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WHAT LANGUAGE TO LEARN: BRITISH OR AMERICAN ENGLISH

English is considered to be one of the most popular languages in the world. It is the native language for more than 400 million people of our planet, and at least one billion people can speak English fluently. Obviously, as a result of different historical events and different cultural characteristics various dialects of the English language appeared. Surely, all people have repeatedly heard about the most popular language version – American English. How and why does it differ from the “original” British English?

It is necessary to turn to history to answer this question. In the 17-18 centuries in the United States there were a huge number of immigrants who arrived from England, Spain, Germany, France, Norway, Sweden and other countries. For people, who went to explore unexplored territories, it was necessary to be engaged in production, to establish trade, to create optimal socio-economic conditions. That is why people needed one common language to achieve common goals. However, refined English, which aristocrats used in Britain, was not transferred to America. People needed a practical, accessible and understandable language. British English was changing for years and centuries and, as a result, American English, that differs a lot from British, was created.

The changes can be found in different aspects of the language. To begin with, there are changes in phonetics. American English is sharper and faster due to specific features in pronunciation. Let's consider some of them:

- the sound [a:] is replaced by the sound [æ]. For example: *class* [klæks], *bath* [bæθ], *last* [læst].
- in the sound [ju:] after consonants [j] almost disappears. Often USA's residents pronounce the words *duty* and *student* as [ˈdu: ti], [ˈstu: d(ə)nt].
- the sound [r] is spoken out regardless of its location in words. For example: *car* [kɑr], *port* [pɔ: rt].
- Americans often don't pay attention to diphthongs. For example, the word *fate* can sound like [fe:t].

How can such differences be explained? As already mentioned above, American English was formed under the influence of the languages and dialects of immigrants from different countries of the world. People often neglected traditional phonetic rules. British English is subject to a single Received Pronunciation. But there are various regional standards in the United States of America.

Vocabulary is also very important. The differences in the lexical composition of American and British English can confuse a person even with an excellent level of knowledge. The catch is that some words and phrases exist in both versions of the language, but they don't have the same meaning. For example, in America the word *pants* denotes *trousers*, in the UK - *the item of underwear*. Due to ignorance of the differences, one can get into a very awkward situation.

In addition, different words are used to translate the same Ukrainian words into British and American English. For example, in the USA “цукерки” are called *candies*, in the UK - *sweets*.

When studying the language, one should pay attention to some subtleties. In British English, the word *holiday* is used to refer to “свято, відпустка, канікули”. In the United States, this word means only "свято", the word "відпустка" is translated by the word *vacation*.

Another serious topic is grammar. From the grammatical point of view, it can be said that American English tends to simplify forms. Americans don't complicate sentences by using the Present Perfect Tense, even with such classic time markers as “just, already”. They use Past Simple, but the British consider that this using is erroneous and will necessarily say such sentence in Present Perfect. For example, the sentence “Він щойно прийшов” in the British version will sound “He has just arrived”. The Americans will formulate it as “He just arrived”.

And finally. What kind of English should we learn? Of course, it all depends on the circumstances, but, there is no need to learn American English if you do not live in the USA. That is why it is definitely recommended to learn British English. Let's name some arguments in favor of this decision:

- British English is universally recognized. It is necessary to study it for passing the majority of standardized international tests. You can rest assured that with the knowledge of British English you will be understood anywhere in the world.

- British English allows you to form a complete understanding of grammar. Studying complex rules, you can easily use various designs in any situation.

- British English is more diverse than American English. You have a great opportunity to significantly expand the lexical stock and make your speech much richer. In addition, the opportunity will open to freely read your favorite English books in the original.

Many modern language centers and English teachers offer various programs for studying British and American English. If there is a desire to get acquainted with both options, it is better to begin with classical British English.

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