

TEXT-IMAGE INTERRELATIONSHIPS IN BRITISH ENGLISH VERSUS AMERICAN ENGLISH NOMINALS

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Abstract:

This paper investigates dialectal variation in English from a cognitive linguistic perspective, focusing on how different dialects (American English and British English) conceptualise and convey meaning through alternative terms and phrases. Abandoning objectivist semantics, the study adopts a conceptualist view, emphasising the human ability to construe situations in multiple ways and focus on salient features. It explores dialectal variation in nominal structures using examples from a corpus of usage guidebooks. The analysis applies the base/profile theory to demonstrate how different dialects highlight distinct aspects of concepts, revealing subtle differences between seemingly synonymous words. Profiling plays a central role in this process, as it involves emphasising specific characteristics of an object, either physical or non-physical, depending on what is most salient in a given context. Key profiling aspects such as purpose, user, container, content, and origin influence how dialects construe and represent meaning. For instance, the purpose behind an object, the identity of its user, or the container holding it can shape how it is linguistically framed. Similarly, focusing on the content or the origin of a concept brings out differences in mental construal, which can vary significantly between dialects. By analysing these cognitive patterns, the study reveals that what are traditionally considered synonymous terms across dialects are actually functionally equivalent expressions with distinct conceptual delineations. The findings challenge the notion of strict lexical similarity and call for a redefinition of dialectal synonymy as functional equivalence, shaped by cognitive and cultural factors. Ultimately, the study sheds light on how profiling directs attention to different facets of a concept, influencing perception, communication, and understanding between speakers of different English dialects.

Keywords: *Dialect; Cognitive Linguistics; Construal; Base/ Profile Theory.*