

Practice Unit 10

1. Explain the following joke:

Cockney nurse (to patient): *Cheer up, you're going home to die.*

2. Consult your library for a copy of the *Computer-Developed Linguistic Atlas of England* (Viereck et al., 1991 & 1997) or the *Linguistic Atlas of New England* (LANE, Kurath et al.), identify a region of your choice each and draw up profiles listing the phonetic, grammatical and lexical characteristics identifying the local dialect.
3. Visit web sources such as the BBC's "Voices" or the "International Dialects of English Archive (IDEA)" and download one audio-file each illustrating a British and an American regional dialect. Describe the salient characteristics of each of the two varieties.
4. The British Library and the United States' Library of Congress are the two most prominent libraries of the English-speaking world. Check their homepages to see what types of audio and audiovisual holdings they offer. Identify holdings which are of interest to linguists.
5. Consult a reference work such as Peter Trudgill's *Dialects of England* (2nd edition 1999, Oxford: Blackwell) to find out which pronunciation features are represented by those isoglosses in Figure 10.2 on page 162 in the book which were not discussed in the text.
6. Somewhat exceptionally for dialects and languages which have not been standardised, there is a long and distinguished tradition of literary writing in Scots. Below you find two typical examples of how writers handled the problem of reducing spoken language to writing at two successive stages in time.

Literary writing in Scots, Text 1: Robert Burns (1759-1796)

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled, ["who have" [should be "at has"?]]
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed,

Or to victorie.

*Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front of battle lour;
See approach proud Edward's power -
Chains and slaverie!*

*Wha will be a traitor's knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha's sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee!*

*Wha for Scotland's King and Law,
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Free-man stand, or free-man fa'?
Let him follow me!*

*By oppression's woes and pains!
By your sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free!*

*Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!
Let us do, or die!*

Literary writing in Scots, Text 2: Tom Leonard (b. 1944), from Intimate Voices - 1984

Listen to the sound file of Tom Leonard's poem [here](#)

*this is thi
six a clock
news thi
man said n
thi reason
a talk wia
BBC accent
iz coz yi
widny wahnt
mi ti talk
aboot thi
trooth wia
voice lik
wanna yoo
scruff. if
a toktaboot
thi trooth
lik wanna yoo
scruff yi
widny think*

*it wuz troo.
 jist wanna yoo
 scruff tokn.
 thirza right
 way ti spell
 ana right way
 to tok it. this
 is me tokn yir
 right way a
 spellin. this
 is ma trooth.
 yooz doant no
 thi trooth
 yirsellz cawz
 yi canny talk
 right. this is
 the six a clock
 nyooz. belt up.*

As a starting point for your analysis, re-write the texts in standard English. Which Scots (and Scottish English) features do the two writers attempt to represent? Identify dialect dictionaries and other reference works you might use in those cases in which you do not get the meaning of a passage.

7. In his history play *Henry V*, Shakespeare presents three officers - Fluellen (= Llewellyn), Jamy and Macmorris -, whose English is distinctly non-standard. Given the context of the play, which varieties might Shakespeare have had in mind?

Fluellen: *Ay, so please your Majesty. The Duke of Exeter has very gallantly maintained the pridge; the French is gone off, look you, and there is gallant and most prave passages. Marry, th'athversary was have possession of the the pridge, but he is enforced to retire, and the Duke of Exeter is master of the pridge. I can tell your Majesty, the Duke is a prave man. (Henry V, III, 6)*

Fluellen: *Captain Jamy is a marvellous falorous gentleman, that is certain, and of great expedition and knowledge in th'ancient wars, upon my particular knowledge of his directions. By Cheshu he will maintain his argument as well as any military man in the world in the disciplines of the pristine wars of the Romans.*

Jamy: *I say gud-day, Captain Fluellen.*

Fluellen: *God-den to your worhsip, good captain James.*

Gower: *How now, Captain Macmorris, have you quite the mines? Have the pioneers given o'er?*

Macmorris: *By Chrish la tish ill done; the work ish give over, the trompet sound the retreat. By my hand I swear, and my father's soul, the work ish ill done; it ish give over. I would have blowed up the town, so Chrish save me la, in an hour. O tish ill done, tish ill done; by my hand tish ill done. (Henry V, III, 6;2)*

