

BRITISH AND SCOTTISH ENGLISH: THE ROOTS OF DIFFERENCES

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The article is dedicated to the comparison of two dialects - British (Standard) English and Scottish English – with the aim of detecting resemblance and difference between them. Scotland, being a completely unique culture, different from the English one, has demonstrated its peculiarity in its language as well, which, under the influence of many factors, later led to a formation of a new dialect of the English language. The aim of the research is to study the main aspects of the Scottish dialect, find out the circumstances of its appearance as well as to analyse the counterparts of the language itself: phonetics, grammar and the vocabulary. The comparative analysis of these two dialects would be interesting too, in order to see the difference in their origin and uniqueness of their development. The results might be helpful to students, masters and teachers, who are eager to deepen the knowledge about the language, as well as to people, who are interested in the topic and keen to learn the Scottish dialect of English.

Key words: Scottish English; Scottish dialect; comparative linguistic analysis; origin of Scottish English; British English.

Language plays an important role in the life of every nation. There is even a quote of Ria Mae Brown, saying that language is a roadmap of a culture adding that it tells you where its people came from and where they are going. But everything is not so easy with Scotland. Basically, there are two speech forms developed here, both of which came from Old English: *Scottish English* and *Scots*. The first one is regarded as a dialect of English, while the second is thought to be a distinct language from a Germanic branch of languages. Still, British and Scottish variants have a lot in common, so the goal is to compare these two languages, find their similarities or differences, and summarize the results by proving or refuting the fact that «Scottish English is a dialect of British English».

First of all, what is a dialect? The dialect, according to Cambridge Dictionary, is «a form of a language that people speak in a particular part of a country, containing some different words and grammar, etc.». Thus, before going into the vocabulary and grammar, we need to consider the country itself, or, to be precise, its history [1].

English came to the British Isles in the V century AD, together with the Germanic tribes – Angles, Jutes and Saxons. The language they spoke is now known as Old English. It consisted of four dialects: Northumbrian, Mercian, Kentish and West Saxon, where the first two ones were crucial components in the development of Scots. In the 8th century a new tribe decided to conquer

Britain – the Vikings, who brought their own language, called Old Norse. They settled in Northern Scotland, the Northern Islands and the Hebrides, changing the old language and turning it into a new one. From that time Old English, spoken in Scotland, began to transform into the new version of it – into Scottish English. The language was preserved because of the historic conditions of that time: the Vikings themselves, who mixed with the local population, severely protected their lifestyle, including the way they pronounced the words. The two parts of the country – both the Scottish and the English one were developing in their own unique way, and if the English wanted to spread their influence, even through the use of English, it was very hard to do so, due to the difficult nature surroundings and harsh people, who were not eager at all to accept strangers' mother tongue [2].

Scotland was never invaded by the Normans, but the Scottish Royal court did feel its influence: King David married Matilda, who was a niece of William the Conqueror. He also awarded Scottish lands and positions of power to the members of Anglo-Scottish elite, which encouraged them to settle in Scotland. Many of them were from the old Danelaw area so their English was heavily influenced by Scandinavian. Thus, king David also established towns – Royal Burghs – with special trading privileges, which also attracted people, especially from the Low Countries. As a result, the Scottish speech brought together varying proportions of Gaelic, local Anglican, Scandinavian-influenced English and Dutch. Still, the surviving documents are all written in Latin, that's why it's hard to evaluate the effect these languages had on today's Scottish English, even though the impact of them is indisputable.

The further development of the language began in the XVII century and is connected with the name of king James I, who moved his court to England. During that time, Scottish English became closer to the variant we know today, because even the poets of the court began adapting the language and style of their verse to the tastes of the English market. This was later characterized as the sudden and total eclipse of Scots as a literary language. The spread of the British variant of English was also supported by the absence of the Scottish translation of the Bible, so people could only pray while using the British version of the book. However, despite the closeness of two languages, some words and terms in Scotland remained the same: these Scottish equivalents either don't exist in British English or have different meanings [3].

Today «Scottish Standard English» is spoken all over Scotland, having only slight differences in speaking in different areas of the country. Scots exists now as well. While its contemporary usage is restricted to a minority of the rural population, Scots is still seen as forming «the substratum of general

English in Scotland» [4]. In the 2011 National Census, 93.8 percent of Scotland's population declared that they spoke, read and wrote (Scottish) English, leaving 6.2 percent who had some issues. The statistics show the latter proportion of the population, by their specific skills set.

