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Communicating across the pond: Evaluating perceptions of dialectal divergence among American student sojourners in England

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Communicating Across the Pond: Evaluating Perceptions of Dialectal Divergence Among American Student Sojourners in England

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An Honors College Project Presented to

the Faculty of the Undergraduate

College of Arts and Letters

James Madison University

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April 2023

Accepted by the faculty of the School of Writing, Rhetoric and Technical Communication, James Madison University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Honors College.

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PUBLIC PRESENTATION

This work is accepted for presentation, in part or in full, at the Virginias Collegiate Honors Council Conference on April 15, 2023.

to Mom, Dad, and Alex,
who made every step of this journey possible

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Preface

The concept for the following research developed as a result of my own experiences. From January 2022 to June 2022, I studied as an Associate Student of New College at the University of Oxford in Oxford, England. My perceptions of the research are inherently influenced by my own experience studying abroad. Before departing the United States, I considered how the nuanced differences between British English and American English would impact my ability to communicate in social and academic settings. Rooted in my initial inquiry regarding the variations between British English and American English, the following research study explores how divergent dialects influence an abroad experience. I designed the methodological framework before departure, conducted my interviews in England, and analyzed the data after my return to the United States.

Acknowledgements

Throughout the entire duration of my thesis, and my academic career as a whole, Professor Kevin Jefferson provided unwavering guidance and encouragement. Working alongside him on the *James Madison Undergraduate Research Journal* and in the University Writing Center strengthened my writing and editing skills, which I relied on to complete this project. I am thankful for his continued mentorship.

I also owe sincere thanks to my readers, Professor Sarah O'Connor and Dr. Cathryn Molloy. Professor O'Connor has been a part of this project since its inception, and she has continued to provide meaningful feedback. Dr. Molloy's research expertise greatly strengthened my capability to design and conduct a qualitative study. Their valuable perspectives helped turn my preliminary research questions into the present thesis.

Finally, my thesis would not have been possible without the continued support of my family and friends. I am extremely lucky to have a family who always believes in me, offering help and advice whenever needed. Likewise—whether I met them in elementary school, middle school, Shenandoah Hall, Harrison Hall, or Oxford—my wonderful friends have remained an integral part of my life. I am so incredibly thankful to know remarkable people who continue to inspire me.

Abstract

Although at first glance the differences between British English and American English seem trivial—"apartment" vs. "flat" or "color" vs. "colour"—these dialectal divergences immediately create an othering effect. Subtle changes are representative of the deeper implications of this issue; altered language impacts perceptions about the validity and correctness of a written work. My research seeks to understand how the differences between British English and American English impact American student sojourners during an abroad experience in England. Examining how American sojourners perceive dialectal differences and adapt their written rhetoric to match that of a British audience offers valuable insight into the audience awareness of American students. Using a phenomenological research approach, I conducted 13 semi-structured interviews to study audience awareness. Through concept coding, three main themes emerged: sociolinguistic prestige, language globalization and media influence, and visual language variation. Each theme speaks to how American sojourners perceive and approach written language differences during an abroad experience. In a time when language is increasingly divisive and difference is regarded with suspicion, it is critical to consider how language alters perceptions. My research approaches difference with a mindset that respects dialectal divergences and works to form global connections.

Keywords: written dialect, Sojourner Adjustment, audience awareness, immersion, British English, American English

Chapter 1: Introduction

For university students with the opportunity and resources to study in a foreign county, the experience fundamentally influences their academic and personal life. Many students choose to study internationally, with enrollment varying from short-term study abroad courses to participation in full degree programs. American universities frame studying abroad as a key opportunity for students to gain intercultural competence and cross-cultural awareness that broadens their global perspectives (Dolby, 2004). Throughout the 2019–2020 school year, the Institute for International Education reported 162,633 American students participated in study abroad programs, ranging from less than eight weeks to the full academic year (IIE Open Doors, 2022). Likewise, many American students completed their entire degree through a foreign university program. During either of these experiences, short-term programs or full degree enrollment, American students operate as *sojourners*, individuals living temporarily in a foreign environment (Pedersen et al., 2011). This research adopts the term sojourners to describe American students studying in a foreign country; describing students as sojourners encompasses the experiences of those who participate in short-term study abroad programs, as well as those who complete their entire degree abroad. During an abroad experience, American student sojourners have the opportunity for immersion within their new host environment. Doerr's (2019) study—an examination into how transforming the language used during an abroad experience can better promote realistic expectations—interprets *immersion* as the added potential to learn about another culture during an educational program abroad.

Immersion into a new culture inherently involves encountering a new language or dialect. While participating in an abroad program, sojourners can practice their ability to use the host country's language. Viewing language as the "production of meaning in social contexts,"

language preparation is a crucial element to consider before enrolling in a full degree program abroad or participating in a traditional short-term or semester-long study abroad program (de Saint-Léger & McGregor, 2015, pp. 1–2). Within the growing pedagogical perspective of teaching language and culture as inseparable entities, some university administrators prepare students—whether the administrators are located at an American university or through the international program at universities abroad—to appreciate the new host language and culture. Preparing students for language differences before studying in a new country fosters more dynamic intercultural awareness and personal reflection (Jones et al., 2019).

However, study abroad administrators often focus students' language preparation on languages other than English; for example, administrators or professors may teach a student Spanish and elements of Argentinian culture before the student studies in Buenos Aires. While this form of instruction is necessary to convey the broader implications of intercultural awareness, administrators often overlook preparing students for differing dialects. *Dialect* is "a form or variety of a language which is peculiar to a specific region, [especially] one which differs from the standard or literary form of the language in respect of vocabulary, pronunciation, idiom, etc." (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d., par. 2). If an American student aims to study in England, language instruction is not a key feature of pre-departure preparation because English is the dominant language of both countries. Yet, Australia, Canada, England, the United States, and many other countries differ in the ways they use English. As Johnson (2008) noted, social and historical factors influence dialect, creating varied understandings of "correctness" across the heterogeneous dialects of English. Dialectal divergences are important for American sojourners to understand because, just as language impacts intercultural awareness for countries where the

dominant language is not English, dialects can influence the abroad experience of American

sojourners.

Throughout the 2019–2020 school year, 19,147 students completed a study abroad

program in the United Kingdom; this means 11% of all American students who studied abroad

during those years studied in the United Kingdom (IIE Open Doors, 2022). A significant

percentage of all American sojourners who study abroad encounter the dialectal differences

between British English and American English. Although at first glance the differences between

British English and American English seem trivial—does one ask for "fries," "chips," or

"crisps?"—dialectal divergences create an othering effect. The immediate awareness of dialectal

differentiation influences perceptions of correctness and credibility, thus altering how individuals

interact within specific contexts. Individuals' contemplation of dialect has the potential to

transform their understanding of self (Honeybone & Maguire, 2020). Since studying in another

country is an opportunity to grow intercultural appreciation and self-awareness, it is important to

consider how dialects create an othering effect and how American student sojourners can address

this phenomenon during their time in England.

Although linguists often examine dialects based on speech and auditory differences, for

American sojourners enrolled in short-term, semester-long, or full degree programs, it is

necessary to examine how dialect influences written works. Since submitting written papers or

projects comprises a key element of an educational experience, written dialects affect students'

academic success abroad. For example, compare these two sentences: "The cat is the color

black." and 'The cat is the colour black'. From the American perspective, the first sentence

exemplifies correct spelling and punctuation while the second demonstrates blatant divergences

from accepted conventions. The opposite is true for a British audience. These subtle changes are

representative of the deeper implications of the issue: altered language impacts perceptions about the validity and correctness of a written work within a given context. If students understand differing dialects, they may choose to demonstrate *audience awareness*—within a rhetorical situation, how the rhetor crafts their message based on their audience—by adapting their written rhetoric for a British audience, thus demonstrating an understanding of British English (Borchers & Hudley, 2018).

Purpose of Study

There are practical and theoretical applications to studying dialect regarding sojourners' academic experiences with British English and American English. Directly contrasting standardized written British English and written American English is an appropriate approach to assess audience awareness; the formality of written academic works allows for a close examination of how dialectal differences influence perceptions of meaning. Historical and social factors created a standardized version of written American English, even though American English speech dialects vary (Johnson, 2008). The same can be said for standardized, written British English conventions (Honeybone & Maguire, 2020). While there are clear dialects present within British society and American society—not to mention other varieties of English dialects across the globe—these standardized, established conventions of English form the most direct comparison of the two dialects. Evaluating the written variation between British English and American English permits American sojourners studying in England to comprehend these distinct differences.

From a rhetorical perspective, examining how language differences influence meaning provides valuable insight into how rhetors can best create effective messages. In a time when language is increasingly divisive and difference is regarded with suspicion, it is critical to

consider how language functions and alters perceptions. This research approaches difference with a mindset that aims to respect divergent dialects and works to form global connections. Due to a lack of preparation before engaging with a global community, many individuals approach cross-cultural situations with a distinct lack of audience awareness and cultural understanding (Doerr, 2019). American students may choose to study abroad in England because societal perceptions condition them to anticipate a seamless cultural immersion process. However, each culture, and language, has notable differences. In a global community, a singularized American perspective is dangerous because the refusal to acknowledge or approach differences with respect creates an unsuccessful rhetorical environment, preventing cross-cultural connection. For rhetoricians, understanding how to craft a message using audience awareness comprises a crucial area of study. A qualitative research study evaluating rhetoric across borders allows for a closer examination of how rhetors develop their rhetoric and how global audiences receive messages.

Based on these practical and theoretical applications for examining dialect, this research aims to assess how American sojourners studying in England perceive the dialectal variance between British English and American English. It also evaluates whether American sojourners adapt their written works to meet the British expectations of their new audience abroad. The study seeks to answer five main research questions:

- How do American sojourners studying in England perceive the differences between British English and American English?

- What dialectal changes do American sojourners studying in England identify as a challenge in their acclimation to British written expectations?

- Do American sojourners studying in England adapt any elements of their written works for a British audience?

- How do American sojourners studying in England consider audience awareness during their time in England?

- Would American sojourners studying in England benefit from greater resources that further explain the differences between British English and American English before departure?

Adapting written rhetoric for a British audience represents audience awareness because American sojourners would be making a conscious choice to use the written dialect of their host country. The significance of demonstrating audience awareness lies in the meaning that American sojourners connect to language differences; if a student recognizes the value of dialect adaption to match a new audience, their choice to alter their writing represents an increased global competence. Evaluating how American student sojourners currently respond to divergent dialects is important because it reveals how the present lack of language preparation could influence the potential for intercultural and personal reflection.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Several elements affect communication and the adjustment that American sojourners experience to written British dialect conventions. The American sojourner experience lies at the intersection of rhetorical theory, linguistic analysis, and Sojourner Adjustment. Chapter 2 examines the role of audience in rhetorical situations, the established differences between British English and American English, and the influence of language during the immersion process.

Language as Meaning-Making

Humans have an innate ability to make meaning through language, referred to as the language faculty. As the human brain evolved to its current form, humans developed thirteen distinct features to utilize language as a meaning-making tool: vocal-auditory channels, broadcast transmission and directional reception, rapid fading, interchangeability, total feedback, specialization, semanticity, arbitrariness, discreteness, displacement, productivity, traditional transmission, and duality of patterning (Hockett, 1960). Designed for linguistic function, each of these specific evolutionary adaptions allow humans to create and utilize language (Hockett, 1960). These specific developments differentiate human language from animal language and demonstrate the unique human ability for the language faculty (Hockett, 1960). The human brain adapted "a 'cognitive system' … that make[s] use of this information for articulation, perception, talking about the world, asking questions, telling jokes, and so on" (Chomsky, 1995, p. 12). Chomsky's (1995) discussion of a cognitive system exhibits that humans have the evolutionary capability to convey meaning in any context using language.

Beyond the basic biological conditions for language, humans have furthered the potential for meaning-making by using language systems. Language, at its core, is a symbol system: a system where the arrangement of arbitrary characters creates meaning when placed in the context

of established linguistic conventions (Borchers & Hundley, 2018). Considering the English alphabet, the 26 letters are arbitrary characters that function as symbols with the potential for varied arrangement and the capability to produce different meanings. For example, the letters "A," "T," and "N," can be arranged to spell "ANT" or "TAN," thus denoting two different things. The crucial concept to note is language functions as a symbol system with the potential to produce a variety of meanings (Borchers & Hundley, 2018).

Language and its production of meaning exemplifies semiotic theory, "the study of the social production of meaning from sign systems" (Griffin et al., 2019, p. 320). Within semiotic theory, there are three central components: the signifier, the signified, and the sign. The *signifier* (visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, or tactile data acquired through humans' five senses) and the *signified* (meaning associated with the sense data based on understandings developed through social conventions) comprise a *sign* (Griffin et al., 2019). Using the previous example, the letters "A," "N," and "T" arranged in that specific order serve as the signifier; the small insect associated with that letter combination is signified. Semiotics establishes language as a meaning-making sign system.

For the linguistic meaning-making process, the social element of language remains a critical component. An individual's environment, dictated social conventions, and language instruction influence how they use language and perceive the world around them. As language acquisition, the language learning process, occurs, "the end result of this process is actually a grammar—the mental system that allows people to speak and understand a language" (O'Grady et al., 2011, p. 357). The grammar system that develops is largely dependent on an individual's environment. While all humans share the biological potential for language, there are clear differences in how humans across the globe develop their mental grammar systems; for example,

individuals raised in Japan or the United States have different language skills based on their

environment. As a human develops language skills, their perception of language is influenced by

the grammatical system they learn to be correct during the language acquisition process.

Considering the language acquisition phenomenon within the field of sociolinguistics, the

assigned "correctness" of language perpetuates the construction of culture that is dependent upon

a shared system of meaning (Yamaguchi & Tay, 2010). When viewing language as a sign

system—coupled with the understanding that each language or dialect develops their own

construction of culture—there are multiple ways of understanding the self and the world (Fatemi,

2018). Exposure to diverse sign systems allows individuals to gain new perspectives because the

introduction of a new language system holds the potential for meaning-making (Fatemi, 2018).

Immersion into new cultures can alter perceptions of language "correctness." Within the context

of this research, it is crucial to consider how language, as a sign system, perpetuates accepted

notions of culture and identity.

