

## *Original Paper*

# The English in Ghana: British, American or Hybrid English?

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### **Abstract**

*As a result of colonization of the British, the English used in many African countries and for that matter Ghana, is the British standard variety. However, the English used in Ghana, appears to have been invaded by the American English. This poses a problem as both teachers and students especially at the senior high school level confuse themselves about which word or spelling is right and vice versa. This study thus seeks to investigate students' awareness of this invasion, the extent of the invasion and also to ascertain which of the aspects of the language has been much influenced by the American variety. The underpinning framework for this study is Kachru's (1985) concentric model to situate the type of English used in Ghana. A sample size of 100 Students of English Education Department of University of Education, Winneba was selected for the study. The data was a secondary one: a random collection of vocabulary. Test, interview and questionnaire were also employed to gather other related data for the study. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to analyse the data with precedence on qualitative analysis and the findings were thematically presented. The results indicate that although students use both American and British English together, they have little knowledge about the differences between them, especially, with the vocabulary aspect. Students have fair knowledge about the differences between the two varieties as regards the orthography aspect. These findings have implications on the teaching of English language and on examination issues in the country. It also informs writers of various educational materials about what variety to use.*

### **Keywords**

*British English, American English, Hybrid English, Second Language, Vocabulary, Orthography*

## **1. Introduction**

### *1.1 History of English*

Languages such as Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Arabic and French were at various times lauded for their prestige and popularity. English, as it is used now, did not enjoy the same status and prestige during the early days. It used to be a paltry language until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The custodians of the language, the

now known great country, The United Kingdom, used to speak a language called the Celtic language. English language however started when three Germanic tribes: the Angles, the Saxons and the Jute invaded The United Kingdom during the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. This resulted in the invaders pushing the Celtic speakers into what is recently referred to as Wales, Scotland and Ireland (Crystal, 1995). The three tribes mixed their different Germanic dialects, a group of dialects which forms what linguists refer to as Anglo-Saxon or Old English. After the colonization by the Germans, the Romans also took over the colonization process and this history of the language (passing through many hands) explains the reason why it is so much heterogeneous, one of the reasons which it has conveniently contributed to its acceptance as a world language.

Many people are of the opinion that the language has been welcomed as a world language because of its inflexion; this might be a half-truth assertion since in comparison of English and Latin, there is not much difference between them as regards their inflexions. It must be stated that before the colonization splurge of Great Britain, the classical languages (Greek and Latin) used to be the languages in vogue. This is because the Romans were in control of many parts of the world. Crystal (1995) submits that a language becomes traditionally an international language for one chief reason: the power of its people—especially their political and military power. Indeed, it may take a militarily powerful nation to establish a language, but it takes an economically powerful one to maintain and expand it. English is a world language today due to the historical (colonization) and contemporary (trade, technology, fashion) influences of Britain and America respectively (Graddol, 1997).

The expansion of the English language continued with the Nineteenth-Century colonial developments in Africa and the South Pacific, and also took a significant extra move for it to be adopted in the mid Twentieth Century as a formal or semi-formal language by many newly independent countries (Crystal, 1995). Now, English is represented in every continent, and in islands of the three major oceans—Atlantic (St Helena), Indian (Seychelles) and Pacific (in many islands, such as Fiji and Hawaii). It is this spread of representation which makes the application of the label “global language” (Crystal, 2003), a realism.

This huge expansion informed Kachru’s Concentric Model which describes the spread of English in terms of three concentric circles—Inner, Outer and the Expanding to signify “the type of spread, the patterns of acquisition and the functional domains in which English is used across cultures and languages” (Kachru, 1985, p. 12). The Inner Circle regions are the “norm providing” regions where English is a native language: the United Kingdom, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The Outer Circle regions are classified as “norm developing” areas where English is used as a Second Language (ESL); English as official language in countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, Singapore, India, Malaysia and many others. The third category, the Expanding Circle regions, termed, “norm dependent” regions where English is used as a Foreign Language (EFL); the language (English) is used for international purposes only in such countries as Togo, Ivory Coast, Japan, Germany and China.

Fishman’s (1996, p. 628) concluding statement supports the expansion of the language as,

...the world of large scale commerce, industry, technology, and banking, like the world of certain human sciences and professions, is an international world and it is linguistically dominated by English almost everywhere, irrespective of how well-established and well-protected local cultures, languages and identities may otherwise be.

Following the above, there is explicit indication that English, qualifies as a world language since it is in no way limited in its reach to any parts of the world.

### *1.2 Statement of the Problem*

The English used in Ghana has been addressed in different ways. In one realm, there have been issues that the English used in Ghana is very unique from the standard native forms thus the claim of existence of a nativised form referred to as Ghanaian English (Owusu-Ansah, 1991, 1994, 1997, 2012; Koranteng, 2006; Appartaim, 2012; Ngula, 2012; Wiredu, 2012; Okyere, 2013). In another realm, scholars such as Sey (1973), Gyasi (1990), Ahulu (1994), Nimako (2004) have extensively made their submissions, and countered the existence of the supposed Ghanaian English. It appears scholarly works on English as used in Ghana have been to either prove the existence of Ghanaian English or to argue that it is an erroneous structure since it deviates from the standardized form.

Another crucial issue about the English as used in Ghana is whether the country uses BrE, AmE or a hybrid form. This issue needs much attention to ensure that the educational system pulls on that direction. It is interesting to note that countries like Iraq (Ali, 2016) and some European countries have explored the issue and have arrived at intriguing outcomes such as students' inability to differentiate the two varieties thus mixing them up. However, in Ghana, there seems to be no study on the topic so far. Educationists and policy makers in the country keep on assuming that the British Standard variety is the reigning variety. The main examination body in the country, West Africa Examinations Council (WAEC) still insists on British Standard variety for oral assessment of the language. For the written aspect of the language, the expectation is that there should be a consistent use of either a British or an American variety. This expectation implies students are familiar with the two varieties, a situation which has not been investigated and thus has not been proven. Accordingly, this study is meant to assess students' knowledge level of the spelling and vocabulary of the two main varieties so to establish the type of English used or to be used in the country.

