Language Varieties: American English Versus English

Intro:

Britain was trying to spread English across the world from France to India to Australia and even to America. When Britain colonised America they forced English on the locals with not a whole lot of effort to learn Native American. America wanted to feel independent and decided to move away from English and create American English. The two are similar in many ways but also have numerous differences, mainly, spelling, vocabulary and pronunciation.

Main Paragraph 1:

The second major difference between the two languages is vocabulary. The vocab of a language is all the words there are like the dictionary. In both languages, the vocabulary is constantly growing and changing especially with the internet. Although the two languages are branches of English this may be the biggest difference between the two. Whether it be words for everyday things like underwear or panties/knickers, cell phone and mobile even thanks and cheers are different ways to describe or say the same thing. The reason for Americans changing their vocabulary is because they wanted to show cultural independence and distance themselves from. They didn't want to be associated with which is the reason for Webster's Dictionary. Noah Webster was a school teacher and realised that America needed a collective language so he created Webster's Dictionary. The majority of the spelling is supposed to be "how it sounds" to make it easier to learn. This is the base for all of American English today. It has evolved into Merriam-Webster's dictionary which is because some of Webster's proposed spelling changes didn't catch on, like women to wimmen.

Main Paragraph 2:

American English and English have coexisted for hundreds of years but slowly, one is taking over. English has been around for the longer of the two but it is American English that is taking over. There are a few factors that have led to this. One is the simplicity of US English. When American English was created it was considered classless and to simplistic as opposed to English. Nowadays class doesn't dictate language so whatever is easier is becoming more effective and used worldwide. Another factor is the number of people speaking either language. The amount of people speaking American English is greater than in England. This leads to more people spreading the language and vocabulary which will lead to even more people speaking it. A study from the BBC shows that people use 300- 400 American phrases or words a day. Even in their own country American English is invading.

Main Paragraph 3:

The third difference between the two branches of English is pronunciation and accents. A large influence is spelling, as previously stated. The slightly different spelling means that there will be a difference in the pronunciation in most cases. The largest influence in my view is rhotic speech. Rhotic speech is when you pronounce the r as a hard r as opposed to something

subtler. An example is Americans pronounce win-terr while way is win-tuhh. When America was first colonized, they spoke like but as the next generations came through they developed their own dialect and idiolect which also influences the pronunciation.

Case Study:

Upon the numerous differences in vocabulary between UK English and UK English, one simple one used quite often is holiday () and vacation (American). Both mean to have time off work or school to either stay at home or travel abroad. Originally holiday was from Old English words holy + day. This was only used to describe special religious days, hence it being holy. Vacation is from Latin and Old French which typically is the origin for a lot of English words due to the French influence on English.

Personal Connection:

Australia was colonized by Britain but it is still a very multicultural society. In most cases, we use English words and spelling like colour, boot (of a car), post, holiday and many other words. There are also multiple American English words that people use such as eggplant, zucchini, corn, apartment and others. We have been influenced heavily by both strands of English but the only thing that impacts your idiolect is the people around you. For example, if you had a parent from England you would hear more words than American or vice versa. It doesn’t matter where you live it’s the people that you surround yourself with. Personally, I use words from both vocabularies but it is predominately English. I have had family move to Australia from England which would explain it.

Predictions:

Languages are ever-changing and this goes for both American and English. I believe that down the track one English will prevail and I think that will be American English. US English is more simplistic in spelling and in terms of vocabulary, I think that both of them are fine but can see English caving and using American vocab. As previously stated American English is already taking over English which is the reason I think this prediction will come true.