Communicating a Message

The use of language within a social environment develops the reality in which individuals

exist, and understanding how individuals transfer language via communication provides valuable

context for the production of meaning. At the most basic level, *communication* is "the relational

process of creating and interpreting messages that elicit a response" (Griffin et al., 2019, p. 6).

Griffin et al. (2019) noted there are three main components to a communicative situation: the

sender of the message, the message itself, and the receiver of the message. When viewing these

components through a rhetorical lens, all three elements must work together to create a

successful rhetorical situation. To differentiate between general communication and rhetoric,

rhetoric has a definitive purpose; the sender of a message wants to accomplish a clear goal

through their communication to their audience (Borchers & Hundley, 2018). The sender, or rhetor, of the message must create a clear signal that indicates their intended meaning to the audience, thus fostering a transfer of meaning.

Rhetors cannot overlook the role of the audience during the rhetorical process. As Crosswhite (1996) stated, "audience plays a role at every instant and in every feature of any argument" (p. 136). Each member of an audience—or in the instance that the audience consists of a singular individual—perceives a message based on their own cultural expectations, biases, and life experiences (Borchers & Hundley, 2018). Therefore, a message can only be effective if the rhetor creates and conveys their message with the audience's background and perspective in mind. Without appealing to the audience's current viewpoints, a rhetor will struggle to create a successful rhetorical situation. Adapting a message, effectively conveying an idea based on the audience's current standpoint, is one of the most crucial aspects of rhetoric (Crowley & Hawhee, 2012). Within the framework of audience-centered rhetorical theory, audience is the key component to any rhetorical situation; the idea of creating a message with a universal audience, a one-size-fits all form of communication, is inherently problematic (Parrish, 2014).

Audience-centered rhetorical theory dictates a rhetor must tailor their message to effectively communicate ideas to their audience. There are several essential elements rhetors can utilize to develop a successful rhetorical situation when adapting their message for an audience. First, rooted in the western rhetorical canon, there are the traditional Aristotelian proofs: logos, ethos, and pathos (Crowley & Hawhee, 2012). Logos represents a logical appeal, ethos represents a credible appeal, and pathos represents an emotional appeal (Crowley & Hawhee, 2012). The backbone of any argument, each proof appeals differently to an audience, and a rhetor must choose which proofs form the most effective message for their audience. Depending

on the rhetorical situation, logos, ethos, or pathos are valuable for rhetors to use because the

proofs determine how the audience will perceive the importance or correctness of a rhetor's

message.

Furthering the potential to create an effective message for an audience, Cicero's classical

five canons of rhetoric provide rhetors a conceptual framework for their argument; the classical

five canons of rhetoric are arrangement, invention, style, delivery, and memory (Borchers &

Hundley, 2018). However, since the scope of this research focuses primarily on written

communication and messages, it is most beneficial to evaluate writing as a delivery method.

When communicating via written discourse, a rhetor must consider the correctness (punctuation,

grammar, etc.), formatting, and presentation of their writing (Crowley & Hawhee, 2012).

Departures from conventional expectations in each of these categories influence an audience's

perception of the rhetor's ethos. Relating back to the discussion of language acquisition and its

ability to perpetuate social realities, altered written language influences the rhetorical capabilities

of a message. If a rhetor presents a written message that differs from their audience's "correct"

grammar system, the audience is likely to challenge the rhetor's credibility.

Dialect Development

As time passes and culture evolves, so too does the language used to represent the

changing reality. Language inherently develops based on environment, technological advances,

and a variety of other factors. Over time, the blurring and overlapping of language occurs

through language contact and internal diversification (François, 2015). Likewise, the

transmission and diffusion of language comprises a crucial aspect of language and dialect

development (François, 2015). As languages evolves, there is an inevitable divergence from the

proto-language, or root language, according to the family tree model of language development

(Millar & Trask, 2015). Essentially, the family tree model asserts that "language (or dialect) Y at a given time is said to be descended from language (or dialect) X of an earlier time if and only if X developed into Y by an unbroken sequence of instances of native-language acquisition by children" (Labov, 2007, p. 346). The family tree model provides a visual representation of language evolution, demonstrating how there are now distinct linguistic varieties, each with their own ability to create meaning descended from a proto-language. Language is always connected to the people who draw meaning from it (Pereltsvaig, 2017). Therefore, an individual's use of language is distinctly representative of their own cultural perceptions and identity.

As the transmission and diffusion of language occurs, translating into linguistic differences across time and space, a language's evolution becomes evident in writing. In the context of this research, the focus will remain solely on the English language symbol system and varying English dialects. For an example of English language evolution, consider how English appears in writing across different time periods: "and seaxon þā sige geslōgan" vs. "and the Saxons won the victory" (O'Grady et al., 2011, p. 272). Clearly, the English language has gone through internal diversification between this example of Old English and the development of Modern English. The same can be said for modern dialects of English. Due to a variety of historical and cultural events, there are different dialects of English that are prevalent across the globe, including in the United States and United Kingdom (Momma & Matto, 2008). The varying dialects between England and the United States are the result of political tension during the American independence movement, changing social conventions, and language contact through immigration (Allan, 2015). Each of these factors has led to the distinct dialects of English in England and the United States. Additionally, with increasing access to technology and forms of media, language contact is more prevalent than ever; media has a direct impact on

evolving current dialects, including English (Jin, 2021). At this point, it is important to

acknowledge that within England and within the United States, there are also varying dialects

(Momma & Matto, 2008). This research generalizes the internal diversification of these dialects

to purposely focus on the contrast between British English and American English. Specific

differences between British English and American English will be described further in a

following section.

Written Dialect

The development of Modern English dialects has a direct impact on writing, thus creating

written dialects. Since written differences alter an audience's perceptions, defining written

dialect and demonstrating its prevalence in written communication exemplifies how cultural

perceptions influence the creation of meaning. Honeybone and Maguire (2020) conceptualized

written dialect as the inclusion of lexical, morphological, and syntactical linguistic elements in a

written work, determined by the historical and social influences of an individual's language. The

phenomenon of written dialect connects to a writer's identity (Honeybone & Maguire, 2020).

Written dialect serves as a physical representation of language change; a writer's use of varied

dialects offers insight into their perceptions of meaning and written portrayal of identity.

As Murphy (2016) stated, humans "have a bias toward noticing things that are unusual or

novel. So if someone communicates a familiar meaning in an unfamiliar phrasing, it throws off

[the audience's] language processing" (p. 56). Even the smallest word choice variation or

punctuation difference immediately creates an othering effect; this has direct connections to how

an audience perceives a rhetor's meaning because, as emphasized previously, written dialect

connects to identity (Honeybone & Maguire, 2020). The othering effect of written dialect

impacts the success of a rhetorical situation, thus influencing the effectiveness of a rhetor's

written language for a global audience. A person's "linguistic behavior of many types, can act as markers of personal and social characteristics, and may provoke different reactions and responses in social interaction" (Trudgill et al., 1979, as cited in Hernández-Campoy, 2016). Dialect is linked to social identification, and presenting a different dialect from accepted standards will vary the meaning-making capability of language.

For a British audience, an American dialect is easily noticeable, leading to altered perceptions based on group identification (Murphy, 2016). Specifically, individuals who use the British written dialect or American written dialect have a long-standing history of judgement from the opposing group, primarily based on the political and social division described in the previous section (Allan, 2015). The connotations of different dialects create a social othering effect between varying groups and audiences (Hernández-Campoy, 2016). The "correctness" of the written dialect used is entirely dependent on the environment in which the rhetorical situation occurs. Therefore, the othering effect elicited through written dialect has the potential to impact American sojourners. As a phenomenon, dialect depends on an individual's environment and social identity.

Differences Between Written British English and Written American English

Using the framework established through the discussion of written dialect, it is now critical to examine the nuanced differences between British English and American English. The two dialects feature distinct grammatical differences, syntactical divergences, lexical and orthographical variations, and rhetorical contrasts (Biber, 1987; Partridge & Clark, 1951; Rohdenburg & Schlüter, 2009). To gain a holistic understanding of these differences, several research studies compiled extensive information on written dialectal divergences in English. Rohdenburg and Schlüter's (2009) book comprehensively examined how English has at least two

standardized grammar systems based on the differences between the written British dialect and written American dialect. Many linguists contributed information about variation between regular and irregular preterites, comparative forms of adjectives, and postmodifying phrases in British English and American English (Rohdenburg & Schlüter, 2009). Yet, instead of examining all these differences—since that information is readily accessible in alternative publications—the focus here will remain on how slight variations in dialectal differences between British English and American English influence how an audience perceives a message.

Written dialect's othering effect applies to the differences between British English and American English. When examining lexical divergences, the othering effect is specifically seen. The *lexicon*, or vocabulary, of an individual influences their creation of a message. Connecting back to the discussion of semiotics, grounded in socially dictated sign systems, audiences have an anticipated perception of the correct signifier for what a rhetor attempts to signify. Therefore, lexicon guides meaning-making. The use of different words creates different understandings for an audience (Murphy, 2016). Murphy (2016) expressed direct opposition to the claim that the differences between British English and American English are obsolete. Something as simple as the use of different nouns for the same sign alters a message, changing the potential meaning (Murphy, 2016). Accepted vocabulary in British English or American English includes many instances of varied signifiers for the same sign that is intended to be signified. For instance, individuals using British English use the word "pram," while individuals using American English are more familiar with the words "baby carriage" or "stroller" (Biber, 1987). Another example includes the word "pants." In England, "pants" refers to what an American audience would call "underwear," while an American would use "pants" for what a British audience calls "trousers" (Murphy, 2016). In considering how an audience receives a message across dialects,

imagine a situation where an American, with no audience awareness for differing vocabularies across the dialects, asks a British individual where they got their pants. The audience does not receive the message—an innocent question about what store they might find similar pants—in the same way the rhetor intended, and there is the potential for the message to be considered offensive. In this way, lexical differences create an othering effect.

The *orthographic*, or spelling, changes between British English and American English also further the prevalence of written dialect. Orthographic variations are common examples of differing dialects because there is a clear visual difference between British writing and American writing (Partridge & Clark, 1951). There are several common orthographic contrasts between the dialects: "-our" vs. "-or" (humour vs. humor), "-re" vs. "-er" (centre vs. center), "-ence" vs. "-ense" (defence vs. defense), "-xion" vs. "-ction" (connexion vs. connection), "-ise" vs. "-ize" (recognize vs. recognize), and "-lyse" vs. "-lyze" (analyse vs. analyze) (Cook & Ryan, 2016). There are also additional specific examples of altered spelling, for example, "tyre" vs. "tire" and "travelled" vs. "traveled" (Partridge & Clark, 1951). If traditional grammar is a crucial element to consider when creating a message for a specific audience, then orthographic changes represent an important difference between British English writing and American English writing.

Finally, rhetorical contrasts separate written British English and written American English. At the most basic level, American English is more relaxed, while British English is typically more formal (Partridge & Clark, 1951). Therefore, British writing is more heavily edited (Biber, 1987), while American writing closely mirrors colloquial use (Rohdenburg & Schlüter, 2009). In his 1987 study, Biber examined nine genres of writing to compile an in-depth analysis into how the dialectal variation between British English and American English creates systematic differences. Biber included academic writing as a genre in the study. Analyzing the

nine genres across three scales—interactive versus edited, abstract versus situated context, and reported versus immediate style—Biber (1987) concluded that British English is less interactive (less colloquial) than American English, and British English "exhibit[s] fewer features associated with a highly nominal and jargon-ridden style" than American English (p. 116). There is a fundamental variance in how rhetors construct messages between British English and American English. Changing the rhetorical expectations of a written message influences how an audience perceives a message, impacting the meaning-making potential of language.

Sojourner Adjustment and Identity

The concept of Sojourner Adjustment reveals how language deviations impact individuals during their adaptation process to a new host country. Developing from initial notions about "culture shock," Sojourner Adjustment studies how individuals adapt to new environments (Church, 1982). As stated previously, this research defines American students studying in England as sojourners, individuals with temporary residence in a new environment; as Pedersen et al. (2011) stated, *Sojourner Adjustment* is the acculturation of sojourners into their host culture. The process of Sojourner Adjustment occurs in four stages:

1. Initial fascination with the new host culture

2. Increased hostile attitudes toward the host culture and the formation of closer relationships with those who also identify as sojourners

3. Development of new language abilities to connect with individuals who are members of the host culture

4. Acceptance of new culture with decreased anxiety, resulting in stronger cross-cultural competence (Church, 1982).

As sojourners adapt to new language customs, or dialects, there are inevitable instances where an individual recognizes that they cannot communicate in an effective way. When assessing how an individual adjusts to a new culture, there are two potential outcomes. First, an individual reaches the fourth stage of Sojourner Adjustment, and the sojourner increases their cultural competency; adversely, there is also potential for an individual to maintain their hostile attitude toward a host culture as they struggle to adjust, increasing perspectives of patriotic superiority for their home country (Church, 1982). During both a short-term study abroad program and a full degree program abroad, American sojourners must navigate their adjustment to a host culture. As they acclimate to their new environment, students face a reconciliation with their own American identity; students consider how their own background and national identity influences their role in a global context (Dolby, 2004). Language adjustment has a tangible impact on how American sojourners view themselves and others, potentially altering how they use language to create meaning during an abroad experience.

Pedersen et al.'s (2011) study analyzed the Sojourner Adjustment of 248 American students from one Northwestern university who studied abroad in a variety of host countries to determine what factors had the greatest influence on the students' immersion to a host culture. Pedersen et al. measured for multiple factors: social interaction with host nationals, cultural understanding and participation, language development and use, host culture identification, social interaction with co-nationals, and homesickness/feeling out of place. Regarding the language development and use factor, Pedersen et al. determined that "one's active attempts to learn the local language (or dialect/idioms in countries where the individual is fluent in the local language) and one's use of the local language during interactions with others" impacts their acculturation (p. 883). Their inclusion of dialect in their description highlights how dialect

influences the immersion process and potential for meaning-making. Pederson et al. found a relatively positive correlation between students' host language use and their acclimation, exemplifying the role that language has on the Sojourner Adjustment of American students.