The study is guided by the questions below.

1. Which of the aspects of the British Standard English used in Ghana have been much influenced by the American Standard English?
2. What is the level of students' knowledge of the differences in the orthography and vocabulary of the American and the British Standard varieties used in Ghana?
3. What is students' orientation towards the variety used in our educational system?

Below are the objectives that the study seeks to achieve.

- ✓ To ascertain the aspects of the Standard British English that have been much influenced by the American Standard English.

- ✓ To examine students' knowledge level of the differences (orthography & vocabulary) of the two main varieties of English.
- ✓ To investigate students' orientation towards the variety used in Ghana.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 *British English (BrE) versus American English (AmE)*

English is a native language of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. BrE and AmE have gained much prominence over the others because Britain and America colonized other countries and spread their languages to their colonies. Thus they are the varieties that are taught in most English as Second Language (ESL) and English as Foreign Language (EFL) programmes.

The term, BrE seems to raise an argument since the country consists of four nations: England, Northern Island, Scotland, and Wales. This apparent argument stems from the misconception that *British* appears closely associated with just one nation, England (Kumar, 2003). It is thus abstruse which of the nations the term BrE points at. Murphy (2016:4) explains the situation as, "But *British* is also used to describe things and people from the UK, since there is no adjectival form of *United Kingdom*". This implies that the term, *British English*, epitomizes English of the entire country, even though a particular variety may be the point of reference in a particular context. In this very context, the BrE is closely-knitted with the English of the Great Britain.

In Great Britain, there are many dialects such as Cockney, York, Scouse and Brummie which are used by different people in different communities. Among these dialects, a consensus is reached on which one of them to be used for official purposes even though it might not be the popular one (Crystal, 2003). Accordingly, the British Standard English (henceforth BSE), a prestigious dialect used by the Royals (Queen Elizabeth) in the country is the acceptable variety due to its poly-functional purposes. It is the English used in the educational sectors, administration and other formal activities; it is regarded language of the educated populace in London. Also, it is the language spoken on British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) with its spoken form as the Received Pronunciation (RP), a particular accent with which the Standard English is to be spoken. This kind of pronunciation is related to Oxford Schools and BBC company and it is considered an ideal kind of pronunciation which provides the conditions for the English language to be used all over the world as well as it being taught as a second or foreign language in many countries. Other varieties in the country apart from the BSE are demeaned upon in many respects.

Just as the description of BrE is contentious, AmE denotes similar problem. However, AmE could theoretically refer to the English that is spoken by all the people of the United States of America (Murphy, 2016). American variety of English is the language used in the U.S with its geographically, politically and economically conditioned characteristics. Unlike the British who colonized many countries, hence the acceptance and usage of the BrE in most parts of the world, the AmE is used in

few places including Liberia in Africa, Japan, South Africa, Taiwan, China and the Philippines in East Asia and some parts of the Americas. Crystal (1995) accordingly comments that BrE is becoming one more dialect of the world English, and it has exercised greater influence on world English than any other variety. This is an indication that BrE has reached many more places than the AmE. Notwithstanding the dominance of the BrE over the AmE, the latter still has gained international status (world language) because of its position in media, international business and technology (Tottie, 2002; Ali, 2016).

It should be added that many best-selling adventurous and romantic novels are of American origin and thus making the variety very popular and acceptable. Observing this upsurge of the variety (AmE), Tottie (2002, p. 1), comments, “American English was considered less educated, less cultured and less beautiful than British English”. However, due to its rank in media, international business, computing and science, AmE has gained the status as a world language (Tottie, 2002). The accessibility of the variety by a large group of people because of its status in media, has made it more inter-continental.

Following the above, clear evidence exists on the popularity of the two major varieties of the language (British and American). This situation poses the question whether or not second and foreign users of the language strictly adhere to only one of the varieties or there is hybridisation. There seems to be the opinion of many users of English language that all types of *English* are the same since a native of one variety might easily understand another variety. That erroneous impression is explicated by Murphy (2016, p. 4) as, “...while the differences between American and British English may be small, they are innumerable, varied and interesting”. It might be that the differences do not involve formal terminologies but misunderstandings are possible in everyday life language. Therefore, it is important to raise the level of awareness of the differences between the speakers of the two varieties (Murphy, 2016). Such differences account for a speaker of American orientation and another of a British orientation saying *first floor* and *ground floor* respectively of a storey building, meanwhile, they will be referring to the same apartment of a building.

A standard language is a form of a dialect of a language that has been accepted by many users of the language and has been extensively codified for easy referencing. McArthur (2003, p. 442) submits that Standard English is generally considered, “the variety most widely accepted, understood, and perhaps valued within an English speaking country”. He presents some characteristics of Standard English as, it has “at least three identifying characteristics: 1) it is the easiest to recognise in print because written conventions are similar world-wide; 2) it is usually used by news presenters; and 3) its usage relates to the speaker’s social class and education”.

Some linguists argue that Standard English relates with written form of English and not the spoken form on the premises that pronunciation cannot be tied to any particular accent (Crystal, 1995; Trudgill 1999). This implies that the aspects of the language with which standardization could be applied are vocabulary, orthography (spelling) and grammar but not the pronunciation. This is because pronunciation, many times is blended with different accents of people from different language

backgrounds who are so ingrained with their native language accent and thus the likely influence of their L1 accent.

The above suggests that a particular Standard variety is used in places where English is used either as a Second language (outer circle) or a foreign language (expanding circle). Accordingly, British Standard English is the variety used in former colonies of the British Empire as in Africa continent (Ghana, Nigeria South Africa, and Kenya), Asia (Pakistan, India, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand), New Zealand Middle-Eastern Countries with the exception of Israel and Saudi Arabia.

