

New-Dialect Formation: The Inevitability of Colonial Englishes

Peter Trudgill

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Distinguished sociolinguist Peter Trudgill here presents a controversial new theory about dialect contact and the formation of new colonial dialects. He examines the genesis of Latin American Spanish, Canadian French, and North American English and in particular concentrates on Australian, New Zealand, and South African English. These varieties developed during the nineteenth century along with the immigration of settlers from Britain and Ireland. The novelty of Trudgill's theory is that these new varieties of English were predictable and deterministic according to certain demographic and linguistic principles, and that all these varieties of colonial Englishes are similar to each other because they were formed out of similar mixtures according to the same principles. Trudgill argues no role in colonial dialect development and that the work of dialect formation was carried out by children over a period of two generations. Trudgill's work represents an exciting new approach to the study of language contact and dialects in its emphasis on the notion of predictability and the important role of children.



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