Varieties of English

Australian English

by

Tristan Schmitz & Mesut Deveci
Table of contents

1. Short introduction of Australia’s geographical situation

2. History of Australia - How did the English language came to Australia?
   2.1. Today’s situation

3. Language
   3.1. Influences under the magnifying glass
   3.2. Varieties / Regional Variations

4. Morphology of Australian English

5. Phonology of Australian English

6. Acoustic examples
1. Geographical situation

- name derived from australis (Latin) = southern
- world’s smallest continent – southern hemisphere
- 6th largest country after Russia
2. History of Australia

- first ensured discovery of Australia in 1606 by the Dutsh Willem Jansz

- in 1770 Captain James Cook arrived at coast of Australia and claimed the land as the „British Colony of New South Wales“ for the British Empire

- reason why the Britains wanted to build up new colonies was because Britain‘s prisons were overcrowded

- first British settlers arrived in 1788 at Port Jackson

- most of them from London

- The settlement was named “Sydney“ (name was given by Viscount Sydney, the highest colonial official of Australia
2.1. Today’s situation

- liberal democratic political system
- population of about 20 million people
- capital city is Canberra
- consists of 6 states: New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia.
3. Language

- brief definition about: when one can talk about the so called Australian English language

“We define Australian English as the language of those speakers who were born and bred in Australia or who migrated to Australia in early childhood.”

- development of Australian English began with the settlement of New South Wales by the British in 1788

- most of the convicts were London origin

- two stands: 1. upper / ruling class 2. lower / working class
3. Language

So what is it that makes Australian English so remarkable?

- to classify Australian English four criteria have been set up:

1. the phenomena under consideration have to occur in the variety of English spoken in Australia

2. they have to be of relatively frequent occurrence

3. they have to belong to particular semantic fields

4. when questioned, the Australian English speaker should spontaneously label them 'Australian English'
3. Language

- an example under consideration of the four criteria we got the words:

outback /ˈaʊtbaːk/ which is Australian English origin

hippie /ˈhɪpi/ and

junkie /ˈdʒʌŋki/ which are American English origin
3.1. Influences under the magnifying glass

- strongly influenced by American English
- numerous American loan-words
- started with the goldrush in 1850’s, many goldrushers came from the US
- and US soldiers during WWII
- migration of so many Americans caused a so called Americanisation
- since the 1950’s mass media became important factor for development of Americanisation
- TV, Internet, Radio/Music...with contents from the US effects Australian language more and more
- e.g. Australians use the word truck instead of the British lorry
3.1. Influences under the magnifying glass

- or jail instead of gaol

or program instead of programme

- many people with Irish roots

- time of penal colony – many Irish convicts and Catholic priests and nuns

- influenced by so called Hiberno-English

- “youse” = plural of “you”
  “good onya” = “good on you”

- replacement of “my” by “me” -- “Where’s me hat?” instead of “Where’s my hat?”
3.2. Varieties

- 3 major varieties of Australian English
- General Australian English,
- Broad Australian English
- and Cultivated Australian English
- varieties determined by pronunciation of vowels and vocabulary
- General Australian English: spoken by ~ 55% of the population
- Broad Australian English: spoken by ~ 34%
- Cultivated Australian English: spoken by ~ 10%
3.2. Regional Variations

- regional variations in pronunciation and accents

- not such remarkable as in other languages

- 2 main variations: South Australian English & West Australian English

- South Australian accent divided into Adelaide English, Eyre and Yorke Peninsula English and Northern South Australia English

- West Australian accent divided into Perth English; Central West Australian English and Northern West Australian English

- West Australian is regionally restricted to the state Western Australia
3.2. Regional Variations

- variation of words depends on the specific region:
- bland, processed pork products: possible to tell from which part/region of Australia someone comes, if you know the designation of this product

- Belgium sausage - Tasmania
- Byron sausage – New England
- devon - Victoria and New South Wales
- empire sausage - Hunter Valley
- fritz - South Australia and Broken Hill, New South Wales
- German sausage or pork German - Victoria and northern Tasmania
- luncheon sausage - Queensland
- polony - Western Australia
- round meat - Northern Territory
- strasburg or strasbourg or stras - Victoria
- wheel meat - Tasmania
- windsor sausage - North Queensland
3.2. Regional Variations