### *2.2 The Place of English in Ghana*

The arrival of the English language in Ghana has its history deeply rooted in colonization. The British did not only seek power, money and fame but rather succeeded in imposing their language on the people of Ghana. The legacy has been with Ghanaians for many decades and many education reforms have not been successful in the quest to downgrade the language to the advantage of Ghanaian languages. Many scholars suggested the use of a Ghanaian language as a national language but the multiplicity of Ghana's language system has been a hindrance (Boadi, 1971; Fasold, 1984; quoted in Owusu-Ansah, 1991) and Pakir (2009). "It is thus clear that English continues to be used as the official national language in Ghana to avoid splitting up the country along ethnic lines..." (Owusu-Ansah 1991, p. 17). Notwithstanding the proposals and the debates surrounding the issue, English remains the medium of instruction at every level of education in the country. This has positioned the language as a sole one for education hence the need for students and all users to use it well. Following the colonial history of Ghana, the BrE is the adopted variety for the country and for that matter, the educational system, especially the studying of the subject, English, is strictly inclined towards a British variety.

The BSE with its spoken form, Received Pronunciation (RP) is used in Ghana for official purposes. It is an undeniable fact that this standard of English used in Ghana has been adulterated in many ways. Such adulteration manifests in the form of interference at all levels of the language (phonetic, vocabulary, grammar) which has brought into view what some Ghanaian authors such as Owusu-Ansah (1991, 1997), Koranteng (2006), Appartaim (2012), Ngula (2012), Wiredu (2012), Okyere (2013) refer to as Ghanaian English (GE). Conversely, many other Ghanaian scholars: Sey (1973), Gyasi (1990), Ahulu (1994), Nimako (2004) do not subscribe to its existence but rather regard those supposed Ghanaian English (GE) as erroneous structures. This "adulterated" English (GE), though people deny its existence, is used by people with all levels of education at different contexts. However, it has been observed that irrespective of the existence of a seemingly nativised (GE) and contact (pidgin, creole) varieties, Ghanaians expect and insist on formal varieties in formal contexts (Sarfo, 2012; Okyere, 2013). A situation which is highly adored by many people, and interestingly, it has been proven that people who speak the language consider it prestigious and a mark of confidence (Morris, 1998). Ghanaians' insistence on standard variety in formal settings presupposes the use of the British Standard.

At the senior high school levels, where English language terminal examination (West Africa Secondary

School Certificate Examinations, WASSCE) involves oral assessment, the Received Pronunciation is strictly enforced; a clear indication that no other variety of English is encouraged in the country. Unfortunately, the variety of the language used in Ghana, especially, in the educational system seems to be a blend of the two main varieties: British and American English. In situations where a speaker says, “there are elevators and lifts...” “toffees and candies”, and other related expressions could result in confusion and misunderstanding. To avoid confusion and misunderstanding that may arise from such usages, some scholars propose consistent use of a particular variety rather than a random mix of the two (Baugh & Cable, 2002).

Although the Standard British English is the language norm in Ghana, there seems some intrusion of the Standard American English. Clearly, the two Englishes (Britain and America) are mutually intelligible, however, there are nuances of differences that might hinder effective communication as it could lead to confusion. It is thus imperative students’ knowledge level of the two popular varieties is assessed to help sensitise them on the need to pay heed to such differences.

Many concerns regarding the two main standard varieties have been addressed differently by a number of scholars. Anchimbe (2006) addresses the fast pace at which AmE is overshadowing the other varieties of English in the contemporary world. He argues that English is no more the prerogative of the United Kingdom since it has become a language for all and elaborately advances some key factors that are contributing to AmE superseding the originator’s (UK) English. He classifies all varieties of the language into two: AmE on one side and all other forms of English, which he refers to as *World Englishes* on another side. After critical analyses of the contributing factors that are leading to the AmE becoming a world language, he predicts future reign of the variety over the others.

Bayard’s et al. (2001) concentrates on three native speaking countries (US, New Zealand, Australia) to ascertain the status as regards prestige and popularity of the two major standard varieties. The study establishes that BrE used to be the most prestigious variety, however, AmE is on its way to equaling or even replacing BrE as the prestigious variety.

Rasmussen’s (2015) is similar in a sense that he sets out to investigate people’s opinion about the two major standard varieties but unlike Bayard et al’s, Rasmussen’s focuses on the positions of the two major varieties in terms of spoken and written forms. He concentrates on Norwegian teachers’ and students’ attitudes towards the two varieties and concludes that students prefer to speak AmE but insist on BrE when writing.

Both Garrett et al. (2001) and Dalton-Puffer (1997) support that BrE continues to be the prominent and preferred variety for education as against AmE in European countries. In terms of education, it is interesting to note that all the three authors: Rasmussen (2015), Garrett et al. (2001) and Dalton-Puffer (1997) draw on BrE as the preferred educational choice.

Gongalves’ et al. (2017) is unique compared to the works discussed earlier because the latter is a corpus-based study and also considers the language of both written form (books) and that of social media (twitter) covering a wide geographical area. That difference notwithstanding, the similarity

between Gongalves' et al. and Anchimbe (2006) is that both investigate which of the two major varieties of English is gaining prominence as regards the people's choice of vocabulary and spelling of a particular variety. Interestingly, all the others referred to in this study concentrate on the two aspects: spelling and orthography. Gongalves' et al. (ibid) conclude that AmE is more highly employed than its British counterpart in both written and colloquial forms.

Closely related to the current study is Ali's (2016) which purposes to ascertain the level of knowledge of the differences between spelling and vocabulary of American and British English among Iraqi university students' studying English. He submits that since English is a foreign language in the country and also the students have the freedom to choose which of the two main varieties they prefer, there is the need to test students' knowledge level of the spelling and vocabulary differences of the two main varieties. The result of the test, as presented by Ali (ibid) proves that students have little knowledge about the differences between the two varieties. He then questions the issue of students being expected to heed to consistent use of a particular variety and thus proposes that efforts should be made to create awareness of the differences of the two varieties in students.

