

John Algeo. 2006. *British or American English? A handbook of word and grammar patterns*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 348 pp.

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Although differences between British and American vocabulary and pronunciation have been extensively studied, the same cannot be said for grammatical usage. *British or American English?* is the first systematic attempt to fill this lacuna.

For the past twenty years, Professor and Mrs. Algeo have been gathering citations from newspapers and popular fiction of what intuition told them were examples of typically British grammatical usage. These examples were then checked against entries in the Cambridge International Corpus [of British and American English] and various dictionaries to see if intuition was backed up by facts. *British or American English?* is the fruit of this research.

The book is a cross between a grammar book and a dictionary. The first half is arranged according to parts of speech, each divided into subsections; the second consists of syntactic constructions in which British and American usage is known to vary, with each section again subdivided. Many of the subsections have a short introduction in which the author gives a grammatical explanation, comments on how usage is changing, draws attention to how British usage in the area differs from American, or summarizes recent research on the topic. The words discussed in each subsection are then arranged in alphabetical order with an illustrative quote for each one; comments and references to scholarly articles are included where necessary.

British or American English? should appeal to a wide readership, from North Americans who have misunderstood or been misunderstood in Britain to graduate students looking for a thesis topic. It will be a useful tool for ESL teachers, especially those who are teaching a variety of the language which is not the form they grew up with. Other people to whom it will appeal are translators and interpreters, as well as those who teach courses on British/American English or World Englishes.

Although the lack of a glossary of grammatical terms might make *British or American English?* a little complicated for the bemused tourist, the book itself is well organized and well-indexed, with citations which are clear and often amusing (e.g. <His missus would go on a vinegar trip if he was **late home** again> [p. 150]). A particularly interesting feature is the inclusion of cultural tidbits, such as the different treatment of personal names in each variety of English (p. 102), ways of getting around the lack of a second person plural pronoun (pp. 107–108), or the multiple connotations of *down* in England (p. 151). The section on interjections should come as a great surprise to North Americans, since British usage is so different. Comments on changing usage are especially useful; for example, *lest* was apparently more common in

American English than British in the mid twentieth century, but the situation has now reversed, with *lest* now being more common in the UK and a feature of academic texts in the States (p. 202). There are also some quirky bits of information: did you know that, when they are involved in a carpentry project, Americans will normally ask for *two by fours*, whereas the British will ask for *four by twos*?

One quibble I have with the book is that Professor Algeo has tried in some cases to be too comprehensive and has included entries which may represent something other than British usage. For example, he gives the expression <... he actually shook hands with me **a valedictory fashion**> (p. 195) as an illustration of the omission of the preposition *in*; to me, this looks more like a typographical error which escaped the proof-reader. The same applies to <**both sides** the Atlantic> (p. 196). In a similar vein, Algeo includes <... bars blessedly free from juke-box and **fruit-machine**> as an example of a singular count noun used for a plural; I read the expression as authorial striving for stylistic effect rather than a peculiarity of British English. Some other expressions, such as <... **kidnap girl** ... >, <**Sniff youth** ... >, <... **stab victim** ... > look like “headlines”; in this case, Algeo seems to have had the same feeling, because he gives a second example of <... **stab victim** ... > from the body of the article.

There is also no indication whether phrases which were not supported by examples from linguistic corpora were checked against the intuitions of speakers of British English. Similarly, although the author states in his Introduction, “A comment that a construction is ‘rare’ means that the Algeo corpus contains few examples, often only one,” I wonder if all such instances have been indicated, for there are several forms (e.g. *begin off* = begin/start off [p. 231], *turn in* = turn/show up [p. 233], *cut up* = cut off in a car [p. 235]) that seem odd to me, a native speaker of British English.

Despite these slight drawbacks, *British or American English?* is an extremely useful contribution to our knowledge of the current state of English grammar.

Esperança Bielsa and Susan Bassnett. 2009. *Translation in global news*. London and New York: Routledge. 162 pp.

Reviewed by Robert Dole, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi

Esperança Bielsa, lecturer at the Department of Sociology at the University of Leicester, and Susan Bassnett, professor in the Center for Translation and Comparative Cultural Studies at the University of Warwick, have written a fascinating book about the translation that occurs or does not occur within