Immersion into a new culture is difficult, and the language at a student's educational institution in the host country forces them to consider their own identity. As Tullock (2018) described, "[study abroad] is often the first time sojourners are forced to grapple with self-construction through new linguistic and other semiotic means in situated interactions with real-world consequences" (p. 262). Sojourners come face to face with new linguistic expectations; Pedersen et al.'s (2011) study illustrated how, to positively adjust to their new environment, an American sojourner should adapt to the linguistic expectations of their audience. Relying on a sociolinguistic perspective, thus understanding the connection between language and culture, a sojourner's choice to adapt their language to their new environment's socially dictated expectations represents a critical awareness from the student (Tullock, 2018). For American sojourners studying in England, modifying a message based on British dialectal expectations represents audience awareness. As American sojourners acclimate to their new host country and institution, dialect adaptation challenges their preconceived perceptions of standardized English. Reconciling with this change leads to new questions and perspectives concerning identity and meaning-making.

Dolby's (2004) research epitomizes the overlap between language, identity, and meaning during the Sojourner Adjustment process. Dolby examined American students from a Midwest university who studied abroad in Australia, thus encountering the Australian English dialect. While Australian English clearly differs from the British English and American English dialects, the research findings still demonstrate how American students encounter questions regarding

their own identity and meaning-making abilities abroad. With a specific focus on the concept of national identity, Dolby concluded that a period abroad contributes to the development of a post-national identity for American sojourners. As American sojourners became more aware of their own identity as an "American," they increased their understanding, whether it be through language or social customs, of how they exist within a global context. The shift from a national to a post-national identity demonstrates how an abroad experience gives students the opportunity to reconceptualize themselves and their capacity to make meaning through language. Sojourner Adjustment provides a valuable framework to examine the intersection of language and identity during an abroad experience.

Research Significance

Although significant research has been completed in each of these areas—rhetorical theory, written dialect, established differences between British English and American English, and Sojourner Adjustment—there is a gap in how each of these elements correspond directly to the experience of American sojourners studying in England. This research aims to add to these fields of scholarship by examining the present audience awareness of American sojourners in relation to the variances between British English and American English written dialects. While Pedersen et al. (2011) and Dolby (2004) examined the crossroads of these concepts, it is valuable to research a sample population consisting of solely American student sojourners in England.

Building on Tullock's (2018) exploration into language's semiotic construction of meaning, this research will study divergent dialects with a specific emphasis on established academic writing; the standardized, written conventions offer the most structured comparison of dialect for American sojourners. Since language creates a negotiation of identity within students studying abroad, their perceptions of meaning-making are likely to evolve after participating in

an abroad experience. The discussion of language and meaning-making aligns with Church's (1982) discussion that at the academic level, older sojourners, beginning with graduate students, report higher levels of academic satisfaction than their undergraduate counterparts. As individuals age and encounter more instances where they reconcile with their own perspectives and identity, they alter their way of communicating and interacting with their social reality.

While students' physical interactions with other cultures and languages provide the best opportunity to increase global awareness, pre-departure preparation is also a key facet of fostering a successful immersion process (Jones et al., 2019). This research aims to serve as a guide for American students who are considering studying in England by demonstrating the importance of audience awareness. Through examining how current American sojourners perceive dialectal divergence, common themes emerge surrounding the role of language during the immersion process. By revealing students do not have a seamless adaption to England simply because English is the primary language, this research can aid potential sojourners because it shows the importance of understanding audience awareness before departure.

Identifying how American sojourners currently perceive dialectal divergence and consider audience awareness during an abroad experience can demonstrate how language develops meaning. Studying divergent dialects with an American student population in England can provide valuable information about how individuals communicate within a global context. Audience awareness—considering how students create their messages for an audience—offers clear insight into how the differences between British English and American English impact American sojourners. In an ever-increasingly connected society, it is imperative to consider how individuals view themselves as global communicators and demonstrate a self-awareness of their own identity within a foreign social context.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this research is to evaluate how the differences between written British English and written American English impact American sojourners studying in England and their perceptions of linguistic divergence. Within this context, I define *impact* as any identifiable variance between the established expectations of American students and what they report about their time abroad. Considering audience-centered rhetorical theory, written linguistic differences between British English and American English, and Sojourner Adjustment, I investigate the role of divergent written dialects during an abroad experience in England. Specifically, the study aims to examine how established written dialects impact a small sample of the target population. My research seeks to address five main questions:

- How do American sojourners studying in England perceive the differences between British English and American English?

- What dialectal changes do American sojourners studying in England identify as a challenge in their acclimation to British written expectations?

- Do American sojourners studying in England adapt any elements of their written works for a British audience?

- How do American sojourners studying in England consider audience awareness during their time in England?

- Would American sojourners studying in England benefit from greater resources that further explain the differences between British English and American English before departure?

As stated in Chapter 2, there is a gap in existing scholarship that directly addresses considerations of audience awareness for American sojourners studying in England. Therefore, it

is necessary to expand upon the foundational framework of previous scholarship, warranting the collection of empirical data. My research, intended as a pilot study, aims to address this gap and consider dialect's role during American sojourners' abroad experiences. Employing a phenomenological research approach, the study utilized qualitative data gathered from interviews with a participant population of 13 American sojourners who engaged in abroad experiences ranging from short-term study abroad programs to full degree enrollment. Chapter 3 describes the research design, data collection, and coding methods.

Qualitative Research Approach

At the most basic level, the research design followed a qualitative approach. As Denzin and Lincoln (2018) suggested, "qualitative inquiry seeks to discover and to describe narratively what particular people do in their everyday lives and what their actions mean to them. It identifies meaning … focusing on differences in forms of things that make a difference for meaning" (p. 36). Studying American sojourners at their British institutions, their temporary environment for everyday life, allowed for an evaluation of meaning-making in relation to divergent dialects. My participant population considered their meaning-making potential through their immersion in a specific social setting: England. When investigating the creation of meaning in a defined population, a qualitative research method is appropriate (Holliday, 2002).

Building my qualitative design, the methodology relied heavily on a social constructivist framework. Emphasis on historical influences and cultural norms represents an essential component of approaching research from a social constructivist lens (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Although dialect also connects to biological speech development factors, since the purpose of this study evaluates how differing written dialects impact American sojourners, it is important to consider cultural norms and language learning. Individuals in the education field have long used

qualitative research and social constructivist framework to evaluate learning and "aspects of the 'hidden curriculum' of social relations and values socialization" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 51). Since students learn how to write through their educational environment, I hypothesize that a change in written dialectal expectations will have an identifiable impact on the experience of American student sojourners. Language comprises a crucial backbone of any meaning making; as a sign system, language constructs reality (Endress, 2018). By utilizing a social constructivist framework, my research design could evaluate how language and norms impact perceptions of meaning within an educational context.

Further categorizing the methodology, this research was a phenomenological study. In a phenomenological approach, the research's purpose is to determine an overall phenomenon based on the sample population's experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). My research aimed to document the shared event of participants—encountering written British dialect in an academic setting—and to then identify commonalities to describe the experience. My research design met the defining features of a phenomenological study because I limited my scope to a single phenomenon, collected data from a sample population who all experienced the phenomenon, and considered how the phenomenon influenced lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A phenomenological approach acknowledges lifeworld, or the place where participants experience the phenomenon (Vagle, 2018). Dependent on "perspective, time, space, relationships, and so on," a phenomenological approach allowed for an investigation of how written dialect impacted the meaning-making of my American sojourner sample population (Vagle, 2018, p. 7).

Methodological Framework

To conduct a successful phenomenological research study—one that evaluated the intersections of audience-centered rhetorical theory, perceptions of dialect, and Sojourner

Adjustment—it was crucial to consider the best methodological framework for an exploration of meaning-making. Developing effective phenomenological research requires a survey of previous methodology used to explore common concepts and themes (Larsen & Adu, 2021). As I created my methodological approach, I relied on previous qualitative studies that assessed audience awareness to inform my data collection method: semi-structured interviews.

I selected interviews as my data collection method because an interview allows a researcher to collect an account of a certain experience (Holliday, 2002). Since the purpose of a phenomenological study is to find meaning, interviewing participants is advantageous because it permits the researcher to investigate how a phenomenon impacts perceptions of meaning (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Like Liu and Guo's (2018) survey of Chinese students' audience awareness while writing in English, my research relied on open-ended interviews to collect data. Although Liu and Guo's study considered audience awareness across languages, and my research specifically focuses on English dialects, their methodology still provided a valuable framework for considering audience awareness in students. Therefore, when evaluating how students perceive the value of adapting written works, I used qualitative interviews because they comprise a beneficial methodological design to consider how dialectal divergence influences language adaptation.

My qualitative interviews utilized a semi-structured format. Similar to Ross' (2014) study researching how students consider audience awareness during written reflection, my research employed a semi-structured format to further examine participants' interview responses; during the semi-structured interview process, researchers can ask their participants follow-up questions related to the research subject (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Ross' (2014) semi-structured format allowed for a close examination of audience awareness, with participants demonstrating their

current perceptions (e.g., "I was writing for the person who was going to mark it") (p. 224). For

my methodological framework, I utilized the data collection method of semi-structured

interviews to explore how differing dialects and written expectations influenced my participant

population's perceptions of audience awareness during their experience in England.

However, while using semi-structured interviews for data collection, it is still necessary

to establish foundational questions to ask each participant. By considering how Pedersen et al.

(2011) analyzed Sojourner Adjustment for a student population, I developed foundational

questions to gauge how American sojourners recognized the role of language in their acclimation

to England. Specifically, Pedersen et al. asked their participants the degree to which they agreed

with the following prompt: time abroad "increased my understanding of my host country's

language [or dialect/idioms]" (p. 884). The foundational questions directly addressed students'

audience awareness, thus examining how dialect impacts meaning. As I wrote the core interview

questions, I specifically focused on questions that directly addressed how American sojourners

noticed the written British dialect and if they adapted their written language for a British

audience.

Sample Population

To effectively research how the differences between British English and American

English impact American sojourners studying in England and their perceptions of linguistic

divergence, I identified American students at British higher education institutions. Reiterating

my previous justification for the use of the term sojourner—it applies to students in short-term

study abroad programs and those enrolled in British degree programs—for this study, I define

American sojourner as any American student studying at a British higher education institution.

Relying on my qualitative, phenomenological research framework, I needed to organize a sample

population of American sojourners. Since this research study seeks to evaluate the phenomenon of divergent dialects, I used purposive sampling to identify potential participants. In purposive sampling, a researcher selects a target population based on the knowledge that the phenomenon they are investigating is present in the identified population (Strunk & Mwavita, 2020).

Therefore, I aimed to establish contact with British universities. I contacted universities through emails to varying research, international student, and admissions offices. I emailed 20 universities across England. Each university is a member of the Russell Group organization, a group dedicated to generating quality research across the United Kingdom. Russell Group universities "produce more than two-thirds of the world-leading research produced in UK universities" (The Russell Group, n.d.). Due to their prestige and student research potential, these universities have established international student populations and study abroad programs with American students. Although the Russell Group contains 24 universities, those schools extend to Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. For the scope of this research, I only emailed Russell Group universities in England. Using systematic sampling, I conducted my qualitative interviews at the first five Russell Group universities that responded to my initial outreach efforts (Kalton, 1983). I established contact with five different British universities: Durham University, the London School of Economics and Political Science, Queen Mary University of London, the University of Oxford, and the University of Warwick.

At each university, my goal was to identify one to three participants, with the help of the offices at each university where I established contact, with whom to conduct the interviews. My ideal sample population ranged from 12 to 15 participants, based on the understanding that my group was heterogenous, but they all experienced the same phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Additionally, it was important to limit my sample size to 12 through 15 individuals to

consider how data saturation could impact the results. With data collection methods like

interviews—where there is a higher "mean probability of observing codes," meaning that

interviews can quickly yield relevant and valuable information—it is appropriate to have a

smaller sample size to reach data saturation (van Rijnsoever, 2017, p. 5). For the scale of my

pilot study, a range of 12 to 15 participants allowed me to examine how the phenomenon

impacted a specific group of the target population.

Procedure

I developed a research procedure to conduct my data collection using a

phenomenological research approach. James Madison University's Institutional Review Board

approved this research procedure under protocol # 22-3039 (see Appendix A).

To identify my participants, I coordinated with an individual in the appropriate office at

each one of my five British universities to assist with participant recruitment. For anonymity and

data security purposes, I could not access the names or email addresses of the American student

population at each university. Therefore, I needed my contact at each university to send my

preliminary recruitment email (see Appendix B). With their aid, I sent a recruitment email to

connect with one to three American students at each British university. My participant pool

represents what Daniel (2012) identified as a voluntary response sample; British universities

contacted their American student population, which I could not access for confidentiality

reasons, and American students volunteered to participate in my interviews. I further relied on

systematic sampling because I selected only the first three volunteers at each university to

participate in the interviews (Kalton, 1983). The only participant requirement was that they had

to be an American student studying in England. There were 13 individuals who responded to my

recruitment email: three from Durham University, one from the London School of Economics

and Political Science, three from Queen Mary University of London, three from the University of

Oxford, and three from the University of Warwick. Of the selected 13 participants, six were

study abroad students, with programs ranging from four weeks to one academic year, and seven

were full time students at a British institution. Table 1 shows the complete breakdown of

American sojourner experience for my participant population.

Table 1

Length of Sojourner Experience for Participant Population

Participant	Short-Term Study Abroad (< 6 months)	Long-Term Study Abroad (> 6 months)	Full Enrollment in Undergraduate Degree Program	Full Enrollment in Postgraduate Degree Program
1				■
2			■	
3			■	
4	■			
5		■		
6	■			
7			■	
8			■	
9			■	
10	■			
11				■
12	■			
13	■			

Note. The blue boxes represent the length of sojourner experience based on the participant.

Once an individual responded to my recruitment email and expressed their participation

interest, I worked with the student and my contact at each university to organize a time and

location where I could conduct the interview. All my interviews occurred between March 2022

and June 2022. I had approval to be on each of the different British universities' campuses

because the appropriate individual at each university signed a site permission form, which I

needed to gain IRB approval. Before I conducted the interview, I asked each participant to sign a consent form (see Appendix C) acknowledging their willingness to participate in the research. They could withdraw from the research at any time; however, no participant chose to withdraw.