- swimwear is known as bathers in most areas of Australia

- except than New South Wales and Queensland: simmers, cossie or togs

- people from Queensland use an interrogative at the end of sentences: „eh?“ ; „hay?“ or „hey“

- also in New Zealand and Canada
4. Morphology

- two morphologic phenomena:

  Reduplication

  Suffixation
4. Morphology

Reduplication

- E.g. “never-never”
- rare occurrence in Australia
- stress pattern of reduplications is mostly | ‘--|-- |
- noun derived with the hypocoristic suffix -|i| may be reduplicated
- E.g. leggy-leggy, salty-salty where stress pattern is always | ‘--|-- |
- in „salty“ the suffix conveys a hypocoristic nuance which in salty-salty is intensified through reduplication
4. Morphology

- reduplication is almost only used in language of lower social classes

- reduplicated words with two syllables are stressed | ’--,-- | 

- In names of four syllables the pattern is | ’--,--- | and | ’--’-- | 

- remarkable: city-names like Waggy Waggy, Drik Drik or Murrin Murrin
4. Morphology

Reduplication frequency

- Northern Territory: 0.0 - 0.4%
- Queensland: 0.4 - 0.8%
- Western Australia: 0.0 - 0.4%
- South Australia: 0.0 - 0.4%
- New South Wales: 0.4 - 0.8%
- Victoria: 0.8 - 1%
4. Morphology

Suffixation

- typically Australian phenomenon
- common occurrence
- three types of suffix formations in Australia:
  1. -'i/e.g. employee
  2. -/i/ and -/,ˈou/e.g. bullocky and bottlo
  3. -/əˈru/e.g. kangaroo
4. Morphology

1. Formative -/ˈi/  

- in employee the noun derived with the suffix -/ˈi/ is passive, denoting a person who is affected by an action
- could also be active, when performing an action e.g. escapee
- another examples: divorcee -> different meaning in AE and AuE
  interviwee -> AE -> belongs to officialese, where in AuE it’s used in casual conversations
4. Morphology

2. Formative 

- a large number of words in Australian English end in 

- the formative 

- colloquial speech

- e.g. breaky /ˈbreki/ instead of breakfast or commy /ˈkɔmi/ for communist

- typical Australian clippings are
e.g. possy /ˈpɔzi/ for position or mossy /ˈmɔzi/ for mosquito
4. Morphology

3. Formative  -/əˈru/

- occur only occasionally and are not felt as being ‘in vogue’

- expresses movement
e.g. *ride-a-roo* which is an Australian product, an exercise ball, which is so big that a person can jump around on it

- *didgeridoo* -> moving sounds

- the type ‘semi-formative + -/əˈru/’ is most common among Australian plant and animal names
e.g. *kangaroo* and *calgaroo*
4. Morphology

Suffixation frequency of formative  */əˈru/*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>0.4 - 0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>0.0 - 0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>0.4 - 0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>0.0 - 0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>0.0 - 0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>0.0 - 0.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Phonology/Pronunciation

- classified as a non-rhotic variety of English
- non-rhotic = speakers pronounce “r” only if it is followed by a vowel
- phonologically: world’s most regionally homogenous variety of English
- distinguished by its vowel phonology
- unlike other varieties it has “phonemic vowel distinction” & “phonemic differentiation”
- all front vowels are unrounded, while all back vowels are rounded
4. Phonology/Pronunciation

- Special characteristics of Australian English: Long vowels and centralising diphthongs corresponding to “Received Pronunciation”

- Australians also use to shorten terms or even sentences: Australians would pronounce “good day” as “g’day” or “It’s going to rain” – like “s’cona rine”

- Australians often drop the –L- or the –H- out words: Australia becomes Austray’a or house becomes ‘ouse

- The most similar variety of English (in pronunciation) = New Zealand English
5. Acoustic examples

- from the Linguistics Surveyor

1. Broad Australian English

2. General Australian English
Sources


THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

Tristan Schmitz & Mesut Deveci

..... so let’s continue with New Zealand