

THE DIFFERENCES IN THE USE OF PRESENT PERFECT AND SIMPLE PAST BETWEEN BRITISH AND AMERICAN ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

The present paper aims to analyze differences in the use of the present perfect (henceforth PP) and the simple past (henceforth SP) between British English (BrE) and American English (AmE). Both PP and SP are used to refer to an event or state in the past. In addition, both can be used to refer to a state of affairs that existed for a period of time. The primary difference in meaning between PP and SP is that while the former describes a situation that continues to exist up to the present time, the latter describes a situation that no longer exists or an event that took place at a particular time in the past. This meaning difference is often made explicit by temporal adverbs accompanying the main verb (Biber et al., 1999, 467). In an attempt to examine the differences in the use of PP and SP between BrE and AmE, the present study employs six temporal adverbs: already, just, never, ever, yet, and before. These adverbs have been used because some of these are the most frequent temporal adverbs in English (Biber et al., 1999, 795-99) and these adverbs have been explored in many of the previous studies (e.g., Quirk et al., 1985; Easiness 1997; Hundt and Smith 2009; Yao and Collins 2012) in relation to their use in PP and SP.

KEYWORDS: *BrE and AmE, Analyzing the Occurrences*

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