After the participant signed their consent form, I began the interview process. While I developed specific foundational questions (see Appendix D) that I asked all my interviewees, the semi-structured format allowed me to ask further follow-up questions based on the responses of the interviewee (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). I acknowledged that many American students did not have the grammar, syntactical, or lexical knowledge to discuss specific differences between British English and American English. Therefore, I chose the foundational questions because they helped me comprehend students' perceptions of differing dialects and how they had, or had not, adapted their written rhetoric. Additionally, since the semi-structured format allowed me to focus additional questions on the responses and experiences of my interviewees, I could gain an understanding of what American sojourners identified as critical aspects of dialectal divergence. Therefore, my interview design could "make better use of the knowledge-producing potentials of dialogue" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 579). These questions allowed me to examine the audience awareness of American student sojourners.

Interviews ranged from 4 minutes and 26 seconds to 28 minutes and 24 seconds. The variation in these times is due to the level of detail and information that each interviewee provided. I recorded the interviews on my password-protected iPhone, where I disabled the Cloud feature. Following the data collection, I transcribed the interviews, utilizing my password-protected account on REV.com, and then I deleted the voice recordings from my phone. Additionally, I removed identifiable information from the transcriptions before analysis and coding occurred.

Coding Methods

Since semi-structured interviews allow for a broad range of responses, I identified common thematic topics and significant statements across the 13 interviews to analyze how the phenomenon of dialectal divergence impacts American student sojourners. Creswell and Poth (2018) referred to this process—"[highlighting] 'significant statements,' sentences, or quotes that provide an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon"—as *horizontalization* (p. 79). For the purpose of my research, I define *significant* using the concept of frequency; using frequency as a characterization pattern examines how often something occurs (Saldaña, 2021). If I identified common language or ideas across multiple interviews, then I further studied the statements associated with these ideas. I compiled a list of significant statements (see Appendix E), using ideas that I found frequently throughout the interviews, to code my data. For example, eight participants mentioned specific spelling differences that they noticed during their time abroad. Therefore, as I created my list of significant statements, I included specific instances where my interviewees made note of orthographic or lexical changes. Horizontalization allowed me to analyze the interview transcriptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Using the identified statements, I then conducted more research into established scholarship to better understand the concepts that American sojourners discussed as an area of impact during British rhetorical situations.

To further analyze the interview transcriptions, I relied on concept coding. As Saldaña (2021) described, "concept codes assign meso or macro levels of meaning to data" (p. 152). The purpose of concept coding is to examine how language, even a single word or sentence, can represent a larger idea (Saldaña, 2021). Using concept coding, I categorized the identified significant statements into themes about how American student sojourners respond to the

phenomenon of linguistic divergence. Through organizing the significant statements identified through the horizontalization process, concept coding represented an important next step in my methodological framework; it allowed for an evaluation of how American sojourners make meaning in a specific rhetorical situation. Researchers use concept coding to analyze interview transcriptions because it focuses on the meaning that interviewees assign an experience (Saldaña, 2021). Within the process of concept coding, the data shows clusters of meaning, the next step in identifying themes in a phenomenological study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Considering the different concepts that arose throughout the interviews allowed me to best evaluate themes that American sojourners identified as influences on the meaning they assign dialectal differences.

Applying concept coding to my data, I utilized Saldaña's (2021) technique of *lumping*, or macro coding, to analyze the significant statements I found through horizontalization. Lumping is a valuable technique for phenomenological research because it "gets to the essence of categorizing a phenomenon" (Saldaña, 2021, p. 35). Lumping involves analyzing data for overarching similarities, thus creating a few crucial concepts that represent the phenomenon. To lump the data, I identified common ideas that were present in more than half of my participants' responses. Based on the significant statements that I identified during this process, three main concepts emerged during the coding process: sociolinguistic prestige, language globalization and media influence, and visual language variation. Table 2 reveals how I lumped the significant statements into the three main concepts.

Table 2

Significant Statement Organized by Concept

Sociolinguistic Prestige	"They speak funny."
	"I think the American is better."

	"I am slightly peeved when I am like writing on the Google docs and it spell checks me, because I guess I'm like trying to quote something, like a passage from one of my readings, which is written in British English, but when I try to paraphrase it, my Google docs like auto correction is in American English. So, it will spell check me. And so now it's getting to a point where like I can see both as correct spellings, which is really interesting."
	"The first time I was walking down the street and I saw the word tyre spelled out, that was funny."
	"I use like the formatting that they want me to use, but like I've never altered my written English in any way, shape or form sort of out of stubbornness, but also sort of because I don't have to."
	"I know if I download a template from a class, it'll be in like United Kingdom English and I'll switch into United States because I'll start like typing, like organized and it'll be like, you spelled this wrong. And I was, I've not spelled this wrong, leave me alone. But yeah, so I mean, there definitely absolutely is a difference, but I just have chosen to ignore it."
	"As soon as I go back home, give me like a few days or a week, and I'm back to my like normal American English."
	"This is cause I'm American, you're British, never making that connection just to that. They were saying something weird. So, I think it took a while to kind of adjust to, or to assume that they're what they're saying, they're saying because they're British not cause it's just something weird I guess."
	"[professor taking marks off for American spelling] Well, that's not fair."
	"I did not take … me personally writing … I did not take that into account."
	"It's still very bizarre words you haven't really heard before."
Language Globalization and Media Influence	"If like after say 1945, you get the world becoming more globalized. If there's basically stopped being major differences between US and UK English or if those stayed the same?"
	"The 19th century that they began making a bunch of these changes … there was like a move deliberately to try to change some of the spellings … they made it a deliberate effort to simplify American English."
	"I grew up watching all the YouTube videos of people studying abroad, so I was aware of quite a few of them."
	"I think a lot of issues come from the desire to be understood. Not so much with students, but especially with locals and especially the college staff who are older, who haven't consumed the level of American media that people our age have."

	"As much as it pains the British to hear it, American English is more common in the world. It is the standard in most places. And also, because American cultural dominance in media, a lot of people who are speaking English as a second language are learning American English, unless they're in some very specific places."
	"I think living in America, the British culture that we see is very, the phrases that we think about, like 'cheers' and things like that are almost, like people do say it, but it's almost stereotypical."
	"I think people can understand American accent more than they can understand the English accent. Like back home. I think it's because TV shows, it just it's more international."
	"I did watch YouTube videos before. I did like just because I'm like, 'how's this going to be?'"
	"As an American reading all these British texts, the British spellings didn't really affect how I read the texts."
Visual Language Variation	"Mostly just the S's and then some specific words, like if the -ized versus -ised."
	"There's only, there's certain words, which was like, I don't know why they're spelled differently."
	"There's two major [differences between British and American English]. I mean, this isn't, this is kind of mostly it's about terminology … And then also of course you have the issue where UK accents are like sharply defined along class lines and that's not necessarily true of US accents."
	"I just noticed that when I was actually back in America, there was still a lot of British in my writing more so when I arrived back the first time. Part of that was because the phone settings, but I think even part of that was like, if I was writing notes to myself that weren't for the newspaper or something, I might put -ised with certain words with an S unconsciously in like when I was writing stuff."
	"The main differences are around very specific words."
	"If there's like any misunderstanding between people in the US and people in the UK, it would overwhelmingly relate to cultural or terminology issues."
	"Things like color or favorite, it adds the u."
	"I was just covering all my bases because I didn't want like any points ticked off for like spelling and stuff. Although like it wouldn't technically be wrong spelling, but I was just like, I, I just better get acclimated to the language here."
	"That they would add an extra U to like letters."
	"The same kind of language difference came up … Do I call it like the first floor and then like ground floor?"

	"I guess there was the spelling, the OU in labor versus labour, like those kind of differences in spelling sometimes come up. But I think other than that, there hasn't been too many differences in terms of like sentence structure or just the style of writing."
	"I think just spelling, like I've noticed that I've tried to incorporate the OU instead of the normal spelling that I'm used to. But, other than that, I don't think I've made any other noticeable accommodations."
	"I was aware that there is slightly different vocabulary from America and from the UK, but I didn't really expect it to be a challenge or anything just that there would be a few words that have different meanings and have different connotations than in the States."
	"They gave us kind of a list of words that are like exclusively, like used by students in the UK."
	"And the thing you say Z, they say that like specialised all that and they actually say it with -sed is like with a Z instead of the S."
	"It's word differences, but it's also just the whole manner of speaking phrases."
	"I think the biggest thing is a lot of my tutors mark spelling differences in my paper. So, I just transitioned to all of those spellings."
	"Primarily spelling, a few grammar things. I feel like people don't use the Oxford comma very much over here and then quotations, but in terms of the language, I think it's mainly just tutors marking things."
	"I think definitely the spelling, just because I changed the settings on my computer, so I just adapted to doing it, and I pretty much transitioned to doing it that way in terms of phrases and things like that."
	[Is it important to adapt written works?] "All of our assessment is written and a lot of the things that I'm reading for it are from British authors. I also focus on British history. So, a lot of what I'm reading has this spelling and the phrasing. So, I don't think that it's important necessarily, but I think that it's just easier."
	"I think the one that makes the most sense to me, that's going be the hardest to change back is writing the date doing the day first … I definitely do spell with a lot of British spellings."
	"All of the Z and S's. Then the U's, those are the main ones."
	"There was actually one essay that I submitted last year, and I didn't get marks taken off for it, but every single time I used an S or a Z like interchangeably, he would like mark it."
	"The teachers were like, we don't care if you use the American, but just keep it the same. Because obviously if you're here for a few months, you do start to add the U add the S subtract, but I don't even know if that's Z anymore, but yeah."

	"Linguistically, it's difficult to say, because, okay, you can say the S, Z, the U, whatever. But, grammar's the same and I, I would say it's the same in all of England."
	"There's different words for a lot of things."
	"I noticed the spelling, like they do, there's like two, two or three spelling differences that are found, like they use like, -ISED instead of -IZED and they use O U R instead of O R or, and I mean, that's like the main things I've noticed in writing the spellings or some words."
	"Their … speaking and writing seems to be more formal than ours in general ...I tried to make the paper reflect that, but the main thing would be the spellings."
	"Some words and phrases are a lot different or kind of took me just an extra second to be like, oh, this is what they mean."
	"I, definitely the thing that always gets me is the S and Z."
	"I know my tutor pointed out one. When you used toward, I think, the British phrasing is just toward, but sometimes in the United States they say towards."

Note. The blue boxes represent comments coded for sociolinguistic prestige. The yellow boxes represent comments coded for language globalization and media influence. The green boxes represent statements coded for visual language variation.

Data Analysis

These three concepts—sociolinguistic prestige, language globalization and media influence, and visual language variation—are important to further discuss because they are influential factors in how the differences between British English and American English impact American sojourners and their perceptions of linguistic divergence. Sociolinguistic prestige indicates that there is a favorable and non-favorable dialect based on standard use, where *standard* equals the majority or individuals in positions of power (McCormack & Wurm, 1979). Within the context of the research, the definition of standard encompasses instances where American students perceived their dialect as superior to the British dialect based on their personal experiences. The sociolinguistic prestige concept is characterized by "us" versus "them" language and instances where American sojourners critiqued British English. Sociolinguistic

prestige has important connections to audience awareness because ideas of superiority influence how individuals conceptualize the importance of adapting written works for an audience.

I define the next concept, language globalization and media influence, as American sojourners' perceptions about the prevalence of American English as the global standard of English (Deshors, 2018). The language globalization and media influence concept is characterized by specific mentions of globalization or acknowledgments of American media influence. Globalization and media are crucial concepts to consider within the context of audience awareness because they speak to how American sojourners perceive an audience's rhetorical expectations.

The final concept, visual language variation, can be understood as the emphasis that American sojourners placed on specific visual changes in written works. As I demonstrated in Chapter 2 in discussing the work of Biber (1987), there are identifiable differences between British English and American English in written works. Mentions of spelling or word choice, especially instances of "-ized" versus "-ised" or "o" versus "ou," characterize the visual language variation concept. Understanding how these distinct visual changes influence audience awareness, as opposed to other instances of written dialect that are not as identifiable, provides valuable insight into American sojourners' perceptions of linguistic divergence. While I will describe the relationship between these concepts and meaning-making in Chapter 4, each of these codes demonstrate important information on how American sojourners assign meaning regarding the linguistic differences between British writing and American writing.

Additional Methodological Considerations

At this point, it is important to reiterate the purpose of my research and how my methodology supports the overall goal. My research functions as a pilot study, examining how

the differences between British English and American English impact American student

sojourners. While 13 participants represented an appropriate sample size for the scope of my

research, the results are directly applicable only to these participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

More research would need to be completed to make broader generalizations about the American

student sojourner population and the prevalence of sociolinguistic prestige, language

globalization and media influence, and visual language variation. However, the framework for

the research as a pilot study is justified when weighing the methodological considerations. I

purposefully chose a phenomenological research approach because it offered the best

opportunity to consider dialects' influence on meaning-making, even if the results are inherently

tied to my sample of the target population (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

I established "credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability, and confirmability"

throughout my research design, maintaining the validity of my study (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p.

256). In terms of credibility, I acknowledged my research bias as a previous American student in

England. Although I did not discuss my own experiences with participants unless asked, the fact

that I experienced the phenomenon in question may have influenced how participants viewed or

responded to my interview questions. To consider bias that I may have had approaching this

subject, I confirmed my research approach with three individuals, with knowledge of

phenomenological research, who were not sojourners themselves. I also considered the

authenticity of my study through recruiting participants who were currently studying in England.

At the time of the interviews, some participants had only been there for a few weeks and others

had been there for years. I gained an authentic perspective on the phenomenon as American

sojourners became more immersed in their British environment. I considered the transferability

of the research through careful examination of previous scholarship about the role of language in

meaning-making. Established concepts ground the backbone of my study, making the ideas transferable. Finally, earning IRB approval demonstrates internal, ethical credibility. To earn IRB approval, I ensured the methodology could be replicated and the results could be confirmed. I carefully recorded the research methods, thus solidifying the dependability and confirmability of results. The internal validity of my research design demonstrates that while these results are specific to the participant population, there is value in examining the phenomenon of divergent dialects.