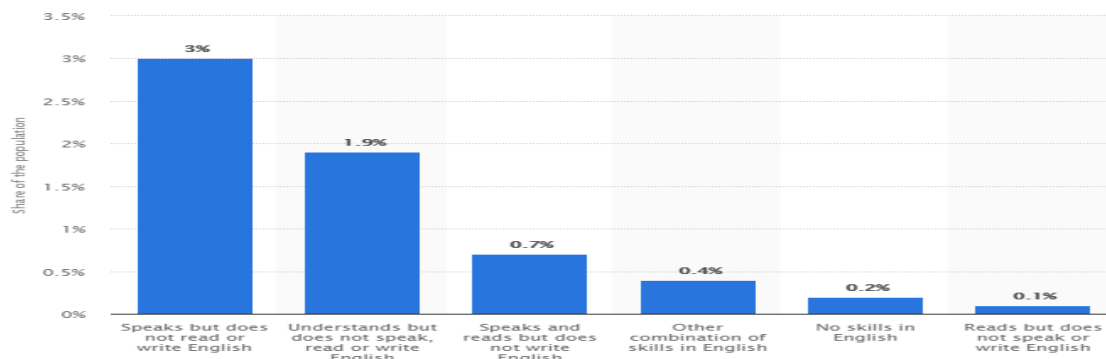


Fig. 1. Proportion of the population, by their specific skills set

However, despite the distinction between Scottish and British variants, they have much in common: the alphabet, single grammar (with only slight differences), practically the same vocabulary. Still the main difference lies in pronunciation. At first the Scottish dialect has fewer vowels, which do not have the same pronunciation as in the British equivalent. For example, the /o/ sound in Standard English is often pronounced with an /ae/ sound instead. The word «cannot» from Standard English transforms into «cannae» in Scottish English, where the /t/ is swallowed, and the /o/ sound changes into the /ae/. Another distinctive feature is the glottal stop – the blocking of the airway to pronounce the letter *t* (though, in Scottish English the letter *t* seems to be swallowed by the glottal stop entirely). For example, «glottal» would become /glo'al/. The letter *r* also has a change in speaking. In standard British English, the sound *r* would almost vanish, while in Scottish version it is pronounced clearly, with a much stronger sound [5].

The difference between two versions of English lies in grammar as well, for instance in the usage of a word «how», which usually replaces «why» in questions: «How no?» instead of «Why not?», together with the usage of some grammatical constructions, which are unacceptable in British English, but commonly used in the Scottish one: «*This needs done*». (Sc.E) – «This needs doing» (Br.E); «*Amn't I?*» (Sc.E.) – «Aren't I?» (Br.E) [6].

The next thing, which is distinct in the Scottish version – is the vocabulary. These are the words, which can be found only in the Scottish dialect: «*lochs*» replace «lakes», «*glens*» – «valleys». Some terms do not even exist in Standard English, like «*dreich*», which means «extremely overcast» or «*ablach*», which stands for «an insignificant person». Idioms that are characteristic of Scotland are called «Scotticisms», but they mostly occur in spoken rather than in written English, such as «*You'd better just caw*

canny» meaning «You'd better just go easy/Don't overdo it» or «*What a dreich day!*» meaning «What a dull, miserable, overcast day» (of weather) [6].

So, to summarize everything we need to return back to the definition of a dialect. While British English is spoken mainly in England, the Scottish variant is common for Scotland (i.e. in one part of the country). Then, even though these two types of English have the single basis for grammar, the Scottish one has its own peculiarities and distinctive features. The pronunciation also varies, however not much enough to be considered a different language, having the same basic vowels and consonants, but pronounced in a special way. What concerns the vocabulary – it is unique and special, but it is more of a sign of a different historic development, in addition to different natural surroundings, which sharpened not only the character of people, but also had an effect on the language they spoke. The mixture of foreign dialects made an impact on Scottish variant, which only underlines its distinction from the original English.

In conclusion, it is proved that Scottish English is a dialect of Standard English and is a part of British English, by finding out the differences between the languages and comparing them with each other. Considering the fact that they are used in different parts of the United Kingdom, Scottish English remains a branch of one single language family and is to be regarded as a variety of the English language.

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