### 3. Methodology

This study employs a quantitative approach to examine and assess students' knowledge level of the orthography and vocabulary differences between the two main varieties. Nonetheless, little qualitative approach would be employed to describe what exists and why the existence of the situation. The premise for basically employing quantitative and little of qualitative approaches lies in the fact that the study aims at establishing what a situation is and explaining the reasons of the situations. The research design employed is case study which focuses on exploring university students' knowledge level about BSE and ASE.

The population for the study is the English Education Students of University of Education, Winneba. These students are mainly trained to be teachers of English at the second cycle schools so unlike other Universities where not all the students offer Bachelor of Education, the students of this university mandatorily offer Bachelor of Education thus the majority of them turning up as teachers of English. Accordingly, the choice of the population is informed by the fact that the topic under study is of great importance to would-be-teachers. One other reason for the choice is, the researcher is a member (teacher) of the institution thus it is highly expected that students would be much cooperative in the gathering of the data.

Systematic sampling technique was employed to select one hundred (100) students from the population of seven hundred and five (785) students. The researcher deems the sampled size appropriate because one hundred students from the population appears a considerable representative which will ensure that the outcome of the study will be a probable reflection of the entire population and many students at large. Accordingly, 25 students were sampled from each level (class) of the four levels (classes). With systematic sampling technique, every *Kth item* of a group is selected for inclusion.



It has been proposed, that an effective systematic sampling procedure follows the sampling formula below:

Population size = selective interval

Sample size

Due to the composition of the population (four different classes/levels), the formula is appropriately modified as:

Level/class (of the populace) = selective interval

Sample size

Accordingly, the formula was applied to each of the four levels to select twenty-five (25) students to sample the one hundred (100) students.

Below is a table showing the details of the sampling procedure.

**Table 1. Details of the Sampling Technique**

LEVEL	TOTAL NUMBER	SELECTIVE INTERVAL	SAMPLE SIZE
100	266	10	25
200	187	7	25
300	216	8	25
400	176	7	25

With the Table 1 above, the starting points vary with every level. As indicated in the table above, the first selected item is the starting point for all the levels. The reason for adopting systematic sampling rests on the fact that it is a type of random sampling and thus ensures the probability of every member of the population to be selected for inclusion. Explanation of the selective technique is indicated in the Table 1. For the level 100s, every 10<sup>th</sup> member of the class was selected; for the level 200s, every 7<sup>th</sup> member, for the level 300s, every 8<sup>th</sup> member and for the 400s, every 7<sup>th</sup> member, was chosen.

It must be stated that the selection was serially based and this was done during the School's End-of-Semester Examinations during which time students are serially arranged (sit per index numbers). Accordingly, the sampling seems to ensure the probability of any students (dunce or clever) to be selected.

Data was collected through the use of questionnaire, test and informal interview. The questionnaire yielded information on students' knowledge level of the various native varieties, especially, the two main varieties of the English language; the test was used to assess the students' awareness of the vocabulary and spelling differences of British and American English and the essence of the informal interview was to seek clarification on follow-up questions that might arise from the questionnaire responses. The test was on selected vocabulary of the two varieties and the result was presented in percentages. The vocabulary were randomly picked from Mariani Webster's and Oxford Dictionaries

which comprises American and British lexicon respectively.

The random selection of the words would indicate that they will cover range of words that the researcher has no priority of. Forty (40) vocabulary were selected and the reason for the number was to consider average number of words that will not take so much time of the students. It might be argued that the number is insignificant considering the total lexicon of the language; it must be stated that the differences are not very much however the little different varieties are capable of causing confusion and ambiguity in some contexts. Also, though the different words might be a handful factoring the lexicon of the language, the students' awareness of these differences needs to be established.

Data from the questionnaire and the informal interview would be qualitatively analysed and the outcome would be thematically presented. For the test, the performance of the students on individual words of the test would be considered in order to ascertain the words or the group of words students will perform well on and vice versa. If fifty percent and over students' (one half or more than one half of the respondents) score on a word, it would be considered that students have knowledge of the word(s) and whichever word that less than fifty percent of the respondents (less than one half of the respondents) score right would be considered that students are unaware of the word's category.

#### 4. Result and Discussion

Presented below is the analysis and the result of the questionnaire administered. The analysis will be done on question by question basis.

Question 1: How many native varieties of English exist?

**Table 2. Students' Knowledge of the Native Varieties of English**

Number of variety	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Level</b>						
100	-	21	-	2	-	2
200	-	22	1	2	-	-
300	-	2	-	-	23	-
400	-	1	2	-	22	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>02</b>

From the Table 2, as many as forty-six (46) of the students said there are two (2) native varieties of English, three (3), indicated there are three varieties, four (4), and two (2) indicated there are 4 and 2 varieties respectively while the remaining forty-five (45), indicated there are 5 varieties. Considering the respondents (students) on level basis, none of them from any of the levels indicated there is one variety of the language. As many as 21 of the first year students (Level 100) representing twenty-one percent (21%), indicated there are two native varieties of the language. With the second year students

(Level 200), twenty-two (22) of them, representing (22%), also said there are two varieties. With the third year students (Level 300) and the fourth year students (Level 400), as many as 23 of them representing (23%) and 22 students representing (22%) respectively, indicated there are 5 native varieties of the language. A few of the respondents, nine (9) representing (9%) indicated there are 3, 4 and 6 native varieties of the language. It could be said that the high numbers of the levels 300 and the 400's choice of the correct number of the variety is as a result of their experience with the course, *Varieties of English*, which the students of the Department of English Education of the University study in the second year of their course. The Level 200s had not undertaken the course at the time of this research. Following this, it can be said that the majority of the students, and for that matter many students, are familiar with two native varieties of the language. The subsequent questions would lead to ascertaining the types of varieties the students know.

