

SHE-III: American English
Take-home Exam
Due on 28.07.2006 by 17:00 pm

The exam must be typed except when you have to mark the phonetic characters by hand. You may collaborate while doing the take-home exam but do not copy from one another. Please indicate with whom you have worked with. If I see identical (or even nearly identical) exams, all parties involved will automatically get a zero.

I. Varieties of American English

1. Consider the following AAVE sentences:

- (a) *There go the book.*
- (b) *The basketball team beat.*
- (c) *The professor ruded the students in line.*

Identify the meaning of each sentence. What does each sentence demonstrate with respect to the kind of structural differences between AAVE and standard varieties of English?

2. Now consider the following sentences:

- (a) *The man béen married the woman.*
- (b) **The man has been married the woman.*

What does *béen* denote in AAVE? What does the ungrammaticality of (2b) suggest with respect to the underlying structure of (2a), and the grammatical status of *béen*?

- 3. Explain what *pleonastic negation* (also known as ‘multiple negation’) is with 4 different types of examples.
- 4. We also find instances of ‘double negation’ in Standard American. How are such cases different from those we find in AAVE with respect to their semantic and phonological properties?
- 5. List at least 3 different phenomena documented in studies of AAVE phonology. For each phenomenon, define the nature and context of the phonological process/rule in question with examples. Where relevant, indicate in which other varieties of American English we may find similar patterns.
- 6. List 3 phonological or syntactic phenomena that are unique to Ocracoke English. For each phenomenon, define the nature and context of the process/rule in question with examples.

II. American English Phonology

- 1. Explain the Northern Cities Vowel Shift. Where does it take place?
- 2. Consider the following list of words. Identify which items would be involved in the Northern Cities Vowel Shift:
beet, step, pat, look, tip, stack, loft, top, cut, rop

3. Define the phonological context in which the so-called “clear-l” and “dark-l” occur in British and American English. Give examples to illustrate the context.
4. Provide 4 words in which the primary stress falls on the final syllable in American English but on the initial syllable in British English, and 4 more words in which the opposite is observed (i.e., initial syllable stress in AE, final syllable stress in BE).
5. In the pronunciation of *category* and *secretary*, how may British English differ from American English? Provide 5 more examples in which the same difference is also observed.

III. American English Vocabulary

1. Define the meaning of the following loan words in American English and indicate their source language.

tote (verb)
bisque
woodchuck
kosher
moccasin
snoop
schmuck
lei

2. Give 3 examples for each of the following types of metaphors and explain their meaning by using them in a sentence/context:
 - (i) money/business metaphors
 - (ii) sports metaphors
 - (iii) spatial metaphors
3. Give 2 examples for words that have a different meaning in American English compared to British English. Provide 3 examples for words that are used only in one variety.
4. Mencken (1949) groups American place names into 8 general classes (e.g. , (i) those embodying personal names, example: *Washington*). List the other seven and give at least 4 examples for each.
5. Transcribe (by using the IPA, or any other transcription convention you have learned in your SHE-courses) the following American place names in the way they are pronounced in Standard American English and mark the location of primary stress. Indicate the difference in pronunciation if there is variation.

New Orleans
Newark (New Jersey)
Albuquerque (New Mex.)
Bonne Terre
Tucson
La Jolla (CA)

Susquehanna
Detroit

6. Visit the American Dialect Society's webpage (<http://www.americandialect.org>) to find out about the results of the 2005 Words of the Year vote. List some words (winners or nominations) from 4 different categories and comment on their likelihood of becoming mainstream words of American English.

IV. The Grammar of American English (vs. British English)

1. Indicate whether the following words or sentences are more likely to be used in American English (AmE) or British English (BrE).

- (a) *I like math.*
- (b) *Italy win against France.*
- (c) *The dress fitted her nicely.*
- (d) *I leaned against the wall.*
- (e) *She leapt from her bed.*
- (f) *Have you any money?*
- (g) *That will be John at the door.*
- (h) *I gotta go.*
- (i) *You need to walk towards the entrance.*
- (j) *I hate to go to school on Fridays.*
- (k) *Mr. Brown would like for you to write the letter.*
- (l) *I wish you would have carried out the task.*
- (m) *The authorities ordered them evacuated.*
- (n) *You need to fill in a form.*
- (o) *Mr. Johnson lives in Oak Street.*
- (p) *Who is that? (on the phone)*
- (q) *What have you been up to?*
- (r) *The woman whom you saw was my sister.*
- (s) *One thinks that one should be responsible.*

2. What is an activo-passive verb (also known as pseudo-intransitive)? Illustrate the term with a few examples. In which contexts do we observe such constructions more frequently? Are they more common in American English than in British English?

V. Slang, style, and spoken interaction in American English

1. Define and illustrate in a sentence the following slang terms in American English. For each slang term, comment on its origin. Is the slang commonly used nowadays?

hootch (or hooch)

snafu

flattop

cakewalk

jive

2. In one paragraph, explain the main findings of Labov's (1972) study on the stratification of /r/ in New York City. What is hypercorrection? How is it reflected in different social classes in Labov's study?
3. Compare and contrast British and American English with respect to the type and function of discourse markers and hedges used in spoken interaction.