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.
Varieties of English

A Typological Approach

Peter Siemund
For Georg, Cosima, and Johann
Contents

List of figures  page x
List of tables  xi
Acknowledgements  xiv
How to use this book  xv
Abbreviations  xvii

1 Introduction  1
  1.1 Background and aims  1
  1.2 Structure of the book and target audience  3
  1.3 Varieties of English: an overview  5
  1.4 Sociolinguistics and functional typology  10
  1.5 Summary and list of keywords  18
  1.6 Exercises  18
  1.7 References  20
  1.8 Further reading  22

2 Reflexivity and reflexive marking  23
  2.1 Overview  23
  2.2 Varieties of English  25
  2.3 Cross-linguistic comparison  33
  2.4 Summary and list of keywords  39
  2.5 Exercises  40
  2.6 References  42
  2.7 Further reading  44

3 Pronominal gender  45
  3.1 Overview  45
  3.2 Varieties of English  48
  3.3 Cross-linguistic comparison  55
  3.4 Summary and list of keywords  61
  3.5 Exercises  61
  3.6 References  63
  3.7 Further reading  64

4 Pronominal case  65
  4.1 Overview  65
  4.2 Varieties of English  71
## Contents

4.3 Cross-linguistic comparison 78
4.4 Summary and list of keywords 81
4.5 Exercises 82
4.6 References 84
4.7 Further reading 85

5 Determiners 87
5.1 Overview 87
5.2 Varieties of English 91
5.3 Cross-linguistic comparison 100
5.4 Summary and list of keywords 105
5.5 Exercises 106
5.6 References 108
5.7 Further reading 109

6 Tense marking 111
6.1 Overview 111
6.2 Varieties of English 114
6.3 Cross-linguistic comparison 122
6.4 Summary and list of keywords 128
6.5 Exercises 129
6.6 References 131
6.7 Further reading 132

7 Aspect marking 134
7.1 Overview 134
7.2 Varieties of English 137
7.3 Cross-linguistic comparison 144
7.4 Summary and list of keywords 150
7.5 Exercises 150
7.6 References 152
7.7 Further reading 153

8 Modal verbs 155
8.1 Overview 155
8.2 Varieties of English 159
8.3 Cross-linguistic comparison 164
8.4 Summary and list of keywords 169
8.5 Exercises 169
8.6 References 171
8.7 Further reading 172

9 Negation 174
9.1 Overview 174
9.2 Varieties of English 177
9.3 Cross-linguistic comparison 183
9.4 Summary and list of keywords 190
9.5 Exercises 191
9.6 References 192
9.7 Further reading 193
Contents

10 Subject-verb agreement 195
  10.1 Overview 195
  10.2 Varieties of English 199
  10.3 Cross-linguistic comparison 208
  10.4 Summary and list of keywords 215
  10.5 Exercises 216
  10.6 References 217
  10.7 Further reading 218

11 Ditransitive constructions 219
  11.1 Overview 219
  11.2 Varieties of English 222
  11.3 Cross-linguistic comparison 229
  11.4 Summary and list of keywords 232
  11.5 Exercises 233
  11.6 References 235
  11.7 Further reading 236

12 Interrogative constructions 237
  12.1 Overview 237
  12.2 Varieties of English 241
  12.3 Cross-linguistic comparison 249
  12.4 Summary and list of keywords 253
  12.5 Exercises 254
  12.6 References 256
  12.7 Further reading 257

13 The formation of relative clauses 258
  13.1 Overview 258
  13.2 Varieties of English 262
  13.3 Cross-linguistic comparison 267
  13.4 Summary and list of keywords 273
  13.5 Exercises 274
  13.6 References 275
  13.7 Further reading 276

14 Summary and outlook 278
  14.1 Exceptional properties of English 278
  14.2 Universals, angloversals, and vernacular universals 280
  14.3 Variationist (sociolinguistic) typology 283
  14.4 Where to go from here 285
  14.5 Summary and list of keywords 285
  14.6 Exercises 287
  14.7 References 289
  14.8 Further reading 290