*Which of the varieties is used in Ghana?*

All the respondents responded that the British variety of English is the one used in Ghana. This is not surprising since that is a common fact from history: Britain being the country's colonial masters.

*Do you think the variety used in Ghana has been influenced by another or other variety/varieties? If yes, which is/are the influencing variety/varieties?*

None of the respondents answered "No" to this question which indicates that they all answered "Yes". This is a good indication that students have some knowledge about the British variety so what warrants investigation is their level of knowledge of the language. Responding to the second part of the question, ninety of them, representing (90%), answered that it is the AmE which is influencing the British Variety as used in Ghana. The remaining ten respondents did not indicate any variety even though they all responded affirmatively to the early part of the question. The respondents were not provided options for the second part of the question and that may explain why the ten respondents did not provide any response. This response is intriguing considering the fact that many researchers have indicated the trend of AmE speedily competing with the British variety (Tottie & Hoffmann, 2006; Anchimbe, 2006).

*Which of the aspect(s) of the British English used in Ghana do you think has/have been much influenced and why?*

The first part of the question was a closed-ended question and as many as eighty-nine (89) of the respondents indicated that orthography (spelling) is the much influenced aspect. Seventy-six (76) of those who chose orthography also chose pronunciation as another influenced aspect. Eleven (11) of the respondents did not answer the question. The eleven respondents who did not respond to this question, upon enquiry under the unstructured interview session indicated that they did not know whether or not any of the aspects have been influenced. The second part of the question which required students to explain why the influenced, recorded various responses of which the dominant ones are presented as, "Different spellings are allowed in Ghana", "Different pronunciations do not change the meaning of words", "Different spellings do not cause meaning change", "Different spellings and pronunciations have been used ever since". It is unfortunate that students do not know that different spellings of words

which are taken as the same may have different meanings. For example, the spellings “program” and “programme” which many people take as the same spelling mean different things in American and British English respectively. None of the respondents indicated that the vocabulary and grammar of the British English (as used in Ghana) are influenced in any way. This indicates that students do not know the differences between and among different native varieties of the English language because there are quite a number of words which students use interchangeably. Probably, students and for that matter many people take it that *cookies/biscuits*, *elevator/lift*, *holiday/vacation*, *chemist/pharmacy* and others are synonyms of a variety but these sets belong to British and American varieties respectively.

*Do you think there is the need to use more than one variety of English in Ghana?*

Seventy-six (76) of the respondents responded negatively to this question. The remaining twenty-four (24) respondents responded in the affirmative. This question was followed by informal interview to ascertain their reasons for their choices. Those who supported the use of the British variety only were of the opinion that it ought to be the only one since it is the language of education and also since it has for long been the official language of the country. Their response is in line with Tottie’s (2002) that BrE is the language of education. Few of them indicated that the British variety sounds more formal than the American variety thus the need to continue using the former. The respondents’ opinion directly supports the studies that show that BrE continues to hold its strong position in educational sectors, especially, in European educational sectors (Dalton-Puffer, 1997; Ladegaard, 1998; and Rindal, 2010, 2014). The respondents who suggested the use of the American variety in Ghana argued that AmE seems to be a dominating variety now: it appears “flexing” (what they meant by the “flexing” was related with language that is in vogue since many youngsters use that variety). Interestingly, it was realized that what they term as the American variety are all colloquial in nature. Some examples they gave as American variety included, “naa” (no), “yeah” (yes), [gæd] for God instead of [gɒd] and few others. Unfortunately, the students could not indicate whether or not what makes the words British or American stems from vocabulary or pronunciation.

#### *4.1 Results from the Test on the Set of Words*

As indicated earlier, the students were tested on their knowledge of the spelling and vocabulary differences of some words belonging to either the American or British English variety. The first analysis will be based on the spelling test which will be followed by the test on vocabulary.

##### *4.1.1 Spelling*

With this test, none of the students scored the total marks of forty (40). The table below provides the details of the students’ performance. The Table presents the students’ performance on the individual words.

**Table 3. Result of the Test on Spelling Differences**

S. No	Word Group 1	Answer as British (Correct)	Answer as America	Left un-answered	Total	Percentage Of correct	Word Group 2	Answer as American	Answered as British	Left un-answered	Total	Percentage of correct response
1	Centre	59	38	3	100	59%	Center	60	38	2	100	60%
2	Fibre	60	37	3	100	60%	Fiber	60	36	4	100	60%
3	Litre	45	18	37	100	45%	Liter	35	43	22	100	35%
4	Theatre	63	29	8	100	63%	Theater	63	27	10	100	63%
5	Kilometer	59	38	3	100	59%	kilometer	59	38	3	100	59%
6	Defence	32	43	25	100	32%	Defense	22	37	41	100	22%
7	Licence	35	27	38	100	35%	License	32	15	53	100	32%
8	Offence	46	38	16	100	46%	Offense	40	28	32	100	40%
9	Pretence	48	40	12	100	48%	Pretense	48	39	13	100	48%
10	Apologise	67	30	3	100	67%	Apologize	75	25	-	100	75%
11	Organise	65	27	8	100	65%	Organize	75	25	-	100	75%
12	Patronise	68	30	2	100	68%	Patronize	75	25	-	100	75%
13	Labour	70	26	4	100	70%	Labor	72	24	4	100	24%
14	Flavour	70	26	4	100	70%	Flavor	72	24	4	100	24%
15	Neighbor	75	20	5	100	75%	Neighbor	73	24	3	100	73%
16	Leukaemia	23	33	45	100	23%	Leukemia	18	22	60	100	22%
17	Paediatric	18	29	53	100	18%	Pediatric	15	32	53	100	15%
18	Manoeuvre	45	33	22	100	45%	Maneuver	45	31	24	100	45%
19	Oestrogen	15	18	67	100	15%	Estrogen	18	21	61	100	18%
20	Travelling	72	15	13	100	72%	Traveling	73	15	12	100	73%
21	Cheque	69	20	11	100	69%	Check	24	64	12	100	24%
22	Fuelled	69	25	6	100	69%	Fueled	70	25	5	100	70%
23	Fuelling	72	18	10	100	72%	Fueling	27	46	27	100	27%
24	Jewellery	46	37	17	100	46%	Jewelry	50	10	40	100	50%
25	Aluminium	72	26	2	100	72%	Aluminum	32	16	52	100	16%
26	Flexitime	41	46	13	100	41%	Flexitime	57	40	3	100	40%
27	Flush	38	52	10	100	38%	Flash	52	38	10	100	52%
28	Tyre	78	12	10	100	78%	Tire	32	34	34	100	32%
29	Grey	54	43	3	100	54%	Gray	43	55	2	100	43%
30	Pyjamas	48	44	8	100	48%	Pajamas	42	32	26	100	42%
31	Programme	74	15	11	100	74%	Program	76	10	14	100	76%
32	Odour	63	37	-	100	63%	Odor	10	14	76	100	10%
33	Cozy	23	60	17	100	23%	Cosy	24	65	11	100	24%
34	Enquiry	24	26	50	100	24%	Inquiry	19	22	59	100	19%
35	Judgment	38	42	20	100	38%	judgement	40	45	15	100	40%
36	Catalogue	34	57	9	100	34%	Catalog	33	55	12	100	33%

