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WATCHING ENGLISH CHANGE

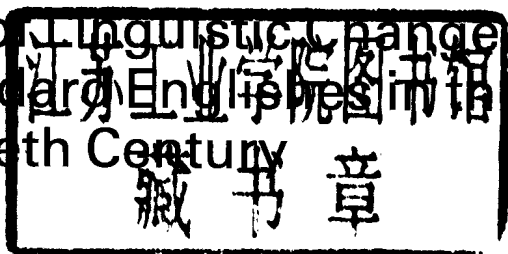
*An Introduction to the Study of
Linguistic Change in Standard Englishes
in the Twentieth Century*

LAURIE BAUER



Watching English Change

An Introduction to the
Study of Linguistic Change
in Standard Englishes in the
Twentieth Century



Laurie Bauer



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Watching English Change

Laurie Bauer

In memory of my father, L. F. J. Bauer, 1911–89
And of my mother, J. K. Bauer, 1919–92

For them, this is not history

Preface

It is a pleasant duty, at the end of the task of composing a book, to thank those people and institutions whose help has been instrumental in ensuring the successful outcome of the project. I am pleased to be able to make the following acknowledgements for help unstintingly given. First, much of the research aimed directly at the production of this book was done while I was on sabbatical leave from Victoria University of Wellington, and the guest of the Department of Linguistics at the University of Leeds. I should like to thank both institutions for giving me the chance to carry out this work in congenial circumstances, and free from normal distractions.

Many colleagues read early drafts of some or all of the book. Their comments have been invaluable, and have led to a far more polished finished version, with far fewer glaring errors in it. In particular, I should like to thank Scott Allan, Janet Holmes, Harry Orsman, Liz Pearce, and Jack Windsor Lewis, as well as the editors of the series, Geoff Leech and Mick Short. It should be clear that none of these people is responsible for the opinions I express, and that they may not even agree with me. For statistical advice, I am indebted to Steve Haslett, of Victoria University's Institute of Statistics and Operations Research. For help with the transfer of text from one word-processing package to another, I should like to thank Mike Bennett. I am particularly indebted to my wife, Winifred, for her careful reading and correcting of the text, for her general support at all times, and for innumerable discussions of matters connected with the project at all stages of its development. Finally, I am indebted to my parents, to whom this book is dedicated, for setting me out on the route to university in

the first place, and for their support and belief in what I have done over many years.

Wellington, New Zealand
June 1993

Laurie Bauer

How to use this book

This book is intended as an introductory text. It is loosely ordered from less difficult to more difficult. In particular, presentation of material in the chapters on grammatical change and sound change makes greater demands on the reader as the chapter progresses. The final chapter, in attempting to make generalizations across the data discussed in earlier chapters as well as some new data is, in parts, conceptually more advanced than the earlier chapters, which focus on observations.

Throughout the text brief questions are introduced to allow readers to check their comprehension of preceding material. Answers are also provided in nearly all such cases. Ideally, students will cover up the printed answer and attempt to provide their own before reading the suggested solution.

At the end of each chapter there are sections called Reading and References, Notes and, in some cases, Exercises. In these sections, a rather heterogeneous collection of information is presented: comments on other areas of possible change in twentieth-century English, elaboration of some of the points made in the text where the elaboration is not relevant in the development of the chapter, discussion of the precise nature of the data that was considered in the analysis of texts, suggestions for background reading on many of the topics that are covered only briefly in the text, as well as suggestions for reading from other works which consider the same or similar phenomena. Readings and notes which are directed at a particular section in the chapter are headed with the title of the section they refer to.

Where it seemed feasible (that is, in Chapters 1–5) I have also provided an ‘Exercises’ section. The exercises vary

enormously in difficulty, and students should not undertake them without the guidance of a teacher. They have, however, been graded (see 'Symbols used' below) to indicate the easier and the harder exercises. Some of the exercises would be more suitable for class-work, where every member of the class contributes some data to be discussed by everyone. Suggested answers to these exercises are provided at the end of the book.

Symbols used

The phonetic symbols used are those of the International Phonetic Association. The particular IPA symbols used in the transcription of modern English words are explained in the 'Guide to phonetic symbols' which follows.

- ★ In the exercises, this symbol indicates a relatively straightforward exercise, which even beginning students should be able to attempt.

In the text, it is used sparingly to indicate sequences of words which are not part of normal usage.

In the tables, it has a sense explained in the individual table.

- † In the exercises, this symbol indicates a more challenging exercise which should only be undertaken by advanced students.

In the tables, it has a sense explained in the individual table.

- ~ This symbol links forms which are used as alternatives in the community.

- // Slashes are used to enclose transcriptions which note only contrastive elements (e.g. the symbols listed in the guide to phonetic symbols below for current English).

- [] Square brackets enclose transcriptions (a) which may contain phonetic detail relevant to the discussion which is not provided by transcriptions enclosed in slashes; or (b) where no claim is made about contrastiveness.

