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Varieties of English

English is a highly diversified language that appears in a multitude of varieties across the globe. These varieties may differ extensively in their structural properties. This coursebook is an introduction to the fascinating range of regional and social varieties encountered around the world. Comparing grammatical phenomena, the book analyses the varieties in depth, identifying patterns and limits of variation, and providing clear explanations. Using comparisons with other languages, the book identifies universal as well as language-specific aspects of variation in English.

This book is specially designed to meet the needs of students. Each chapter contains useful exercises targeted at three different ability levels, and succinct summaries and practical lists of key words help students to review and identify important facts.

PETER SIEMUND is Professor and Chair of English Linguistics at the University of Hamburg.

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Varieties of English

A Typological Approach

Peter Siemund

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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi - 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05-06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

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www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521764964

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First published 2013

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-521-76496-4 Hardback
ISBN 978-0-521-18693-3 Paperback

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For Georg, Cosima, and Johann

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to the many students on my courses who accompanied me during the gestation process of this book and who served as guinea pigs for its content and the concomitant exercises. Their feedback, especially during the final stages of the project, was extremely helpful.

As we do not live in isolation and our thoughts and ideas are shaped by the daily input we receive, it is difficult to mention every source of inspiration that I drew on and that went into this book. A good number of colleagues deserve to be credited, even though I cannot recollect every aspect of their input. The following list makes no claims to completeness and could easily be extended: Julia Davydova, Florian Dolberg, Hans-Olav Enger, Markku Filppula, Volker Gast, Bernd Kortmann, Simone Lechner, Georg Maier, Heli Paulasto, Lukas Pietsch, Günter Radden, Monika Edith Schulz, Sali Tagliamonte, Katerina Stathi, Peter Trudgill, Johan van der Auwera, Donald Winford, and Bao Zhiming.

Georg Maier and Tayo Neumann helped me substantially to systematise the data. They deserve special mention for this labour-intensive job. Leonie Fölsing, Anika Lloyd-Smith, and Martin Schweinberger proved indispensable during the editorial process.

Moreover, I would like to thank the two anonymous referees who evaluated and commented on the initial book proposal. Their remarks prevented me from committing several blunders and helped avoid hidden pitfalls.

Last but not least, I owe a substantial debt of gratitude to Andrew Winnard of Cambridge University Press who encouraged me to pursue this project and who showed a lot of patience when I got severely distracted by serving as coordinator of the Collaborative Research Centre on Multilingualism (Sonderforschungsbereich 538) and the Research Centre on Linguistic Diversity Management in Urban Areas (LiMA).

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How to use this book

The idea of the present book originated in a graduate course that I have taught several times over recent years at the University of Hamburg. It grew out of a dissatisfaction with widespread approaches to varieties of English that view these as national linguistic constructs (Indian English, Singapore English, Nigerian English, American English, Canadian English, etc.) without taking proper heed of the many structural commonalities that especially the non-standard varieties share. These commonalities have been referred to as 'vernacular universals' and also 'angloversals'.

The main difference from previous publications on varieties of English is that I do not proceed variety by variety, but phenomenon by phenomenon. I assume that varieties of English as far apart from one another as Shetland English and Torres Strait Creole or Appalachian English and Singapore English lend themselves to systematic structural comparison. To achieve this objective, I rely on the overall approach of functional typology and its methodology. In this approach, conceptual and structural differences are broken down to parameters of cross-linguistic validity, thus allowing us to compare highly different linguistic systems. Functional typology identifies the patterns and limits of variation and helps us locate individual varieties of English in the orchestra of other languages and language varieties.

This book can be used and read in different ways. Even though it has primarily been designed as a textbook for advanced undergraduate and graduate students, including their instructors, it may also be read as an introduction to structural variation across varieties of English. Each chapter is dedicated to one grammatical domain and offers a concise overview of this domain, a description of the structural variation encountered in this domain, and an assessment against known cross-linguistic parameters of variation.

Each chapter contains nine exercises at three levels (basic, intermediate, and advanced), with three at each level. The basic-level exercises are meant to recapitulate the contents of each chapter. More challenging exercises can be found at the intermediate level. The advanced-level exercises offer ideas for small research projects that you may tackle on your own.

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The chapters are bracketed by succinct introductions, summaries, and lists of keywords that are meant as guidelines through the chapters. At the end of each chapter, you can find lists of references and suggestions for further reading. References that are relevant to several chapters are accumulated in the *General references* section at the end of the book.

Example sentences have been fitted with interlinear translations (glosses) where appropriate. As the examples and the glosses have been drawn from many different sources, there is some overlap and redundancy in the labels used (see the list of abbreviations, pp. xvii–xix). No confusion should arise, since the context disambiguates such cases.

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Abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ABS	absolutive
ACC	accusative
ASP	aspect
AUX	auxiliary
BNC	*British National Corpus*
CG	common gender
CL	classifier
CLF	classifier
COCA	*Corpus of Contemporary American English*
COMP	complementiser
COP	copula
CPL	complementiser
DAT	dative
DEM	demonstrative
DET	determiner
DO	direct object
ERG	ergative
F	feminine
FOC	focus
FUT	future tense
GEN	genitive
ICE	*International Corpus of English*
IO	indirect object
IMPF	imperfective
IMPFV	imperfective
INF	infinitive
INSTR	instrumental
INT	intensifier
INTR	intransitive

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L2	second language
LOC	locative
M	masculine
MASC	masculine
NEC	necessity
NEG	negative
NEUT	neuter
NOM	nominative
NOT	not
NP	noun phrase
NPI	negative polarity item
NYT	*New York Times*
O	object
OBJ	object
OBL	olique
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*
PART	partitive
PAST	past tense
PERF	perfective
PFV	perfect
PL	plural
PM	predicate marker
POS	possibility
POSS	possessive
PP	prepositional phrase
PRED	predicate marker
PREP	preposition
PRES	present tense
PRO	pronoun
Pro	pronoun
PROG	progressive
PST	past tense
PTCP	participle
Q	interrogative/question
REC	recipient
REFL	reflexive
REL	relative marker
RT	recipient-theme
S	subject
SG	singular
SMH	*Sydney Morning Herald*
SUBJ	subject

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TH	theme
TOP	topic
TR	theme-recipient
TR	time of reference
TR	transitive
TSit	time of situation
TT	topic time
TU	time of utterance
TRANS	transitive
V	verb
VENT	ventive
WH	*wh*-word

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