37	Traveler	78	15	7	100	<b>78%</b>	Traveler	43	13	44	100	<b>43%</b>
38	While	18	34	48	100	<b>18%</b>	whilst	18	32	50	100	<b>18%</b>
39	acknowledg ement	12	34	54	100	<b>12%</b>	acknowledg ment	14	32	54	100	<b>14%</b>
40	Moustache	23	19	58	100	<b>23%</b>	mustache	28	14	58	100	<b>28%</b>

The result of the test indicates the students' knowledge about the spelling differences between the two main varieties. The performance of the four different levels (levels 100, 200, 300 & 400) revealed there are no significant differences (therefore it was not important to present the result on class by class levels). From the Group 1 words on the table, it could be realized that less than fifty percent of the students could not identify as many as twenty (20) of the words, showing that they do not have firm grasp of the spelling differences. The students were able to rightly place words that end with *-ise* and *-our* such as "organise" and "patronise" and "colour" and "flavour" respectively since in all instances with those endings, as high as sixty (60) and above students rightly categorised those words. The reason for students' knowledge about those words could be attributed to the fact that words with those endings are innumerable and are also often used. One other reason could be attributed to technology: the use of computer which "accepts" those American spelling at the detriment of those British words. This explains Tottie's (2002) submission that AmE has gained popularity to the extent of being a world language because of its status in media, international business, computing and science.

Aside from that, students found it difficult to determine the variety of the *ce/se* words such as defence/defense, licence/license, and offence/offense since more than one-half of the students could not correctly decide their varieties. The category of the double/single vowel words for British and American variety as in paediatric/pediatric and leukaemia/leukemia respectively could not be determined by many of the respondents thus a clear indication of their unfamiliarity with the words' varieties. Similarly, the respondents did not know the difference between words like pyjamas/pajamas, enquiry/inquiry, catalogue/catalog and others as shown in the Table 3 above. The result is a clear indication that the students have little knowledge about the spellings of the two varieties although they are aware of its existence. This is what raises the argument about the consistency in the usage of one variety in writings as expected in Ghana's educational system.

The result directly shows that students are not familiar with the orthographic differences and thus mix the two varieties in their writings. The situation appears worrisome since the respondents are prospective teachers of the language at the senior high schools and its equivalent level of education. If English students who are being trained to be English language teachers exhibit such knowledge level of the differences, then it could be speculated that many English language teachers on the field are not acquainted with the differences.

The students' performance on the Group 2 words appears worse than those of the Group one. They could not score an average mark of fifty percent in twenty-six (26) out of the forty (40) words,

implying that they could not determine the variety of many of the words. The students' performance on the *-ize* words was very impressive; this might be because words with that endings are many and thus students, especially those who use computers often, might have encountered them many times.

A good number (50% and above) of the respondents could correctly categorise as many as twenty (20) of the British words while they could categorise only fourteen (14) of the American words correctly. Comparing students' performance on the words of the two varieties, it could be said that students' knowledge of the British words is relatively better than their knowledge of the American words. The relatively better performance of the students on the British words could be attributed to the issue that students are more familiar with the British spelling than the American spelling probably because that is what they encounter in many write-ups since the former has been the formal language since the era of colonization (Morris, 1998).

**Table 4. Result of the Test on the Vocabulary**

SN	WORD GROUP 1	ANSWERED AS BRITISH (CORRECT)	ANSWERED AS AMERICAN (WRONG)	LEFT UN-ANSWERED	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE	WORD GROUP 2	ANSWERED AS AMERICAN	ANSWERED AS BRITISH (WRONG)	LEFT UNANSWERED	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
1	car park	12	20	68	100	12%	parking lot	12	20	68	100	12%
2	Cot	52	36	12	100	52%	Crib	52	36	12	100	52%
3	Curriculum vitae	56	14	30	100	56%	Resume	56	14	30	100	56%
4	drawing pin	15	10	83	100	15%	thumb tuck	15	10	83	100	15%
5	Draughts	07	12	81	100	7%	checkers	07	12	81	100	7%
6	Engaged	19	29	52	100	19%	Busy	19	29	52	100	19%
7	Father Christmas	08	14	78	100	8%	Santa Claus	08	14	78	100	8%
8	full stop	78	20	02	100	78%	Period	78	20	02	100	78%
9	Gents	24	66	10	100	24%	Men's room	24	66	10	100	24%
10	Football	32	36	32	100	32%	Soccer	32	36	32	100	32%
11	Mackintosh	09	79	12	100	9%	raincoat	09	79	12	100	9%
12	Mobile phone	78	12	10	100	78%	cellphone	78	12	10	100	78%
13	Motorway	47	40	13	100	47%	Highway/ Expressway	47	40	13	100	47%
14	Motorbike	32	36	32	100	32%	motorcycle	32	36	32	100	32%
15	Biscuit	85	15	-	100	85%	Cookies	85	15	-	100	85%
16	Timetable	39	43	12	100	39%	schedule	39	43	12	100	39%