SMALL CAPITALS are used to introduce technical terms where they are defined in the text or where their definition can be deduced from the text.

italics are used in several ways in the text, including for emphasis, but the most important use is to mark letters, words, phrases or sentences cited or talked about.

Bibliographies

Three bibliographies are presented at the end of the book: a list of references, giving details of linguistic books referred to in the text; a list of lexica, in which the various dictionaries consulted are listed; and a list of sources of data, in which the literary and other sources of genuine examples cited in the text are given. The lists of lexica and sources of data are ordered alphabetically by the abbreviation used to designate the items in the text.

Guide to phonetic symbols

The following symbols are used in the phonetic transcription of English words in this book. The symbols used are the same as those used in many standard reference works for southern Standard British English.

Symbol	Key word	Symbol	Key word
ɑ:	<i>part</i>	k	<i>coo, pack</i>
ɒ	<i>pot</i>	l	<i>lie, pal</i>
æ	<i>pat</i>	m	<i>my, Pam</i>
aɪ	<i>my</i>	n	<i>nigh, pan</i>
aʊ	<i>pout</i>	ŋ	<i>pang</i>
b	<i>buy, cab</i>	ɔ:	<i>port</i>
d	<i>die, pad</i>	ɔɪ	<i>boy</i>
dʒ	<i>Jew, siege</i>	p	<i>pie, pap</i>
ð	<i>thy, seethe</i>	r	<i>rye</i>
e	<i>pet</i>	s	<i>sigh, cease</i>
eɪ	<i>pate</i>	ʃ	<i>shy, ruche</i>
eə	<i>mare</i>	t	<i>tie, pat</i>
ə	<i>potato</i>	tʃ	<i>chew, patch</i>
əʊ	<i>mow</i>	θ	<i>thigh, ruth</i>
ɜ:	<i>pert</i>	u:	<i>moo</i>
f	<i>fie, roof</i>	ʊ	<i>put</i>
g	<i>guy, league</i>	ʊə	<i>moor</i>
h	<i>high</i>	v	<i>vic, leave</i>
i:	<i>peat</i>	ʌ	<i>putt</i>
ɪ	<i>pit</i>	w	<i>woo</i>
ɪə	<i>mere</i>	z	<i>zoo, ruse</i>
j	<i>you</i>	ʒ	<i>rouge</i>

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Background to this book

Many lay people think of language change as something which happened in the past, but does not happen any longer. Until recently, many people also thought of standard English as something fixed and unchanging. To such people, a book about change in current standard English (or, as we shall see, standard Englishes) is thus doubly surprising.

This book will show that English is changing today and that you can watch the changes happening around you. This first chapter deals with some of the background required before we go on to look at actual cases of change.

1.1.1 What are standard Englishes, and why is there more than one?

Most educated people appear to have a fairly clear idea about what standard English is. It is the kind of English you are expected to have to speak if you want to get a job in broadcasting, the kind of English you must be able to use in the professions, the kind of English the teachers expect you to write in schools. It does not contain double negatives such as *We haven't got no pets*; words like *done* and *seen* are exclusively past participles in standard English, not past tense forms, so that sentences such as *I done it yesterday* or *I seen her yesterday* are not part of standard English. Moreover, people feel that something either is standard English, or it is not: there are no half measures. Some people might think it is standard English to say *It was different than I had expected*, others might think it is not, but both groups would expect that there

should be a single right answer to the question, which could be discovered by appeal to the proper authority (possibly *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, or some similar publication).

There are, however, numerous problems with this view. An obvious one is that the standard changes. If the standard never changed, it would still be standard to say *Our father, which art in heaven* as in the King James version of the Bible. Nowadays, except in direct quotation, we would have to say *Our father, who is in heaven*. The seventh edition of *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1982) suggests that *It was different than I had expected* is *not* part of the standard, the eighth edition (1990) suggests that it *is*. We presumably do not wish to suggest that a lot of people who previously spoke standard English suddenly started speaking non-standard English in 1990 because they still said *It was different from what I had expected*. Nor would we wish to suggest that a lot of people who spoke non-standard English in 1982 started speaking standard English in 1990 for that reason. There has to be a certain amount of room for variation within a standard.

A second problem is this: people who have jobs in broadcasting, or who have jobs in the professions, do not all speak or write in the same way. Teachers do not all try to teach precisely the same form of English to their students: in Britain only about 3 per cent of the population speak with a standard accent (Trudgill and Hannah, 1982, p. 2), so most teachers cannot model the standard accent for their students, even if they use standard grammatical patterns. Even in grammar there are differences between what is normal in the North and South of England. In the North *You haven't got to eat your cabbage* may mean 'You must not eat your cabbage', while in the South it can only mean 'You are under no obligation to eat your cabbage'. If the view presented above were correct, we would have to say that people who deviate in any way from some arbitrarily chosen notion of 'correct' do not speak or write standard English, only something close to standard English. In fact, we might not be able to find anyone who speaks standard English in this narrow sense: standard English would be a fictional standard rather than a genuine variety of English. There is not necessarily any conflict here. It might be said that standard English is a variety which people like