



Dialectal differences

1 Structurally, the English language is fairly homogeneous all over the
2 world, but there are marked differences in pronunciation between its
3 many dialects. It is interesting to note that some of the most striking of
4 these differences occur in the small island of Britain, a fact for which
5 there is, of course, a perfectly logical historical explanation. Visitors
6 from the United States of America, where only three main dialects are
7 recognized, are often taken aback when they hear the widely differing
8 British accents.

9 During the Second World War, a number of British and American
10 mechanics who were stationed in a certain country in the Near East,
11 were living together in a local boarding house. One day at tea-time an
12 American who hailed from Kansas was sitting opposite a
13 Yorkshireman who had a strong local accent and two Londoners, one
14 of whom spoke in the Received Pronunciation while the other had a
15 marked Cockney accent. After listening for some time to the
16 conversation of these three, the Kansan suddenly burst in with: "Say, I
17 can't figure out how you Britishers understand one another."

The source of the text reproduced above is unknown. It was inherited from colleagues some time in the early 1990s. I would be grateful to receive any information about the source of this text.