

**ESV** ERICH  
SCHMIDT  
VERLAG

GRUNDLAGEN DER ANGLISTIK UND AMERIKANISTIK

Herausgegeben von Rüdiger Ahrens und Edgar W. Schneider

Band 39

# **Variation and Change in English**

An Introduction

von  
Daniel Schreier

ERICH SCHMIDT VERLAG

**Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek**

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

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[ESV.info/978 3 503 15507 1](http://ESV.info/978%203%20503%2015507%201)

ISBN 978 3 503 15507 1

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Ansi/Niso Z 39.48-1992 als auch der ISO-Norm 9706.

Druck und Bindung: Strauss, Mörlenbach

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## Preface

I admit I feel somewhat apologetic writing this preface. The main reason is that in order to save whatever may be left of my academic reputation, I cannot bring myself to admit publicly when the manuscript was originally due – so perhaps let me conveniently forget and say that, when I finally handed it in, I was rather relieved to hear that the contract was still valid.

So first and foremost, I must thank Dr Carina Lehnen of Erich Schmidt Verlag for her support over the years, for her good advice and valuable input, her astounding patience, and of course her understanding for a contributor who ... well, took his time, full stop (let there be no mistake, I myself would have kicked me out long ago). At the same time, I wish to thank Edgar W. Schneider, University of Regensburg, a wonderful colleague and dear friend of many years, who encouraged me to contribute a volume to this fine series and made extremely useful and extensive comments on earlier draft versions. As always (I am tempted to say), Edgar's careful reading and relentless criticism saved me from a usual round of sloppy mistakes and oversights. I also wish to acknowledge the support of the University of Zurich, who awarded me a competitive sabbatical in autumn 2013, which (among other things) allowed me to finish this book; and my colleague Miriam Locher, in whose office I not only marveled at beautiful views but also finished first drafts of chapters 3 and 4 when I had a guest lectureship at the University of Basel. The entire manuscript was read and checked by Nicole Eberle and Danae Perez-Inofuentes, my wonderful research assistants, who made most helpful comments and saved me from unnecessary repetitions. Lena Posingies, finally, the copy editor, spotted whatever inconsistencies remained after several rounds of editing when going through the final manuscript. My heartfelt thanks go to all of them. I also wish to acknowledge the use of map 1.1, courtesy of the University of Swansea (adapted from Parry, David (1999): *Grammar and Glossary of Anglo-Welsh Dialects*. Sheffield: National Centre for English Cultural Tradition), and map 1.2, which is taken from Labov, William/Ash, Sharon/Boberg, Charles (2008): *The Atlas of North American English. Phonetics, Phonology and Sound Change*. Berlin: de Gruyter Mouton.

Let me at this stage add a short note on how to use this book: the activities in chapters 1 to 4 refer to material discussed in the text and are best seen as a bridge between theory and practice. I have done whatever I can to make them useful for class work. Moreover, to further the horizon, I refer to additional material and complementary readings after each chapter. In this way, it is my hope that "Variation and change in English" is an introduction for beginners and advanced BA students but that MA students in their first year will find it useful in a challenging

## Preface

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way also. Some knowledge of general linguistics and English phonetics and phonology is expected, though every effort was made to avoid unnecessary technicalities.

Last but not least, I tried very hard to write a book that I myself as a student would have found useful. Not surprisingly, this brought back long-forgotten memories from my student days in Basel and Neuchâtel. I came to realize yet again how much I am indebted to two outstanding sociolinguists, Jenny Cheshire and Peter Trudgill, inspiring, enthusiastic teachers and wonderful colleagues both, who convinced me that doing sociolinguistics might be worthwhile and helped me on the way. When I was a student, the idea of doing linguistics for a living was simply inconceivable. This one is for them too.

And finally - will Änglisch jo d Geschäftssprooch isch, abr Baseldytsch bekanntlyg die vom Härz: Ain vo de vyylne Gründ worum das Buech e chli duurt hett, isch d Geburt vo unsrem glaine Ängeli Alessia gsi – dr bescht Grund für jeedi Vrögerig. E gschyde Mensch hett emol gsait, s Lääbe mit Kindr kunnt in Farb, das ohni isch numme schwarz-wyss. Und eso, hejo, isch das Buech dr Alessia gwidmet, mit Dang für all die Stund voll vo Lache, Entdegge und Stuune.

Daniel Schreier

Basel, Switzerland; February 2014