Conclusion of Methodology

Chapter 3 discussed the research methodology used to explore how the differences between British English and American English impact American sojourners and their perceptions of linguistic divergence. Through an IRB-approved research design, I collected interview data from 13 American sojourners studying in England. Based on an understanding of horizontalization and concept coding, three common concepts emerged: sociolinguistic prestige, language globalization and media influence, and visual language variation. Each of these concepts influence the meaning-making of American sojourners regarding dialectal difference. These ideas will be further explored in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

I completed 13 interviews with American sojourners studying at British universities to explore the phenomenon of how the differences between British English and American English impact American sojourners during an abroad experience. After analyzing the data through concept coding, three main concepts emerged: sociolinguistic prestige, language globalization and media influence, and visual language variation. This chapter presents the coded results of the interviews to examine how these three concepts are evident throughout the participant population. Through evaluating the presence of these concepts, the results demonstrate important insight into the themes of dialectal difference, audience awareness, and identity.

Concepts Present in Participant Population

As stated in Chapter 3, I developed the coding scheme by using the characterization pattern of frequency. Frequency established the definition of significant that I used to compile the list of significant statements. After I lumped the significant statements, using Saldaña's (2021) macro coding technique, three main data concepts emerged. Table 2 demonstrated the categorization of significant statements into the three different concepts. I would like to emphasize that the goal of the interviews was not to prove that any of these concepts were present. The concepts themselves appeared organically during the data collection process, and the frequency of the concepts throughout the interviews warranted further examination and analysis.

First, since the coding technique relied on the established equivalence between significant and frequency, it is essential to clearly establish the frequency of concepts within the participants' interviews. Each concept—sociolinguistic prestige, language globalization and media influence, and visual language variation—appeared in over half of the interviews.

Sociolinguistic prestige occurred in eight interviews; language globalization and media influence occurred in seven interviews; visual language variation occurred in 12 interviews. In four interviews, the participants provided responses that presented all three concepts. A complete breakdown of which concept each participant demonstrated can be found in Table 3.

Table 3

Coded Concepts Present in Interviews Based on Participant Population

Participant	Sociolinguistic Prestige	Language Globalization and Media Influence	Visual Language Variation
1		■	■
2			■
3	■		■
4	■		■
5			■
6	■	■	■
7	■	■	■
8	■	■	■
9	■	■	■
10		■	■
11			■
12	■	■	
13	■		■

Note. The blue boxes represent instances where the concept is present in the interview.

Table 3 highlights the prevalence of each concept across the 13 interviews. Displaying how concepts appeared across different interviews offers valuable insight into how each individual conceptualized the dialectal differences between British English and American English. I further explain the relationship between each of these themes in the following sections of Chapter 4. After presenting data on the participants' patterns, in terms of writing a phenomenological research study, it is now appropriate to examine each concept as a unit of meaning, ultimately identifying common themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In relation to the

present discussion, how the differences between British English and American English impact American sojourners, organizing the data by theme is beneficial to demonstrate meaning (Holliday, 2002).

As the chapter continues, I present each concept, emphasizing how the prevalence of the concepts express information about the participant population's audience awareness. To begin, participants' assertion of sociolinguistic prestige does not demonstrate audience awareness because there is a steadfast claim about the superiority of American English. Next, I discuss language globalization and media influence. Some participants used the dominance of American media to further assert sociolinguistic prestige; they insisted language adaptation was not necessary because American English represents the global standard for English. However, some students demonstrated audience awareness through their use of media before departure, employing varied media sources to research British English. Finally, I present information about visual language variation. As expected, many participants focused on specific orthographic or lexical differences between the two dialects. However, I discuss the visual language variation concept last because some participants' references to lexical differences suggest deeper cultural implications of dialectal divergence. Since this discussion most closely aligns with audience awareness, I use it to create a framework for the final discussion of audience awareness in American sojourners.

Sociolinguistic Prestige

Eight participants used language exhibiting sociolinguistic prestige: the notion that there is a favorable and non-favorable dialect dictated by perceptions of the majority population (McCormack & Wurm, 1979). Since American sojourners comprise the entirety of the participant population, American English represents standard use. Perceptions of sociolinguistic

prestige arise from social, economic, and political factors (Hernández-Campoy & Conde-

Silvestre, 2012). Essentially, the environment in which an individual acquires their language

instills a hierarchy of language (Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre, 2012). Hernández-

Campoy and Conde-Silvestre's (2012) idea about the conceptual hierarchy of language aligns

with Allan's (2015) claim that political and social division has an enduring impact on how

British individuals and American individuals perceive the opposing dialect. The sociolinguistic

prestige concept emerged through the coding process because many participants made claims

representing a preference for American English over British English. Participants asserted

sociolinguistic prestige through their consideration of American English as the "normal English."

Through dismissing the validity of British English, or simply remarking that British English is

"weird" or "bizarre," eight participants expressed favor for the standard use of American

English. I coded significant statements when participants affirmed the perceived superiority of

American English. The statements coded for sociolinguistic prestige are seen in Table 4.

Table 4

Significant Statements Coded for Sociolinguistic Prestige

Instance	Sociolinguistic Prestige Statement
1	"They speak funny."
2	"I think the American is better."
3	"I am slightly peeved when I am like writing on the Google docs and it spell checks me."
4	"The first time I was walking down the street and I saw the word tyre spelled out, that was funny."
5	"I've never altered my written English in any way, shape or form sort of out of stubbornness, but also sort of because I don't have to."

6	"I know if I download a template from a class, it'll be in like United Kingdom English and I'll switch into United States because I'll start like typing, like organized and it'll be like, you spelled this wrong. And I was, I've not spelled this wrong, leave me alone. But yeah, so I mean, there definitely absolutely is a difference, but I just have chosen to ignore it."
7	"As soon as I go back home … I'm back to my like normal American English."
8	"They were saying something weird … It took a while … to assume ... what they're saying, they're saying because they're British not cause it's just something weird."
9	"That's not fair."
10	"I did not take … me personally writing … I did not take that into account."
11	"It's still very bizarre words you haven't really heard before."

Note. The green boxes represent comments that describe British English. The blue boxes represent comments that demonstrate a strong preference for American English. The yellow boxes represent comments that state it is unfair or angering that American English is not accepted at their British host institution.

As demonstrated in Table 4, I coded 11 instances for the assertion of sociolinguistic prestige. Of those 11 statements, three sub-categories emerged. First, comments that immediately established British English as the other; by using words like "funny," "weird," or "bizarre" to describe British English, the participants maintained the perspective that American English is the standard form of English. Participants approached British English with a judgmental perspective, focusing on the differences they found strange. Although the American sojourners were in England, participants centered themselves and their dialect as superior, not considering how a British audience may consider American English equally "weird" or "bizarre." American sojourners' othering of British English indicated the presence of sociolinguistic prestige during their abroad experience.

In the next category, throughout three separate instances, participants demonstrated a strong preference for the use of American English—"American is better"—or a lack of consideration for British English. Participants used language that demonstrated feelings of superiority, disregarding the validity of British English. For example, a participant claimed American English is "normal." While this may be true in the American environment in which they acquired their language, this participant did not account for the normalcy of British English within the context of their abroad experience in England. British English is "normal" in England. A participant admitting that they "did not take [using British English] into account" affirmed the prevalence of sociolinguistic prestige during the abroad experience. There was a clear perspective that again, American English is standard.

The last category of the sociolinguistic concept includes participants' claims that having to use British English was unfair or upsetting. These claims most strongly demonstrate sociolinguistic prestige because participants insisted that having to adapt their written dialect to match that of their host institution was unmerited; American sojourners' preconceived notions about the correctness of American English explains their insistence for the use of American English. When participants stated, "I've not spelled this wrong" or "I am slightly peeved when … it spell checks me," it highlights the alleged superiority of American English. Asserting sociolinguistic prestige through notions of unfairness or irritation directly contradicts the validity of British English. Each of these instances indicate that American sojourners approach an abroad experience by evoking sociolinguistic prestige.

Since the dialect favored in demonstrations of sociolinguistic prestige is inherently grounded in the expectations of an individual's environment, prestige is linked to perceptions of identity (Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre, 2012). Using the established link between

prestige and identity, my participants' responses offer greater insight into how American sojourners perceive themselves and others during an experience abroad. Maintaining the steadfast perspective that American English is superior to British English firmly roots participants to an American identity. There is little room for reflection or the development of cultural competence. The inability of some participants to acknowledge the validity of British English could have broader implications for their audience awareness and adjustment to a British environment. Additionally, these instances of sociolinguistic prestige indicate that some students may have a harder time acclimating to their new environment, since language and dialect are crucial components of Sojourner Adjustment. Refusal to use, or feelings of irritation toward, British English impacts how sojourners adapt in a cultural context. I will further explain the intersection of these ideas in Chapter 5.

Language Globalization and Media Influence

Seven participants used language that supported the concept of language globalization and media influence. As stated in Chapter 3, I define this concept as the perception that America English is the accepted global standard of English (Deshors, 2018). Based on a variety of social and political factors, which well exceed the scope of the present research, English is a dominant language across the globe (Momma & Matto, 2008). Building on those social and political factors, including the lasting impact of colonialism, new technological advancements, like radio and television, continue to propel the prevalence of English around the world (Deshors, 2018). More specifically, American media maintains a dominant global influence, whether it be through television, social media, or other platforms (Jin, 2021). Global media powerhouses—Netflix, Hulu, Facebook, Instagram, etc.—all developed in the United States and continue to thrive around the world. Due to the dominance of American media, American English has a formidable

influence on standardized understandings of English across the globe. For individuals who use media as a language-learning tool, there is a higher probability that they will learn English from American media sources as opposed to other sources (Jin, 2021). The concept of language globalization and media influence emerged as participants mentioned this phenomenon during their interviews. Some participants in my sample population of American sojourners specifically focused on how media influences the transfer of language. Through mentioning media platforms, like YouTube, or explicitly saying that American English is the global standard due to media influence, seven participants demonstrated how they conceptualize the use of British English versus American English. The statements coded for language globalization and media influence are seen in Table 5.

Table 5

Significant Statements Coded for Language Globalization and Media Influence

Instance	Language Globalization and Media Influence Statement
1	"If like after say 1945, you get the world becoming more globalized. If there's basically stopped being major differences between US and UK English or if those stayed the same?"
2	"The 19th century that they began making a bunch of these changes … there was like a move deliberately to try to change some of the spellings … they made it a deliberate effort to simplify American English."
3	"I grew up watching all the YouTube videos of people studying abroad, so I was aware of quite a few of them."
4	"Locals and especially the college staff who are older ... haven't consumed the level of American media that people our age have."
5	"American English is more common in the world. It is the standard in most places. And also, because American cultural dominance in media, a lot of people who are speaking English as a second language are learning American English."

6	"I think living in America, the British culture that we see is very, the phrases that we think about, like 'cheers' and things like that are almost, like people do say it, but it's almost stereotypical."
7	"I think people can understand American accent more than they can understand the English accent ... I think it's because TV shows, it just it's more international."
8	"I did watch YouTube videos before."
9	"As an American reading all these British texts, the British spellings didn't really affect how I read the texts."

Note. The green boxes represent comments that describe how American students used media to understand British English. The blue boxes represent comments that demonstrate perceptions regarding the dominance of American media influence. The yellow boxes represent comments that evaluate language globalization in consideration to dialect.

As demonstrated by Table 5, I coded nine statements for their reference to language globalization and media influence. Of those nine statements, three sub-categories emerged. First, participants used language that directly addressed the dominance of American media. Due to the influx of television shows and other forms of media, participants endorsed the perception that American English is more standardized across the globe. Some participants supported their claim by providing examples of their peers—from India, Cameroon, or a variety of other places—who learned American English conventions during their English language acquisition process, not British English conventions. Media directly influences how individuals learn and perceive language. Instance 4 takes this category a step further by acknowledging that in an increasingly connected world, individuals in a younger generation are more likely to understand each other across cultures and dialects because of their increased media consumption. Participants' acknowledgement regarding the role of media, but only in regards to American dominance, offers valuable information about American sojourners' considerations of dialectal divergence.

Recognizing the role of media directly connects to the second sub-category of the language globalization and media influence concept: participants' reflection on how media shaped their own perceptions of dialectal divergence between British English and American English. Two participants stated they watched YouTube videos about British dialect and culture before studying in England to prepare for their abroad experience. There are ample videos on YouTube that discuss British culture, British English, and the differences between varying English dialects. Furthermore, one participant acknowledged how their understanding of British English and culture was originally influenced by stereotypes present in television media. They mentioned that they began their abroad experience with an understanding of British language stereotypes—"cheers mate"—but had no background on the syntactical differences between the two dialects. In addition to video media, one participant discussed how their access to British texts, written media, influenced their perceptions about the correctness of a written work. All these instances connect to the broader idea of language globalization because American sojourners used media to connect and reflect on their understandings of language and culture during their abroad experience.

The third sub-category for the concept of language globalization and media influence considers American sojourners' reflection of dialect in a changing global environment. Instance 1 and Instance 2 demonstrate how participants considered the broader implications of dialect in present society. For example, Instance 2 discusses how, based on the broader history of dialect development between England and the United States, there was a deliberate move to create written dialectal variations. As discussed in Chapter 2, social and political factors create a divide between the British English and American English dialects. Instance 2 considers how these factors determine perceptions of dialect. Instance 1 furthers this notion. While Instance 2 focuses

specifically on the 19th century, Instance 1 questions how dialectal differences currently play a role in meaning-making between British English and American English. This participant considered whether noting the differences between British English and American English is necessarily important because of the global connection between the two dialects. There is media readily available that highlights the two dialects, fostering a dialectal overlap as language becomes more globalized. However, there is still clearly a strong preference for British English in England and American English in the United States. Each of these instances demonstrate how American sojourners consider dialect in a globalized society and the power that media has to connect different languages and cultures.

Since a key feature of Sojourner Adjustment is language acclimation, American students' use of media as a tool to consider language globalization offers important insight into how American student sojourners conceptualize dialectal divergence. Some participants had steadfast opinions that American media establishes the American English dialect as the global standard of English; this contrasts with other participants' consideration of how dialect continues to function in a global community. Participants' primary focus on American media dominance further encouraged perceptions of sociolinguistic prestige as participants displayed pride for the role of American media and its perceived superiority over British English. However, some participants used media as a tool to connect and reflect on their language use. By considering how to adapt to British English, these participants furthered their understanding of how language functions within a specific cultural context. Both these ideas demonstrate themes of audience awareness because, while some participants used media to research British English, others asserted sociolinguistic prestige. I explain these ideas, combined with a further examination of how perceptions of dialectal divergence impact American sojourners, in Chapter 5.

