



Some not very serious exs.

alma chizzit - A request to find the cost of an item

awss - A four legged animal, on which money is won, or more likely lost ("Thatawss ya tipped cost me a fiver t'day")

corta panda - A rather large hamburger

eye-eels - Women's shoes

Some not very serious exs.

oi oi! - Traditional greeting. Often heard from the doorway of pubs or during banging dance tunes at clubs

Saffend - Essex coastal resort boasting the longest pleasure pier in the world. The place where the characters from TV's, popular paipa - The Sun, The Mirror or The Sport

soap opera, Eastenders go on holiday

tan - The city of London, the big smoke

Famous: Cockney "rhyming slang" Exs from "Wikipedia"

- Adam and Eve = believe = as in "would you Adam and Eve it?"
- Adrian's = Adrian Quist = pissed = drunk
- Almond Rocks = socks
- Apples and pears = stairs
- Aris = Aristotle = bottle & glass = arse (a two-stage rhyme) [see *Plaster* below] (disputed) (why? it's correct!)
- Artful Dodger = lodger
- Ascot Races = braces (called suspenders in the U.S.)
- Aunt Joanna = piano

- Bag of fruit = suit
- Baked Bean = queen
- Baker's Dozen = cousin
- Ball and Chalk = walk
- Barnaby Rudge = judge
- Barnet = Barnet Fair = hair
- Barney = Barn Owl (pronounced in a cockney accent) = Row (argument)
- Beezun = Bees and honey = money

Some audio examples.

