A Background Study of Canadian English

ABSTRACT

A more complete understanding of the background of language will be effective in any approach to the grammar and usage of language. In a series of my papers (2011, 2012 a, 2012 b, 2013), we have argued that daily life in Canada—from the author’s personal experiences and knowledge from having lived in Toronto, Canada—will help in an understanding of Canadian English.

From March to September in 2010, the author was able to live and study in Toronto, Canada as a visiting research scholar at the Department of English, the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies, York University, with financial support from Kwansei Gakuin University.

Toronto, the largest city in Canada, is fairly close to Ottawa, the capital city, and is situated only a few hours from the French/English bilingual region of Quebec. It also has excellent transportation links to other areas in Canada, making it one of the best areas for the study of Canadian English.

Daily life and research at York University was most useful, and the author was able to gain many valuable insights into the culture of the Canadian people, as well as discovering many things not known here in Japan before.

The present paper deals not only with Canadian English but also with Canadian culture, involving a number of aspects of everyday life in Canada including the manners and customs of the Canadian people. The topics I deal with are (1) American English expressions in Canadian English such as “simplification of spellings,” “take out or to go,” “diaper,” and so on; (2) meanings of promotion; (3) Canadian form of government including Michaëlle Jean the Governor General; (4) a sketch of characteristics of the Canadian; (5) railway coach lighting in Canada; (6) amusement parks in and around Toronto; (7) an addendum to my previous paper (2012); (8) an addendum to my previous paper (2013). It may safely be said that these topics are explored from points of view not well known here in Japan.

Daily life in Toronto showed the author a number of real images and actual situations of life in Canada that are not well known in Japan. In addition, the author has been inspired to study the background so as to have a better understanding of Canadian English.

It is hoped that the papers the author is currently writing on the background of Canadian English will add to the information already known, and will lead to a more complete understanding of the language as well as daily life in Canada.

Key Words: Canadian English, Canadian daily life, Canadian culture and tradition