17	Windscreen	54	46	-	<b>100</b>	<b>54%</b>	windshield	54	46	-	<b>100</b>	<b>54%</b>
18	Holiday	14	19	67	<b>100</b>	<b>14%</b>	vacation	14	19	67	<b>100</b>	<b>14%</b>
19	high street	18	17	65	<b>100</b>	<b>18%</b>	main street	18	17	65	<b>100</b>	<b>18%</b>
20	Rubber	06	67	27	<b>100</b>	<b>6%</b>	Eraser	06	67	27	<b>100</b>	<b>6%</b>
21	Aeroplane	17	18	65	<b>100</b>	<b>17%</b>	airplane	17	18	65	<b>100</b>	<b>17%</b>
22	Underground	71	10	19	<b>100</b>	<b>71%</b>	Subway	71	10	19	<b>100</b>	<b>71%</b>
23	Lift	14	19	67	<b>100</b>	<b>14%</b>	elavator	14	19	67	<b>100</b>	<b>14%</b>
24	Queue	16	13	71	<b>100</b>	<b>16%</b>	Line	16	13	71	<b>100</b>	<b>16%</b>
25	Chemist	07	73	20	<b>100</b>	<b>7%</b>	druggist	07	73	20	<b>100</b>	<b>7%</b>
26	Phone box	16	57	27	<b>100</b>	<b>16%</b>	Phone booth	16	57	27	<b>100</b>	<b>16%</b>
27	Flat	36	43	21	<b>100</b>	<b>36%</b>	apartment	36	43	21	<b>100</b>	<b>36%</b>
28	Lorry	34	18	48	<b>100</b>	<b>34%</b>	Truck	34	18	48	<b>100</b>	<b>34%</b>
29	Trainers	13	37	50	<b>100</b>	<b>13%</b>	sneakers	13	37	50	<b>100</b>	<b>13%</b>
30	Pullover	34	42	26	<b>100</b>	<b>34%</b>	Sweater	34	42	26	<b>100</b>	<b>34%</b>
31	Barrister	16	35	49	<b>100</b>	<b>16%</b>	Lawyer/ attorney	16	35	49	<b>100</b>	<b>16%</b>
32	Dustbin	67	15	18	<b>100</b>	<b>67%</b>	garbage can	67	15	18	<b>100</b>	<b>67%</b>
33	Bill	13	63	14	<b>100</b>	<b>13%</b>	Check	13	63	14	<b>100</b>	<b>13%</b>
34	Waistcoat	17	14	69	<b>100</b>	<b>17%</b>	Vest	17	14	69	<b>100</b>	<b>17%</b>
35	Braces	82	14	04	<b>100</b>	<b>82%</b>	suspenders	82	14	04	<b>100</b>	<b>82%</b>
36	Dummy	85	15	-	<b>100</b>	<b>85%</b>	pacifiers	85	15	-	<b>100</b>	<b>85%</b>
37	Hoover	27	64	09	<b>100</b>	<b>27%</b>	vacuum cleaner	27	64	09	<b>100</b>	<b>27%</b>
38	earth wire	87	13	-	<b>100</b>	<b>87%</b>	ground wire	87	13	-	<b>100</b>	<b>87%</b>
39	boot (of a vehicle)	100	-	-	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	Trunk	100	-	-	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
40	hire purchase	87	13	-	<b>100</b>	<b>87%</b>	Instalment plan	87	13	-	<b>100</b>	<b>87%</b>

The abysmal performance of the students' knowledge of the vocabulary of the two varieties (British and American) explicitly indicates that they are very much unacquainted with the vocabulary differences between the varieties. From the Table 4 above, the students are familiar with just thirteen (13) of the words which represents just 33%. The students could not rightly place as many as twenty-seven (27) of the words representing 67%. The wide margin between the two responses (the correct and the wrong) clearly shows that the students do not know the vocabulary differences of the two varieties. This brings to view the need to ascertain the reasons of students' unfamiliarity with the vocabulary of the two varieties. Since BrE has been the language of education throughout the period of the inception of formal education in the country (Morris, 1998), one wonders why there seems to be invasion of the American variety. A simple response to this question might be the influx of American movies, novels and the dominant use of the variety on social media.

The performance of the students on their knowledge of the vocabulary compelled the researcher to hold



an informal interview with a section of the respondents in order to ascertain the cause of that performance. Following the interview, four groups of words were established. The groups are: British words that are commonly used thus are easily identified (words that were correctly placed); words of the two varieties which are often used interchangeably and therefore their variety can hardly be determined; words which are American variety but have been often used instead of their British ones and thus have become common with students instead of their British variety and few British words which are hardly used in contextual domains and as such look so odd to the students. In the Table below is a summary of the above explanation.