General references 291
Index of languages, varieties, and areas 295
Index of names 299
Subject index 304
Figures

3.1 Pronominal gender in standard English (Siemund 2008: 148). Reproduced with permission. page 52

3.2 Distribution of he, she, and it in the southwest of England (Siemund 2008: 62). Reproduced with permission. 53

3.3 Distribution of he, she, and it in Newfoundland English (Siemund 2008: 67 based on Paddock 1991: 133). Reproduced with permission. 54

3.4 Distribution of he, she, and it in Tasmanian Vernacular English (Siemund 2008: 100 based on Pawley 2002, 2004). Reproduced with permission. 54

3.5 Distribution of he, she, and it in regional varieties of English (Siemund 2008: 139). Reproduced with permission. 55

3.6 Morphosyntactic distinctions along a continuum of ‘individuality’ (Sasse 1993: 659; Siemund 2008: 4). Reproduced with permission. 60

6.1 Correspondences between non-standard and standard tense use. 114

7.1 Aspectual oppositions (adapted from Comrie 1976: 25). 147

10.1 The ingredients of agreement (adapted from Corbett 2006: 5). 196


14.1 Visualisation of principal components of variance in the 76 × 46 database. Dotted boxes indicate group memberships (Kortmann and Szmrecsanyi 2011: 276). Reproduced with permission. 286
Tables

1.1 Present tense paradigm of English verbs. page 2
1.2 Present tense paradigm of English verbs in areas of the Northern Subject Rule. 3
1.3 Structure of the book. 4
1.4 Order of subject, object, and verb (Dryer 2011a; n.d.o. = no dominant order). 13
1.5 Numeral bases (Comrie 2011). 14
1.6 Combined order of basic constituents and adpositions (based on Dryer 2011a, b; n.d.o. = no dominant order). 16
1.7 Logical types of universal statement (following Greenberg), taken from Evans and Levinson (2009: 437). 17
2.1 Constraints on the use of untriggered self-forms (Hernández 2002: 272). 32
2.2 Grammatical distinctions marked on reflexives (adapted from König and Siemund 2000b: 51). 36
2.3 Body-part nouns as lexical sources of reflexive markers (adapted from Schladt 1999: 120–4). 39
3.1 Gender distinctions in independent personal pronouns (Siewierska 2011). 56
3.2 Pronominal usage in standard English and a non-standard variety. 62
4.1 An illustration of Latin case suffixes. 66
4.2 Pronominal case forms in standard English (Quirk et al. 1985: 336). 68
4.3 Subject pronouns in Ghanaian Pidgin English (Huber 1999: 197). 76
4.4 Object pronouns in Ghanaian Pidgin English (Huber 1999: 199). 76
4.5 Number of cases in a sample of the world’s languages (Iggesen 2011; e.b.c.m. = exclusively borderline case marking). 80
5.1 The pronominal paradigm of Bislama (Crowley 2004: 684). 97
5.2 Distance-oriented demonstratives in Hunzib (van den Berg 1995: 61, cited in Diessel 2011). 105
5.3 Person-oriented demonstratives in Japanese (Kuno 1973: 27, cited in Diessel 2011). 105
### List of tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Deontic and epistemic meanings of English modal verbs (adapted from Quirk et al. 1985: 221).</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Interaction of modal verbs with negation (adapted from Anderwald 2002: 38).</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>Token frequencies of <em>must</em> in the spoken subcorpora of <em>ICE</em>-Singapore and <em>ICE</em>-Great Britain (Bao 2010: 1731).</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>The central modals in five Germanic languages (adapted from Mortelmans et al. 2009: 13).</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>The expression of deontic and epistemic possibility (adapted from van der Auwera and Ammann 2011a, b).</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>The auxiliary verb – main verb scale (adapted from Quirk et al. 1985: 137).</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>Criteria for auxiliary verbs (adapted from Quirk et al. 1985: 137).</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Auxiliary contraction and negative contraction (adapted from Anderwald 2002: 28).</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>Asymmetrical paradigms (adapted from Anderwald 2002: 199).</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>Double negation in relation to other strategies of negation (adapted from Dryer 2011).</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>The paradigms of the verb <em>be</em>.</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>Regularisation of the present tense paradigm.</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.4</td>
<td><em>Were</em>-levelling.</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5</td>
<td><em>Was</em>-levelling.</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.6</td>
<td><em>Was/were</em>-generalisation in relation to clause polarity.</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>Subject-verb agreement as triggered by different nouns (adapted from Levin 2001: 166–9; Corbett 2006: 213).</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>Properties of canonical agreement (Corbett 2006: 9).</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>The effect of distance on the agreement of personal pronouns with <em>committee</em> nouns (Levin 2001: 98; Corbett 2006: 236).</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>Distribution of the complementation patterns in ditransitives in the Lancashire part of the BNC (adapted from Siewierska and Hollmann 2007: 93).</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>Distribution of the complementation patterns in ditransitives in the <em>Freiburg English Dialect Corpus</em> (adapted from Siewierska and Hollmann 2007: 93).</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>Complementation patterns distinguished in Mukherjee and Hoffmann (2006: 151).</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>Complementation of <em>give</em> and <em>send</em> in <em>ICE</em>-India and <em>ICE</em>-Great Britain (adapted from Mukherjee and Hoffmann 2006: 172–3).</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of tables

