

## In Search of the Standard in Canadian English



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Abstract

This volume contains proceedings of a 1985 conference at Queen's University that gathered a diverse group of professionals working with language (linguists, lexicographers, teachers, journalists, and editors) to discuss their understanding of and guidelines for standard English usage in Canada.

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This paper reflects on 'standards' in Canadian English in scholarly research and the public debate about English in Canada from a number of viewpoints. The goals of these reflections are three-fold. First, I aim to characterize the chasm between scholarly and public debates about a language 'standard' in Canadian English (CanE). While this debate is not new (e.g. Kretzschmar, 2009: 1-5 for a recent example), its application in the Canadian context is a desideratum. 1986. *In Search of the Standard in Canadian English* [Strathy Language Unit Occasional Papers 1]. Kingston, Ontario: Queen's University. Parvin, V. E. 1965. *Authorization of Textbooks for the Schools of Ontario*. Canadian English (CaE) is a variety of English used in Canada. More than 25 million Canadians (85 percent of the population) have some knowledge of English (2001 census [1]). Canadian English spelling can be described as a mixture of American English, British English, Quebec French, and unique Canadianisms. Canadian vocabulary is similar to American English, yet with key differences and local variations. History. The term "Canadian English" is first attested in a speech by the Rev. Geikie, a Scottish-born Canadian, reflected the Anglo-centric attitude prevalent in Canada for the next hundred years when he referred to the language as "a corrupt dialect," in comparison to what he considered the proper English spoken by immigrants from Britain.[1].