**Table 5. Representation of Three out of the Four Categories of Words**

<b>British words that are commonly used</b>	<b>British/American words that appear synonymous</b>	<b>American words which have taken over their British counterparts</b>
Biscuit	car park/parking lot	phone booth
boot (of vehicle)	engaged/busy	druggist
Braces	football/soccer	sneakers
Cot	motorway/highway	Truck
curriculum vitae	motorbike/motorcycle	Lawyer
Dummy	timetable/schedule	Check
Dustbin	holiday/vacation	vacuum cleaner
hire purchase	highstreet/mainstreet	Eraser
earth wire	aeroplane/airplane	Raincoat
full stop	lift/elevator	Drugstore
mobile phone	queue/line	
windscreen	father Christmas/Santa Claus	
underground	flat/apartment	
Bill	pullover/sweater	

The words in the first column of the Table are words that were rightly placed and from the interaction with some of the respondents, those words are often used and that explains their conversancy with their variety. According to the respondents, some words of British and American varieties are used interchangeably in Ghana those are the words in the second column of the Table. It is somewhat agreeable that those words are many times used interchangeably and that clearly explains the reason why the students could not correctly indicate their varieties. Invasion of those words could be attributed to their frequent use in the Ghanaian media, both print and electronic. One of the respondents explained why the interchangeability of those words as, “Many times the two are used interchangeably and all these while, I thought they were synonymous and never as belonging to different varieties”.

In the third column of the Table are the words that are of American variety but have or seem to have replaced their British varieties in the country. From the respondents, they never knew words such as “mackintosh” but rather “raincoat”, “chemist” but rather “drugstore”, “phone box” but rather “phone booth” and the others. This invasion is an evidence that the “American variety is well on its way to equaling, or even replacing British English as the prestige, or at least, preferred variety of English” (Bayard et al., 2001, p. 22).

British words that are hardly used because of their contextual domains form the last category of words and those words as regards the test that was conducted are only two in number: “drawing pin/thumbtack” and “draughts/checkers”. Many students could not correctly place these two words because they did not know their varieties; many did not even know what the words meant or represented.

The responses to the questions that guided this study could be summarized in what follows. It should be stated that although different levels (classes) of the students were sampled for the study, there were no significant differences among the groups as regards the result gathered. The only significant difference that emerged was the issue that the levels 100 and 200 students were not familiar with the number of native English countries. Of the two aspects (orthography and vocabulary) considered in the study, it could be said that the vocabulary aspect of the Standard British English used in Ghana is the more influenced aspect by AmE. Evidence of that is the respondents’ low performance in the test as shown in the Table 4. As said earlier, the reason is attributed to the random use of the vocabulary of the two main varieties by teachers, journalists, newscasters and course books writers for which reason many have considered the vocabulary of the different varieties as synonyms. The second question was to ascertain the students’ knowledge level of the differences between the two varieties. The results as could be appreciated from Tables 3 and 4 clearly show that students have very little knowledge of the differences between the two varieties. Students’ knowledge level of the orthographical differences is somehow better than that of the vocabulary differences. Lastly, the students exhibit positive orientation towards the variety used in the country (BrE). The majority of them prefer the use of the SBE in the educational system to the use of SAE.

## 5. Conclusion

The study reveals that the majority of students are conscious of the various native varieties of English. Also, clearly, students are cognizant of the fact that a British variety (British Standard English) is the acceptable variety for educational purposes in Ghana and they support its continuity as the language for education. This preference of the respondents towards the direction of Janicki’s (2005) finding that some teachers hold the view that British English variety should continue to be the ideal variety of English to teach in schools. Apart from Janicki’s (ibid) outcome, Dalton-Puffer (1997), Ladegaard (1998) and Rindal (2010, 2014) also indicate that BrE continues to hold its strong position in European educational sectors.

Notwithstanding the students' recognition and acceptance that the variety is and should continue as the variety for education in the country, the results of this study indicate that students do not have firm grasp of the orthography of a number of the Standard British English (SBE) words. The implication of the students' partial knowledge of the orthography of the variety is that they blend the use of the two main varieties; a situation which ought to be penalised in examination situations in the country. What appears worrying is whether or not examiners and English teachers at the senior high school level themselves are familiar with these differences and thus ensure the issue of consistency in the use of one of the two main varieties. The basis for this worry is the fact that the students are upcoming teachers and thus potential examiners.

Comparing the respondents' performance of their knowledge of the orthography of the variety with their vocabulary knowledge, it was gathered, students' awareness of the vocabulary difference between the two varieties is abysmal; a situation the students traced to a number of reasons. It thus brings up the issue whether Ghana's education system accepts the use of the vocabulary of both varieties or it accepts the consistent use of one as the case is with the orthography. This issue, the researcher believes must be accorded much concern since the country needs to explicitly establish what the situation is and must be in our usage of the language. The belief is, if clear standards as regards which of the variety or varieties is or are to be considered conventional variety, writers of text books and other course materials will be informed about the situation and accordingly act on it.

Although Ghana claims to use the British Standard English, this study has shown that what obtains in reality is different. That claim seems theoretical since in practice, students, teachers and media men comfortably blend the two varieties. Following that, the researcher proposes that it is time the country adopts the use of the two varieties because undoubtedly, the two have gained the status of world language to the extent that AmE is overriding the other (Anchimbe, 2006). The position of this paper appears very different in a sense that many scholars have insisted on the continuity of the "norm" (British Standard English has been the language of education). However the inevitability of a shift is strengthened by the fact that language grows and thus there should always be room for modification to suit the current realities of communicative exigencies. Ghana, should therefore use hybrid English since the two are unquestionably, famous; British English is famous because of the past (political power) and American is famous because of contemporary trend (economic and social status) (Graddol, 1997). This proposal does not suggest an avoidance of creating awareness of the vocabulary differences especially among Ghanaian students as the differences can result in confusion in many contexts. Some courses in English Language should cater for the creation of such awareness at least, for a start.

To sum up, it is evident that Ghana fits very well as an outer circle category in Kachru's concentric model since it still depends on inner circle norms to communicate; Ghana still insists on an inner circle standard. Since the confines of this study have been on only vocabulary and orthography, it is deemed expedient that other researchers consider the extent that pronunciation of BrE has been influenced by the AmE.

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