11.5 Ditransitive constructions as a function of the verb *give* (Haspelmath 2011). 231
12.1 Clause types and illocutionary force in English. 238
12.2 Properties of interrogative clauses in English. 239
12.3 *Wh*-words in English. 240
12.4 Inverted and uninverted main clause constituent interrogatives in the *ICE* (adapted from Davydova et al. 2011: 309). 243
12.5 Inverted and uninverted embedded constituent interrogatives in the *ICE* (adapted from Davydova et al. 2011: 308). 245
12.6 Inverted and uninverted embedded polar interrogatives in the *ICE* (adapted from Davydova et al. 2011: 310). 246
12.7 Some non-standard interrogative words. 247
12.8 Interrogative words in Sranan (adapted from Winford and Migge 2004: 494). 247
12.9 Non-standard tags (based on Kortmann et al. 2004). 248
12.10 Strategies for marking polar questions (Dryer 2011a). 251
12.11 Inverted and uninverted main clause constituent interrogatives in the *ICE* (adapted from Davydova et al. 2011: 309). 255
13.1 Non-standard relative markers based on a survey of Kortmann et al. (2004). 263
13.2 Strategies of relative clause formation (Comrie and Kuteva 2011a, b). 271
13.3 Frequency of relative clause forming strategies (Herrmann 2003: 133). 272
13.4 Resumptive pronouns in simple relative clauses (Herrmann 2003: 150). 273
14.1 Exceptional properties of standard English, as portrayed by Frans Plank in *Das grammatische Raritätenkabinett* (http://typo.uni-konstanz.de/rara/intro/). 279
14.2 Some additional exceptional properties found in standard English. 279
14.3 Exceptional properties of non-standard varieties of English. 280
14.4 Non-standard features of English that follow the cross-linguistic mainstream. 282
14.5 Angloversals (adapted from Kortmann and Szmrecsanyi 2004: 1154). 283
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).
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.
How to use this book

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.
## Abbreviations

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

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 oblique
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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TH</td>
<td>theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOP</td>
<td>topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TR</td>
<td>theme-recipient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TR</td>
<td>time of reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TR</td>
<td>transitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSit</td>
<td>time of situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT</td>
<td>topic time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TU</td>
<td>time of utterance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANS</td>
<td>transitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VENT</td>
<td>ventive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WH</td>
<td>wh-word</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>