Visual Language Variation

Visual language variation is the most prominent concept that emerged through the coding process; 12 of the 13 interviews involved statements that supported the theme of visual language variation. As seen in Biber (1987), written works in British English or American English have identifiable differences, including changes in spelling, word choice, and syntax. Due to the nature of these written dialectal variations, they are easy to visually notice. These differences immediately create an othering effect for a British audience or an American audience (Murphy, 2016). Since individuals develop an established form of "correct" grammar through the language acquisition process, visual changes are easily distinguishable and sometimes off-putting to an audience with a differing dialect. Due to the distinguishable nature of differing grammatical expectations, American sojourners identified these visual changes between British English and American English. I coded statements for visual language variation based on the repeated mention of specific orthographic or lexical differences the participants noticed during their abroad experience. From a surface level perspective, it makes sense that participants honed into visual variation, but there is a deeper meaning within the relationship between visual differences and the cultural implications of language. The statements coded for visual language variation can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6

Statements Coded for Visual Language Variation

Instance	Visual Language Variation Statement
1	"Mostly just the S's and then some specific words, like if the -ized versus -ised."
2	"There's only, there's certain words, which was like, I don't know why they're spelled differently."

3	"There's two major [differences between British and American English]. I mean, this isn't, this is kind of mostly it's about terminology."
4	"I just noticed that when I was actually back in America, there was still a lot of British in my writing more so when I arrived back the first time. Part of that was because the phone settings, but I think even part of that was like, if I was writing notes to myself that weren't for the newspaper or something, I might put -ised with certain words with an S unconsciously in like when I was writing stuff."
5	"The main differences are around very specific words."
6	"If there's like any misunderstanding between people in the US and people in the UK, it would overwhelmingly relate to cultural or terminology issues."
7	"Things like color or favorite, it adds the u."
8	"I was just covering all my bases because I didn't want like any points ticked off for like spelling and stuff. Although like it wouldn't technically be wrong spelling, but I was just like, I, I just better get acclimated to the language here."
9	"That they would add an extra U to like letters."
10	"The same kind of language difference came up … Do I call it like the first floor and then like ground floor?"
11	"I guess there was the spelling, the OU in labor versus labour, like those kind of differences in spelling sometimes come up."
12	"I think just spelling, like I've noticed that I've tried to incorporate the OU instead of the normal spelling that I'm used to."
13	"I was aware that there is slightly different vocabulary from America and from the UK, but I didn't really expect it to be a challenge or anything just that there would be a few words that have different meanings and have different connotations than in the States."
14	"They gave us kind of a list of words that are like exclusively, like used by students in the UK."
15	"And the thing you say Z, they say that like specialised all that and they actually say it with -sed is like with a Z instead of the S."
16	"It's word differences, but it's also just the whole manner of speaking phrases."
17	"I think the biggest thing is a lot of my tutors mark spelling differences in my paper. So, I just transitioned to all of those spellings."
18	"Primarily spelling, a few grammar things. I feel like people don't use the Oxford comma very much over here and then quotations, but in terms of the language, I think it's mainly just tutors marking things."

19	"I think definitely the spelling, just because I changed the settings on my computer, so I just adapted to doing it, and I pretty much transitioned to doing it that way in terms of phrases and things like that."
20	"A lot of what I'm reading has this spelling and the phrasing."
21	"I think the one that makes the most sense to me, that's going be the hardest to change back is writing the date doing the day first … I definitely do spell with a lot of British spellings."
22	"All of the Z and S's. Then the U's, those are the main ones."
23	"There was actually one essay that I submitted last year, and I didn't get marks taken off for it, but every single time I used an S or a Z like interchangeably, he would like mark it."
24	"Obviously if you're here for a few months, you do start to add the U add the S subtract, but I don't even know if that's Z anymore."
25	"Linguistically, it's difficult to say, because, okay, you can say the S, Z, the U, whatever. But, grammar's the same and I, I would say it's the same in all of England."
26	"There's different words for a lot of things."
27	"I noticed the spelling, like they do, there's like two, two or three spelling differences that are found, like they use like, -ISED instead of -IZED and they use O U R instead of O R or, and I mean, that's like the main things I've noticed in writing the spellings or some words."
28	"Their … speaking and writing seems to be more formal than ours in general ...I tried to make the paper reflect that, but the main thing would be the spellings."
29	"Some words and phrases are a lot different or kind of took me just an extra second to be like, oh, this is what they mean."
30	"I, definitely the thing that always gets me is the S and Z."
31	"I know my tutor pointed out one. When you used toward, I think, the British phrasing is just toward, but sometimes in the United States they say towards."

Note. The green boxes represent comments that specifically mention orthographic differences between British English and American English. The blue boxes represent comments that specifically mention lexical differences between British English and American English.

As demonstrated by Table 6, I coded 31 statements for visual language variation. In those 31 statements, two sub-categories emerged. The first sub-category includes comments that explicitly mentioned the orthographic differences between British English and American English. Participants specifically focused on the "-ized" versus "-ised" or the "-or" versus "-our" differences. For example, "specialized" versus "specialised" or "labor "versus "labour." Some participants noted that they changed their Microsoft or Google settings to British English to address these differences between British spellings and American spellings. Altering computer or phone settings only addresses the surface level differences between the two dialects, ignoring the greater syntactical or rhetorical variations. However, the physical act of altering settings still reflects the audience awareness of American sojourners.

The second sub-category of visual language variation involved instances where participants acknowledged the presence of different terminology used to describe the same thing across British English and American English. Their examples of differing lexical choices varied from university specific terms to everyday colloquial language. Participants' mention of word choice differences offers a preliminary understanding of how American sojourners notice the influence of language on culture. Within the cultural context of England, some participants noted how their lexical decisions impacted their meaning-making capabilities. By identifying the differing lexical choices and hinting at deeper cultural context, participants further understood how language is dependent on culture, as opposed to the more superficial orthographic differences. The statements coded for visual language variation demonstrated how American sojourners recognize the differences between British English and American English, emphasizing orthographic and lexical divergences.

As Partridge and Clark (1951) stated, visual differences are easily identifiable. It is worth noting that when asked about the differences between British English and American English, almost all participants explicitly focused on these types of noticeable discrepancies. Partridge and Clark's scholarship emphasized, with their research dating back to 1951, how most studies on dialectal divergence simply examine visual differences; researchers have focused on visual variation for many decades. However, due to the fact that many individuals, as demonstrated by the participant population, immediately focus on simple visual differences, sojourners miss the opportunity to look beyond the orthographic or lexical changes. There are deeper cultural implications to the nuanced changes of language between dialects.

While far fewer participants moved beyond the explicit focus on orthographic changes, there were still some individuals who in their descriptions of varied lexicon alluded to the greater cultural meaning of language differences. For example, Instance 14 reveals how a participant received a packet with words exclusively used by British university students before enrolling in their abroad program. To fit into the British university's culture, the participant had to quickly adapt to those terms. The environment informed the language the participant had to use to adjust to their new host country. To continue, the use of different terms also has implications for how language functions across differing dialects more broadly. In Instance 16, a participant discussed how dialectal differences cover "the whole manner of speaking phrases." There is greater depth to the meaning-making potential of language when considering varied word choice. Participants' note of varied manners of speaking or terminology offers more insight into how American sojourners use language abroad. The choice to use these British words and spellings speak to the audience awareness and language acclimation of American sojourners. I will further examine the implications of specifically focusing on orthographic or lexical differences in Chapter 5.

Audience Awareness of American Sojourners

Each of these concepts—sociolinguistic prestige, language globalization and media influence, and visual language variation—offer insight into how American sojourners conceptualize audience awareness. The presence of sociolinguistic prestige indicated that the participants did not consider how their use of American English could potentially impact the messages that they send to their British audience. In terms of language globalization and media influence, some participants' mindsets about the global dominance of American English showed a lack of awareness for how messages should be adapted for a British audience. Yet, other participants' reference to their use of media acknowledged linguistic divergence and represented an awareness of British English, indicating that some American sojourners consider how differing dialects could impact their rhetorical capabilities. When examining visual language variation, the emphasis that participants placed on orthographic differences demonstrated a surface-level awareness of their British audience. However, some participants' ability to look deeper into lexical choices indicated their consideration for the connection between language and social reality. Each of these concepts reveal the participant population's perceptions of the dialectal divergence between British English and American English, as well as how American sojourners consider adapting their language to create effective rhetorical situations.

While these concepts help to answer the question of how American sojourners perceive and respond to dialectal differences, it is also worth considering how they value their own audience awareness. Therefore, Question 10 and Question 11 of the approved, foundational IRB questions aimed to evaluate how students perceived their own audience awareness. Question 10 asked participants to consider if they had adapted any of their written works for a British audience. Question 11 asked participants why, or why not, they thought it important to adapt

written works for a British audience. I asked these questions to gain an understanding of how my

sample population of American sojourners demonstrated audience awareness during their abroad

experience. Since, as discussed in Chapter 2, there is an intricate relationship between language,

culture, and Sojourner Adjustment, it would have benefited students to adapt their rhetoric for a

British audience. Data for how participants responded to questions surrounding the importance

of audience awareness and written adaptation can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7

Audience Awareness of Participant Population

Participant	Participant Stated Adapting Works for an Audience is Important or Easier for Communication	Participant Stated They Adapted Their Language for a British Audience	Participant Stated They Did Not Adapt Language Due to Professor Instruction
1	■	■	
2		■	
3			
4	■		
5	■	■	
6	■		■
7			
8	■	■	
9	■	■	
10	■	■	
11	■	■	
12			
13	■		

Note. The blue boxes represent instances where each idea was present in the interview based on

participant responses.

As Table 7 demonstrates, nine participants stated that adapting written works for specific

audiences was important, or at least easier, for communicating a message. However, there is a

contrast between the number of participants who stated the importance of audience awareness

and the number of participants who adapted their language for a British audience. Only seven participants claimed to make any adaptations to their language during their abroad experience. Although Participant 4 and Participant 13 reported on the importance of audience awareness, they made no self-identified changes to their language. It is also worth noting that these two participants evoked sociolinguistic prestige during the interviews, and the assertion that American English is better could contribute to their choice not to adapt their written rhetoric. Additionally, statements coded for sociolinguistic prestige are also found in the interviews of Participant 3, Participant 7, and Participant 12, three of the four participants who did not claim that adapting works for an audience is important or easier for communicating a message. Therefore, it appears that the assertion of sociolinguistic prestige correlates to a limited rhetorical change by the participant for their British audience.

While sociolinguistic prestige correlates to participants' narrow audience awareness, there appears to be no consistent pattern regarding audience awareness between participants who discussed language globalization and media influence. A participant's adaptation of language depended on how they perceived American media. While some of the participants discussed the global dominance of American English, others used media as a dialect learning tool. The different sub-categories within this concept demonstrate varied understandings of audience awareness for the participant population. Therefore, there is no clear correlation between participants' discussions of language globalization and media influence on audience awareness.

There are, however, clear connections between audience awareness and the concept of visual language variation. It is noteworthy that the seven participants who stated they adapted their language for a British audience were almost exclusively referring to visual language variation. The most common proof participants provided for their language adaptation was

changing their computer settings to British English instead of American English. Students'

alteration of their computer settings made their computers check for American spellings; the

computers informed American sojourners how to adapt to British spellings. However, while

adapting computer settings provided a quick mechanical fix for orthographic differences between

dialects, it was mainly the participants who valued the meaning-making potential behind lexical

choices that demonstrated audience awareness. Evaluating how participants consider audience

awareness during their abroad experience offers valuable insight into their language acclimation

process. American sojourners' consideration of audience awareness impacts the effectiveness of

the messages they send through their written works to a British audience.

Conclusion of Research Results

This chapter presented the results of 13 interviews with American sojourners. During the

coding process, the three main concepts and subsequent sub-categories allowed for an

examination of how the participant population perceived dialectal divergence and considered

audience awareness during their abroad experience. Nine participants stated audience awareness

was important, and seven participants stated that they adapted their written works. A correlation

between sociolinguistic prestige and no language adaptation indicated limited perceptions of

audience awareness. There were students who did not understand how dialectal divergence could

impact the effectiveness of their communication; however, there were a few students who

considered the cultural implications of language more deeply. Their language adaptation showed

the importance of approaching rhetorical situations with an understanding of their audience's

expected conventions. The language adaptation that occurred directly connected to the concept

of visual language variation, specifically orthographic or lexical changes. The data demonstrated

current perceptions of audience awareness within the American sojourner participant population.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of my phenomenological research study was to examine how the differences between British English and American English impact American student sojourners during an abroad experience in England. Combining previous scholarship on audience awareness, established differences between British written dialect and American written dialect, and Sojourner Adjustment, the research aimed to understand five central questions:

- How do American sojourners studying in England perceive the differences between British English and American English?

- What dialectal changes do American sojourners studying in England identify as a challenge in their acclimation to British written expectations?

- Do American sojourners studying in England adapt any elements of their written works for a British audience?

- How do American sojourners studying in England consider audience awareness during their time in England?

- Would American sojourners studying in England benefit from greater resources that further explain the differences between British English and American English before departure?

The final chapter further discusses how differing dialects impact the abroad experience of American students studying in England. By exploring the meaning behind the data concepts, and considering the findings of previous scholarship, I evaluate the phenomenon of divergent dialects in relation to audience awareness and identity. Additionally, Chapter 5 considers the implications of my research and offers recommendations for future study.

Emergent Themes

During the data analysis and coding process, three main concepts emerged: sociolinguistic prestige, language globalization and media influence, and visual language variation. After evaluating the concepts, underlying themes developed regarding how American sojourners perceive audience awareness. Statements containing sociolinguistic prestige correlate with a lower demonstration of audience awareness. Students' unfamiliarity with the importance of audience awareness had negative consequences for the immersion process into British higher education institutions. Several participants who presented sociolinguistic prestige in their interviews also noted that they received marks on their papers in relation to their use of American English. For example, Participant 8 stated, "a lot of my tutors mark spelling differences in my paper." Participant 8's discussion of how their professors viewed their written assignments exemplifies the importance of audience awareness. British professors noticed when American sojourners used their American English dialect, and this had consequences for American sojourners' academic success abroad. Audience awareness is crucial for American sojourners to understand because, as demonstrated by the participant population, some students' perceptions of sociolinguistic prestige that negatively influenced their Sojourner Adjustment process.

