

The Reasons for Disparity between the Language Institutions of Australia, Britain Canada and USA

Reem Alshayyan, M.A. in Linguistics

Abstract

It is clear that there are differences between the four nations (Australia, Canada, Britain and USA) when it comes to the use of language variety in their institutions. There are various factors such as ethnic groups, type of educational programs offered, the social and cultural systems in the countries, education system, and the immigration and movement of people which result in such differences in the use of language style in these nations.

The common language between these nations is English, which is also a leading international language. This does not, however, translate into having a similar language style or accent in the countries' institutions. The contributing factors can be viewed in different perspectives. There may be some advantages and disadvantages of such varieties in language styles used in institutions, when nations have many different ethnic groups. The use of different language styles and conventions may prove to be a hindrance to some people when they seek jobs after they are through with their education. Although they use the same language, their acceptance in workplaces may depend on the language style they use.

Keywords: Language styles, language use, differences in language use, common language

Introduction

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 15:1 January 2015

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The different languages may be used by different people groups within the same nation. Even when they use the same language, there may be differences between them as to how they use this common language, what styles they adopt and how they choose words to communicate their nuances, etc. There is usually a demand to harmonize the styles of the common language to form uniformity of some degree in order to give equal chance to students in different countries, who learn the preferred language as a second or foreign language. This, however, can prove to be a huge challenge since the difference in language styles stems from different reasons. At the same time, the differences can be used to gain knowledge of the trends which may help us to develop a commonly agreed upon style/s.

Changes need to be done in education systems, in different countries, in order to embrace the characteristics of other systems. This helps in making the overall education system more similar in some aspects such as the age of admission to different levels of learning. More exchange programs can be initiated to help students adapt to the different language styles used for education. Language difference is a field that needs to be addressed to help harmonize the field of education.

One thing is notable, though, there are major causes of the disparity in language in the institutions of the four countries (Australia, UK, Canada and USA) which use the same language as the primary medium of communication in all fields.

Methodology

The study method used in the present paper includes reviewing of the studies carried out in the past. The data from secondary sources provides the main basis of the study through the analysis of previous studies.

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The present research intends to study the reason why there are language differences in the language institutions in Australia, Britain, Canada and USA.

Research Question

The main research questions are: why there exists language differences in language institutions in Australia, Britain, Canada and USA? How can the problem be addressed?

Significance of the Study

Through the research, we will identify the reasons why language differences emerge in the institutions of these nations even though the same language is used. Findings also assist in coming up with a syllabus that can take into consideration the differences and as such bridge the language gap. Such outcomes can help improve language efficiency among the learners.

Background of the Study

Language is influenced by many things, including culture and origin of a person and the nurturing environment that one grows up with. The reasons for language differences in language institutions can be traced to several factors. The study looks at the factors as described in various studies conducted on the same issue.

Literature Review

Language can be termed as a complex system of communication adopted by human beings in their daily life. Linguistics can be said to be a scientific study of languages, and a language is one of the systems. Human language has different characteristics, which show productivity, displacements and disparities. The disparity is defined as unequal, or lack of similarity, thus making language style differences which exist between languages in different

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institutions, in the world. Different factors contribute to these disparities, in different regions of the world. This forms the main intent under discussion which entails the different reasons behind language disparities in the language institutions of Australia, Britain, Canada and USA.

Racial or Ethnic Disparity

Somnath Saha, et al. (2007) suggest that language barrier serves as one of the key factors that lead to disparities among languages in various institutions. For example, Whites seem to be more acquainted with the language within the locality than others within the region. Racial background influences understanding of the system adopted in language institutions. Racial or ethnic disparity forms the major ethnographic attention that shapes the language within institutions. Australian institutions adopt ethnographic characteristics based on an Australian code of ethics or racial dimensions. This is similar to the situation prevailing in the institutions of other countries, thus creating the difference. Having different racial or ethnic ideologies influences the language acquisition by different institutions by affecting the language framework set. Ethnic background influences the inter-institutional relation.

Social Systems

Language may vary in the different institutions due to their different characteristics. The social systems are different; attitudes and even demographics are also different. Australians are stereotyped as being a bit extroverted, louder, and rougher, direct, open and at times very expressive than the persons from other countries. This is a trait that contributes to their demeanor and language too. This is visible in institutions where there is more interaction and higher concentrations of people in one place. Some of these traits lead to temperament, which influences the kind of language one uses. Different people from different countries have different temperaments and hence a different language influence.

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The difference in countries such as the Britain and the US may be due to their history. Most commonwealth countries use British English, which includes Australia and Britain, among the other 54 commonwealth countries. This excludes Canada, where like in the USA, American English is used. Some Canadians also tend to speak a mixture of American and British English due to their proximity to the US and yet still maintain their British spelling. Australian culture is derived from the British and is, therefore, influenced more by their language British English than American English. Similarities between the Australian and British English are identified also in the overall common culture adopted by them.

Immigration and Movement

According to a study by Choudaha, R. (2012) on the trend of students' movement around the globe in search of education, four countries, USA, Canada, Australia and UK are the leading destinations for students. There are increasing numbers of students travelling to the four countries for education. There are different languages that are assembled together in these nations due to the huge movement of students. The accents that each student has, moving from one country to one of the other four, is influential on the language that is used. The language that is present in all four countries, though common, is open to misinterpretation by these students. This is a contributing factor to language disparities in the four countries. The difference emerges due to the number of students in the institutions.

Another contributing factor to the disparities in language is due to the level of language tests that are used by the countries for one to be accepted into another country. According to a study by Merrifield (2008), the levels of achievement demanded in the countries are different depending on the significance placed behind the tests. The reasons that justified the level of

language that one needs to be allowed passage into another country influenced their understanding of the host country language. In some countries, the level required is different from others. This ultimately influences the language in the institutions in the different countries.

In some countries, such as Australia, there are different languages used -- indigenous languages and other foreign languages. This has raised a debate on whether to teach a second language in schools. Educational institutions want to have a common second language that they can teach. As a result, it greatly influences the disparity of language with the other countries. Though this is influenced by the immigration that took place in past years, it has brought about the difference in language in the institutions. The need to adopt a second language has raised a huge debate in the country since 2009. This can be seen as a factor in the language disparity, in institutions within the four nations (Bianco, 2009).

Systems of education adopted by various language institutions serve as another factor for this difference. There is a disparity in the mode of teaching in Britain, Canada, Australia, and the United States. This is mostly influenced by resources availability, in terms of teaching staff and learning resources within the region. The perception within individuals in the institutions influences the methods of language teaching and applications, in the regions. The education system further defines the nature of languages being taught in the institutions. In an attempt by institutions to structure themselves, in order to have self pattern perception, the disparity on the nature of restructuring appears. Depending on the nature of how students are in different educational level and structure, different language perception is adopted. In the present world, there is no language normalization within institutions, enabling every institution to have its own standards and settings for language teaching.

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In today's world, many students are seeking education from the best schools worldwide. This may be best in ranking from the performance or the best according to the student's preference. More students travel to the four countries; US, Australia, Canada, and Britain, for their education away from their original countries. Student exchange programs have increased around the world, with more students going to the best institutions in different countries from their original homes. This is a major factor in the language disparity in the institutions.

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