There is no correlation between language globalization and media influence on American sojourners' understanding of audience awareness. Within the concept, the three sub-categories demonstrated varied acknowledgement of the importance of audience awareness across the participant population. Some participants asserted that the dominance of American media cemented American English as the global standard. However, enforcing this idea ignores the value of audience awareness. While American media may have a prominent impact across the

globe, participants who held to this idea did not consider their current social environment. Even if American English is dominant across the globe, British English is dominant in England. Refusal to acknowledge the role of British English within their social context affects the extent to which a student can acclimate to their new environment.

However, within the same concept of language globalization and media influence, some participants' audience awareness had a positive impact on their immersion. The students who used YouTube videos or other forms of media to learn about British English observed the benefit that their learned knowledge had on their abroad experience. For example, Participant 10 discussed their creation of an American English to British English guide. They noted common terms used in class or their professors' linguistic expectations. Relying on their understanding of audience awareness, Participant 10 took needed steps to adapt their language to match the expectations of their new British audience. This effort had a positive impact on their Sojourner Adjustment and immersion into their British higher education institution. Therefore, audience awareness does benefit how American sojourners acclimate to their new host environments.

Finally, participants who noted visual language variation between British English and American English demonstrated an understanding of audience awareness. While many participants simply relied on digital technology to adapt orthographic considerations, there were a few students who identified the connection between lexical choices and cultural context. Language is inherently linked to social realities. As Participant 1 stated, "if there's any misunderstanding between people in the US and people in the UK, it would overwhelmingly relate to cultural or terminology issues." American sojourners' who demonstrated audience awareness and adapted their written rhetoric created the potential to resolve some of the misunderstandings that arose through divergent dialects. The participants who adapted their

language for their new British audience suggested larger implications for how American

sojourners adapt their written rhetoric for a global audience. The presence of audience awareness

in this instance exemplifies the benefit of adapting written rhetoric.

There is variation between American sojourners who adapt their language based on an

understanding of audience awareness and American sojourners who do not recognize the value

of audience awareness within a rhetorical situation. However, the benefit of conceptualizing the

importance of audience awareness during an abroad experience is clear through the experiences

of the participant population. It is important to consider how American sojourners use audience

awareness because it has a direct impact on their Sojourner Adjustment.

Language and Culture in Rhetorical Situations

The relationship between language, culture, and Sojourner Adjustment influences the

success of an American sojourner within a rhetorical situation, demonstrating the importance of

audience awareness during an abroad experience. Within a social context, language is a

fundamental factor in dictating social reality (de Saint-Léger & McGregor, 2015). Language

shapes understandings, and it is crucial that rhetors conceptualize how they use language to send

messages to varied audiences. Any differences between how a rhetor crafts a message and how

their audience expects the presentation of the message alters perceptions of social reality within a

given context. Due to the intertwined nature of language and culture, a rhetor inherently

approaches a situation using their standard language or dialect. The standard, preferred dialect a

rhetor uses is connected to the environment where their language acquisition occurred. Yet,

when a rhetor enters a new country or culture, based on their understanding of audience

awareness, language adaptation is important because it furthers the acclimation of a sojourner to

the host culture. For example, if an American student begins to implement British slang terms

into their vocabulary, they are more likely to be understood and accepted by British peers. Language adaptation implies a commitment to understanding the social reality, that is created through language, of the host country.

Participants who demonstrated audience awareness and adapted their written dialect to match the expectations of a British audience had a greater understanding of how language can influence the meaning behind messages. The students who adapted their language reduced the linguistic markers that accentuated their status as American within a British cultural context (Hernández-Campoy, 2016). By evaluating how a British audience perceived their language in a new social reality, the American sojourners examined how language plays an integral role in the development of culture (Fatemi, 2018). Regarding the need to adapt written works for an audience given the relationship between language and culture, Participant 5 stated:

Anytime you go into a different culture, I think there is some kind of responsibility on part of the person who's a guest there to try and assimilate as best as they can. Instead of forcing your own knowledge, like if it's a very easy change to make, then to have it for everyone to be on the same ground. If you are a guest there, then it's better for you to make the change, instead of requiring or asking the other person to change their style.

The broader purpose of dialect adaptation lies in the connection between language and culture, the social reality of an environment. There are real-world consequences to understanding this relationship (Tullock, 2018). As shown by the frequent demonstrations of sociolinguistic prestige, not understanding the importance of perceiving varied dialects as "correct" within a social context led to frustration and discomfort within a British academic setting. Yet, the recognition of the relationship between language and culture, even if it began with a basic adaption of language based on visual lexical differences, created an environment where students

were more likely to connect with their intended audience. This realization allows students to reach new levels of cultural competence (Church, 1982). The deeper sense of how American sojourners perceive dialectal divergence and choose to adapt their written rhetoric connects to broader understandings of language and culture in a global society.

Audience Awareness and Identity

Considering the role of language in a new environment also leads to questions of identity for American sojourners. There are two distinct paths American sojourners can embrace during their study in another country in relation to identity. Students can increase their cultural competence and adopt a more post-national identity; alternatively, the experience can heighten feelings of patriotic superiority (Church, 1983; Dolby, 2004). In my pilot study, participants who used statements of sociolinguistic prestige demonstrated feelings of patriotic superiority. For example, Participant 3 stated, "I think the American is better." Later in the interview, Participant 3 continued to evoke sociolinguistic prestige during their discussion of how British society connects social value to internal British dialects; however, they were unable to see useful connections to the United States. While, in American society there exists a significantly smaller connection between dialect and social class than in British society, there still exists a social hierarchy of dialect. Participant 3 only focused on the negative aspects of British society, raising American society higher on their conceptual pedestal. The refusal to view the similarities between the linguistic hierarchy in British society and American society demonstrates an increased patriotic identity.

While some students evoked patriotic sentiments, other students became more aware of how they functioned as an "American" in British society, and their understandings of identity influenced their perceptions of global interaction. Participant 10 provided an example of using

the British term "university," or "uni," versus the American term "college." They described, "I never heard that in America, uni. I like it though." Considering British terms and culture, identifying as a "uni" student and accepting dialectal differences, demonstrated a shift in how the participant considered and communicated language. Their use of the words "uni" student and "college" student showed how they consider themselves to be a student within a British context and an American context; adopting both identities allowed for a more successful Sojourner Adjustment. Additionally, it demonstrated how audience awareness, shifting the terms used to match the expectations of the intended audience, equated to an expanded understanding of the host culture. Participants' dialectal considerations continued to expand until, as Participant 4 stated, "I see them both as correct," in relation to British English and American English. Since language is inherently linked to the development of social reality, seeing the value and "correctness" of both dialects represents a shift in identity. Instead of solely relating to the American dialect, some American sojourners expanded their perceptions and ability to identify with a new social reality. This ultimately alters how American sojourners consider their identity within a global framework (Dolby, 2004). Awareness of identity during an abroad experience demonstrates how American sojourners conceptualize language as a form of meaning-making within varied social realities.

Limitations

Although the findings of this research are representative of my sample population, I acknowledge that more research would need to be completed to continue understanding how American sojourners perceive the phenomenon of dialectal divergence. Since my research is based on the responses of a specific participant population, generalizations cannot be made for the broader American sojourner population (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Additionally, since

meaning-making—the backbone of any phenomenological approach—depends on a variety of factors, such as time and location, the study would need to be replicated with new American students studying in England to see how meaning continues to develop or change for American sojourners (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

It is important reiterate at this point that I was also studying abroad in England during the time of my interviews; this shared experience accounts for some of the rapport and agreements that are present in the interviews. While I also experienced the phenomenon in question, I did not provide any information about my experiences unless asked by an interviewee. Instead, I attempted to remain a neutral third-party observer of the phenomenon during the data collection process to research how my participants considered audience awareness and differences between British English and American English. However, my own experiences inherently influenced my perceptions of the data. While I received feedback and assistance from three individuals with knowledge of phenomenological research to limit my potential bias, if this study were to be replicated, it is important to consider how a researcher's previous experience as an American sojourner could influence the research design.

Looking forward, it would also be beneficial to adapt the methodological framework to create a greater emphasis on the study of identity. I conducted interviews for this pilot study during each participant's abroad experience. However, shifting the data collection process to a longitudinal framework would allow for an increased understanding of how audience awareness influences perceptions of dialectal divergence. First, the researcher would gather demographic information from each participant to see if there are outlying factors in how individuals approach an abroad experience. Researchers would conduct interviews with each participant before departure, during the abroad experience, and after returning to the United States. Additionally,

there would be an increase in the size of the participant population. My sample size, while appropriate for my qualitative, phenomenological approach, would need to increase in a future study to see how the phenomenon applies to the broader American sojourner population. Adapting the methodological framework of this research would allow for increased data on perceptions of language and the influence of dialectal divergence on identity.

Implications

The phenomenon presented in this research has both practical and theoretical implications. First, potential and present American sojourners can use the research results to evaluate the dialectal divergence between British English and American English. Through understanding the importance of audience awareness and language adaptation in a global setting, students will be more prepared to acclimate to a host environment. As Dolby (2004) explained, during a student's Sojourner Adjustment, there is a distinct overlap between language, identity, and meaning. Using the phenomenon discovered through the research study, students can gain an increased awareness about the importance of adapting written rhetoric for their intended audience. By preparing for the change in dialect before an abroad experience—as well as approaching an abroad situation with an understanding regarding the validity of British English and American English within social contexts—students can emerge from their abroad experience with an increased sense of cultural competence. They can reflect on how dialect shaped their experience and can use this information to further understand the importance of language within a social context. Since cultural competence is one of the key intended takeaways of an abroad experience, this research provides insight into how American sojourners can effectively use their abroad experience to adapt and challenge their preconceived notions of identity and social reality (Honeybone & Maguire, 2020).

The current study also has implications for study abroad administrators. Since both England and the United States use English as a primary language, study abroad administrators do not often prepare students for the differences in dialect. Yet, language preparation helps American sojourners adapt to the new dialect and culture, thus leading to increased understandings of intercultural awareness (Jones et al., 2019). During the interviews, 70% of participants stated that it would have been beneficial if their abroad administrator or coordinator provided information about the differences between written British English and written American English before departure. This research can be used to inform administrators about how incorporating discussions of audience awareness and dialectal differences into their pre-departure discussions can benefit students' acclimation and success within a host culture.

From a theoretical perspective, this research further establishes previous understandings regarding the connection between language and identity. Rhetoricians can continue to explore the relationship of dialect and identity to offer insight into how individuals conceptualize themselves and their communication within a global context. By exploring the nuances of language, such as varied dialects, rhetoricians can examine how individuals have the potential to employ more effective rhetorical strategies; audience awareness is a key aspect to effectively utilize rhetoric (Borchers & Hundley, 2018). Additionally, this research supports the use of qualitative research in the field of rhetorical study. While rhetorical and composition studies often emphasize the stylistic aspects of language, it is useful to develop qualitative research studies that explore beyond the face value of language to examine how social realities and other phenomena occur. My pilot study offers a potential methodological framework for other rhetorical study. Many rhetorical theories explore the relationship between language, reality, and

identity, and my research demonstrates the importance and validity of further inquiry into these areas.

Conclusion

My research focused on dialectal divergence between British English and American English, and it sought to understand how this difference impacted American student sojourners during an abroad experience. Using a phenomenological research approach, I interviewed 13 American sojourners, with abroad experiences ranging from short-term study abroad programs to full degree enrollment at British institutions, during their study in England. After coding my interview data, three main concepts emerged: sociolinguistic prestige, language globalization and media influence, and visual language variation. The presence of each concept demonstrates how each participant considered audience awareness in a global environment. Since language is a meaning-making tool that fosters social realities, it is imperative that students understand the power of language before departing for an abroad experience. Immersion into a host culture is inherently tied to language capabilities; a crucial component of Sojourner Adjustment is language or dialect adaptation. Even a nuanced language difference, like dialect, influences the surrounding culture and people. In a globalized society, understanding the overlap between language, culture, and identity provides a valuable framework for how individuals can communicate and foster respectful connections across borders.

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Appendix A:

JAMES MADISON
U N I V E R S I T Y ®

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

DATE:	February 17, 2022
TO:	Katherine Peppiatt, Honors College
	Sarah O'Connor, Writing, Rhetoric & Tech Comm
FROM:	Lindsey Harvell-Bowman, Associate Professor, IRB Panel
PROTOCOL TITLE:	A Study of Audience Awareness: How the Differences Between British and American English Impact American Study Abroad Students and Their Perceptions of Linguistic Divergence
FUNDING SOURCE:	None
PROTOCOL NUMBER:	22-3039
APPROVAL PERIOD:	**Approval Date:** February 17, 2022 **Expiration Date:** February 16, 2023

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects has reviewed the protocol entitled, "A Study of Audience Awareness: How the Differences Between British and American English Impact American Study Abroad Students and Their Perceptions of Linguistic Divergence," under 45 CFR 46.110 Expedited Category 6, 7. The project has been approved for the procedures and subjects described in the protocol.

If your study requires any changes, the proposed modifications will need to be submitted in the form of an amendment request to the IRB. Any changes require approval before they can be implemented as part of your study. If there are any adverse events and/or any unanticipated problems during your study, you must notify the IRB within 24 hours of the event or problem.

This approval is issued under James Madison University's Federal Wide Assurance 00007339 with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). If you have any questions regarding your obligations under the IRB's Assurance, please do not hesitate to contact ORI.

Please direct any questions about the IRB's actions on this project to the IRB Chair:

Dr. Lindsey Harvell-Bowman
harve2la@jmu.edu
(540) 568-2611

Lindsey Harvell-Bowman

Appendix B:

Hello,

My name is Katherine, and I am conducting a research study on how the differences between British and American English impact American students abroad. I am seeking individuals to participate in a thirty-minute interview so I can better learn about the experiences of American students. There are no known risks associated with this research. This study has been approved by the IRB, protocol # 22-3039. If you are interested in participating, you can contact me at peppiakt@dukes.jmu.edu.

Thank You,

Katherine Peppiatt

Appendix C:

Consent to Participate in Research

Identification of Investigators & Purpose of Study

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Katherine Peppiatt from James Madison University. The purpose of this study is to research the audience awareness of American students studying abroad in England. This study will contribute to the researcher's completion of her Honors Capstone project.

Research Procedures

Should you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form once all your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. This study consists of an interview that will be administered to individual participants in the university where you are studying abroad. You will be asked to provide answers to a series of questions related to your perception of the differences between British and American English. Your responses will be audio recorded on the researcher's password protected device.

Time Required

Participation in this study will require 30 minutes of your time.

Risks

The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study (that is, no risks beyond the risks associated with everyday life).

Benefits

Potential benefits from participation in this study include reflecting on your experience abroad that could potentially help you adapt your written rhetoric. There are also expected benefits to the study abroad community as the result from this interview that will help study abroad administrators create resources to best prepare students for their study abroad experience.

Incentives

You will not receive any compensation for participation in this study.

Confidentiality

The results of this research will be presented in the researcher's Honors Capstone project. The results of this project will be coded in such a way that the respondent's identity will not be attached to the final form of this study. The researcher retains the right to use and publish non-identifiable data. While individual responses are confidential, aggregate data will be presented representing averages or generalizations about the responses as a whole. All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. Upon completion of the study, all information that matches up individual respondents with their answers, including audio recordings, will be destroyed. Final aggregate results will be made available to participants upon request.

Participation & Withdrawal

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

Questions about the Study

If you have questions or concerns during the time of your participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

Katherine Peppiatt   Sarah O'Connor
Student   Writing, Rhetoric and Technical Communication
James Madison University   James Madison University
peppiakt@dukes.jmu.edu   oconnosh@jmu.edu

Questions about Your Rights as a Research Subject
Dr. Lindsey Harvell-Bowman
Chair, Institutional Review Board
James Madison University
(540) 568-2611
harve2la@jmu.edu

Giving of Consent

I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested of me as a participant in this study. I freely consent to participate. I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions. The investigator provided me with a copy of this form. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age.

☐ I give consent to be audio recorded during my interview. _____ (initials)

_____
Name of Participant (Printed)

_____ _____
Name of Participant (Signed)   Date

_____ _____
Name of Researcher (Signed)   Date

This study has been approved by the IRB, protocol # 22-3039

Appendix D:
Katherine Peppiatt Official IRB Questions

1. How long have you been studying in England?

2. Why did you want to study in England?

3. Did you anticipate language differences between England and the United States before studying abroad?

4. Before studying abroad, did the program director or study abroad office at your college or university mention how you could be impacted by the differences between British and American English?

5. Have you noticed any linguistic differences between British and American English?

6. If you have noticed differences between British and American English, can you specify how you have noticed these issues in writing?

7. Have any of your professors or classmates commented on your American style of writing?

8. Have you tried to adapt your written works to match that of a British audience? If so, how? Why?

9. Why do you think or do not think that it is important to adapt your written works for a British audience?

10. Do you think it would be beneficial for study abroad administrators to prepare students for the differences between British and American English?

Appendix E:

Significant Statements per Participant	

Participant	Statements
Participant 1	"Mostly just the S's and then some specific words, like if the -ized versus -ised."
	"I guess I didn't realize it, but by virtue of having to override my phone, switching to UK English, I kind of learned the difference between UK and US English a lot."
	"There's only, there's certain words, which was like, I don't know why they're spelled differently."
	[when asked about student study abroad materials provided] "went into more other details and like UK culture being different rather than the spelling differences, they didn't go into those at all."
	"There's two major [differences between British and American English]. I mean, this isn't, this is kind of mostly it's about terminology … And then also of course you have the issue where UK accents are like sharply defined along class lines and that's not necessarily true of US accents."
	"Maybe I'm just cognizant of grammar and stuff anyway, because of the, like me, like being a journalist, being an editor and those sorts of things, but I don't really think, oh, I'm in the UK versus I'm in the US."
	"I just noticed that when I was actually back in America, there was still a lot of British in my writing more so when I arrived back the first time. Part of that was because the phone settings, but I think even part of that was like, if I was writing notes to myself that weren't for the newspaper or something, I might put -ised with certain words with an S unconsciously in like when I was writing stuff."
	"That's a good question because really it's more than my actual verbal speech … I don't want to use all these American terms that people wouldn't necessarily know about."
	"I think they should say that differences exist, but I really honestly don't think that they should make it a big deal."
	"I'm not sure how many Americans pay attention to grammar that much."

	"If like after say 1945, you get the world becoming more globalized. If there's basically stopped being major differences between US and UK English or if those stayed the same?"
	"The main differences are around very specific words."
	"The 19th century that they began making a bunch of these changes … there was like a move deliberately to try to change some of the spellings … they made it a deliberate effort to simplify American English."
	"If there's like any misunderstanding between people in the US and people in the UK, it would overwhelmingly relate to cultural or terminology issues."
	"It is definitely worth studying and worth considering how just different ways of presentation or terms can lead to confusion among people."
Participant 2	"Things like color or favorite, it adds the u."
	"I think it's more of a spoken thing than written."
	"I was just covering all my bases because I didn't want like any points ticked off for like spelling and stuff. Although like it wouldn't technically be wrong spelling, but I was just like, I, I just better get acclimated to the language here."
	"I had to learn a lot of new words, just like very casual, like not necessarily in the academic or professional setting, but just like social slang that I didn't know about."
	"I don't think much has changed like in terms of the way I present myself socially."
Participant 3	"They speak funny."
	"They emphasize a lot on like the regional differences between accents and they have a lot of like slang words."
	"That they would add an extra U to like letters."
	"I think the American is better."
	"From what I see most Americans that I talk to, like, just are general Americans."
Participant 4	"The same kind of language difference came up … Do I call it like the first floor and then like ground floor?"

	"I am slightly peeved when I am like writing on the Google docs and it spell checks me, because I guess I'm like trying to quote something, like a passage from one of my readings, which is written in British English, but when I try to paraphrase it, my Google docs like auto correction is in American English. So, it will spell check me. And so now it's getting to a point where like I can see both as correct spellings, which is really interesting."
	"I haven't thought about matching it, and I'm not sure how I would match it. I feel like I haven't read enough or been taught about the differences in writing styles."
	"I think there's an aspect that's really important to catering to your audience that I feel like that's more in the types of arguments that you bring forward versus the way that you write. I don't think I would dramatically change the way I write for the less than six months that I am here for."
	"Now that you mentioned, like the differences in writing styles, I think that could be a really useful tool."
Participant 5	"I was aware that there is slightly different vocabulary from America and from the UK, but I didn't really expect it to be a challenge or anything just that there would be a few words that have different meanings and have different connotations than in the States."
	"They gave us kind of a list of words that are like exclusively, like used by students in the UK."
	"I feel mainly I just notice differences in the kind of the tone that we use. I guess just the little quirks of everyday speech, but not so much that it feels like a goal, like an insurmountable goal, between the two languages."
	"I guess there was the spelling, the OU in labor versus labour, like those kind of differences in spelling sometimes come up. But I think other than that, there hasn't been too many differences in terms of like sentence structure or just the style of writing."
	"I think just spelling, like I've noticed that I've tried to incorporate the OU instead of the normal spelling that I'm used to. But, other than that, I don't think I've made any other noticeable accommodations."
	"I think anytime you go into a different culture, I think there is some kind of responsibility on part of the person who's a guest there to try and assimilate as best as they can."
Participant 6	"It spoke English."

	"I grew up watching all the YouTube videos of people studying abroad, so I was aware of quite a few of them."
	"The first time I was walking down the street and I saw the word tyre spelled out, that was funny."
	"And the thing you say Z, they say that like specialised all that and they actually say it with -sed is like with a Z instead of the S."
	"He would comment on it or I would like use slightly wrong terms, but I think that was more a biology aspect."
	"Not really, since my professor didn't care if we used the American or the British spelling."
	"I probably would've done the basic spell check for it just because I'm in this country, so it would, I would've thought it would be appropriate, but then they said that they didn't care. So, I was like, why would I do the extra effort?"
Participant 7	"They decided to like, British-ize me."
	"There were going to be like dialectal differences between the north and the south."
	"There's still a lot of language that I didn't understand things, I had to get accustomed to."
	"I like did like the whole rundown and for next year, probably this week is right, like a glossary of uni terms … to really like, sort of acclimate them to that sort of language."
	[Have you noticed any linguistic differences?] "Absolutely. Especially with uni terms."
	"For me, it's primarily in speech. I, because the anthropology department is pretty international, and then also with the anthropology, so like their whole stick is cultural differences, I've always written everything in American English."
	"I use like the formatting that they want me to use, but like I've never altered my written English in any way, shape or form sort of out of stubbornness, but also sort of because I don't have to."

	"I know if I download a template from a class, it'll be in like United Kingdom English and I'll switch into United States because I'll start like typing, like organized and it'll be like, you spelled this wrong. And I was, I've not spelled this wrong, leave me alone. But yeah, so I mean, there definitely absolutely is a difference, but I just have chosen to ignore it."
	"I sort of have my American voice and my British voice."
	"It's word differences, but it's also just the whole manner of speaking phrases."
	"I think a lot of issues come from the desire to be understood. Not so much with students, but especially with locals and especially the college staff who are older, who haven't consumed the level of American media that people our age have."
	"As soon as I go back home, give me like a few days or a week, and I'm back to my like normal American English."
	"As much as it pains the British to hear it, American English is more common in the world. It is the standard in most places. And also, because American cultural dominance in media, a lot of people who are speaking English as a second language are learning American English, unless they're in some very specific places."
	"This is the word; this is what it means. Alphabetical order. Very Simple."
Participant 8	"I think the biggest thing is a lot of my tutors mark spelling differences in my paper. So, I just transitioned to all of those spellings."
	"Primarily spelling, a few grammar things. I feel like people don't use the Oxford comma very much over here and then quotations, but in terms of the language, I think it's mainly just tutors marking things."
	"I think definitely the spelling, just because I changed the settings on my computer, so I just adapted to doing it, and I pretty much transitioned to doing it that way in terms of phrases and things like that."
	[Is it important to adapt written works?] "All of our assessment is written and a lot of the things that I'm reading for it are from British authors. I also focus on British history. So, a lot of what I'm reading has this spelling and the phrasing. So, I don't think that it's important necessarily, but I think that it's just easier."

	"This is cause I'm American, you're British, never making that connection just to that. They were saying something weird. So, I think it took a while to kind of adjust to, or to assume that they're what they're saying, they're saying because they're British not cause it's just something weird I guess."
	"I think the one that makes the most sense to me, that's going be the hardest to change back is writing the date doing the day first … I definitely do spell with a lot of British spellings."
	"All of the Z and S's. Then the U's, those are the main ones."
	"I think living in America, the British culture that we see is very, the phrases that we think about, like 'cheers' and things like that are almost, like people do say it, but it's almost stereotypical."
Participant 9	"There was actually one essay that I submitted last year, and I didn't get marks taken off for it, but every single time I used an S or a Z like interchangeably, he would like mark it."
	"[professor taking marks off for American spelling] Well, that's not fair."
	"The teachers were like, we don't care if you use the American, but just keep it the same. Because obviously if you're here for a few months, you do start to add the U add the S subtract, but I don't even know if that's Z anymore, but yeah."
	"Linguistically, it's difficult to say, because, okay, you can say the S, Z, the U, whatever. But, grammar's the same and I, I would say it's the same in all of England."
	"I do think their way of writing is a lot more formal than ours. I think that's a culture thing."
	"English is English, it's just another dialect and then at the end of the day everyone can understand each other."
	"You know how you have the Grammarly like app on words, I have it set to British."
	"I think people can understand American accent more than they can understand the English accent. Like back home. I think it's because TV shows, it just it's more international."

	"I think it's important maybe in an academic sense, you have come to their country, and it's more of a respect thing. Like if they would come over, I don't expect them to change who they are."
	"It's more format, which is still linguistic."
	"To me you can write the way you write, and a professor isn't going to be like that's not right because at the end of the day, it is right. You're just in a different country doing it a different way."
Participant 10	"I picked here because the language thing kind of freaked me out, they speak English so not having to learn that, it intimidated me."
	"We have different forms of English."
	"There's different words for a lot of things."
	"I noticed the spelling, like they do, there's like two, two or three spelling differences that are found, like they use like, -ISED instead of -IZED and they use O U R instead of O R or, and I mean, that's like the main things I've noticed in writing the spellings or some words."
	"I tried to use the British when I could, but they said be careful with that in the instructions because they said try to remain consistent."
	"Their … speaking and writing seems to be more formal than ours in general …I tried to make the paper reflect that, but the main thing would be the spellings."
	"The work should be designed to fit the audience."
	"I did watch YouTube videos before. I did like just because I'm like, 'how's this going to be?'"
Participant 11	"I think it's less, for me, it was less of what I expected, which was syntax or other kind of differences and more accents, like being able to, I guess, understand different accents, especially across the wider England rather than just London."
	"Some words and phrases are a lot different or kind of took me just an extra second to be like, oh, this is what they mean."
	"I, definitely the thing that always gets me is the S and Z."
	"I, one thing that I have started to do now is change my proofing language to UK English, which helps catch a lot more of those weird spelling things, the S's and the U adding to words."

	"I think depending on the consistency is key and who your audience is."
	"This is how we want you to write and spell things and how you change your proofing language to UK versus US English."
	"I feel like because I expected it to be so similar, it was much more jarring when things were different."
Participant 12	"I did not take … me personally writing … I did not take that into account."
	"There was the word relatively that my tutor and I had sort of different ideas of the implications of what relatively implied."
	"I thought about using British spellings, and then I simply decided not to because I it didn't affect the readability, and it was only my tutor reading it."
	"As an American reading all these British texts, the British spellings didn't really affect how I read the texts."
Participant 13	"Although there have been surprising phrases that kind of caught me off guard as well."
	"It's still very bizarre words you haven't really heard before."
	"I know my tutor pointed out one. When you used toward, I think, the British phrasing is just toward, but sometimes in the United States they say towards."
	"The only adjustments I've made have been if my tutor pointed them out previously and then I would adjust, but there was never anything as far as language barriers that I transitioned from, it was more just grammatical."
	"I do think it's important to do so that because I don't know, we're comfortable reading in a language that we grew up reading and to write in that format is probably easier of an easier adjustment and you can probably relate to the work overall better."
	"I think it is pretty incredible that we all, we speak the same language, but there's such a different, different aspects that you don't expect, even though you are speaking the same language."