2.1 ENGLISH IN THE BRITISH ISLES

OBJECTIVES

This practice session introduces a topic in the development and functioning of the mainland varieties of English, i.e. the forms of English in the British Isles. It traces the dissemination of English beyond England and examines the account given to such spread.

IN THIS SESSION, YOU WILL STUDY:

- about the varieties of English spoken within England;
- how English became established outside England as the first language in other countries within the British Isles;
- what distinguishes mainland (British) English from overseas Englishes.

OUTLINE

1. Sociolinguistic situation in the British Isles.
   1.1.Coexisting languages and their speakers.
   1.2.Standard and non-standard varieties of English.
      1.2.1. England.
      1.2.2. Scotland.
      1.2.3. Wales.
      1.2.4. Northern Ireland and Ireland.
      1.2.5. Other regions: Cornwall, the Isle of Manx, the Shetland and Orkney Islands.
   2. Distinctiveness of British English varieties on individual levels.

SELF-STUDY INSTRUCTIONS

Reading for this session on your own, **it is important to give attention to the following facts**.

- One of the key ideas to emphasize is about homogeneity of English in its early history. English started as a collection of Germanic dialects. Although it experienced some influence during the Scandinavian and Norman invasions, it was not until the Middle Ages that English, as a result of colonization, was extended beyond England.
- In some regions of the British Isles, particularly in Scotland, Wales and Ireland, such Celtic languages as Gaelic, Welsh and Irish continued to be widely spoken long after the Germanic invasions (the 5th century AD) followed by the introduction and establishment of English.
- The Celtic-speaking areas were colonized in the Middle Ages and thus exposed to different varieties of English spoken in England and other languages (Flemish, French) brought there.
- It is necessary to focus on that the mixed demographic background stimulated the transportation of different and mainly nonstandard varieties and later the process of dialect-levelling.

- Today, English in Britain embraces a rich diversity of language forms used in various contexts and in different areas.

RECOMMENDED READING

Crystal D. Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1995. – P. 27, 32.

FURTHE RREADING

Козлова Т.О. Іконічність у лексиці індоєвропейської прамови. Запоріжжя : Кругозір, 2015. С. 76-77, 83, 89-91, 98, 106-107, 119-122.

Козлова Т. О. Лінгвокраїнознавство : навчальний посібник для здобувачів ступеня вищої освіти бакалавра спеціальності "Середня освіта" освітньо-професійних програм "Середня освіта (Українська мова і література)", "Середня освіта (Історія)", "Середня освіта (Математика)", "Середня освіта (Інформатика)". Запоріжжя : Запорізький національний університет, 2021. 140 с.

English Around the World: Sociolinguistic Perspectives / Ed. by Jenny Cheshire. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2012. P. 13-86.

Trudgill P. A Glossary of Sociolinguistics. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2003. 148 p.

INTERNET RESOURCES

Hickey R. Variety studies. Access mode : https://www.uni-due.de/ELE/VarietiesOfEnglish.pdf . P. 14-26.

Katalin B. B. Beginner's English Dialectology: An introduction to the accents and dialects of English. Budapest : AD LIBRUM, 2008. P. 16-43. Access mode : http://mek.oszk.hu/15100/15126/15126.pdf

IMPORTANT CONCEPTS AND TERMS IN THIS SESSION

- Anglo-Irish;
- Brummy;
- Cockney;
- dialect levelling;
- Geordie;
- Hiberno- English;
- Irish English;
- RP;
- Scots;
- Scottish English;
- Scottish Standard English;
- Scouse;
- Severn–Wash line;
- Welsh English.

SELF-STUDY ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment 1. Comment on the following quote:

"Many English people are also regularly exposed to RP in personal face-to-face contact. For a small minority, it is their own speech. Yet no accent is a homogeneous invariant monolith, certainly not RP" (Wells, 1982: 279).

Assignment 2. There are different versions of RP origin. Read the extracts and say which of them suggests RP origin from one of these senses: 'received at court'; 'generally accepted'; 'exclusive'?

A. "**received pronunciation** (also **received standard**) the standard form of British English pronunciation, based on educated speech in southern England, widely accepted as a standard elsewhere" (*The New Oxford American Dictionary*, OUP, 2001: 1421);

B. "…RP, the top accent in the pyramid…" (Jones, 2001: 113);

C. "In earlier centuries, you could tell where an English lord or lady came from by their regional form of English. But by the early twentieth century, a person who spoke with a regional accent in England was most unlikely to belong to the upper class. Upper-class people had an upper class education, and that generally meant a public (i.e. private!) school where they learned to speak RP. RP stands not for 'Real Posh' (as suggested to me by a young friend), but rather for Received Pronunciation – the accent of the best educated and most prestigious members of English society. It is claimed that the label derives from the accent which was 'received' at the royal court, and it is sometimes identified with 'the Queen's English', although the language used by Queen Elizabeth II, as portrayed so brilliantly by Helen Mirren in the movies *The Queen*, is a rather old-fashioned variety of RP.

RP was promoted by the BBC for decades. It is essentially a social accent not a regional one. Indeed, it *conceals* a speaker's regional origins. This is nicely illustrated in …the accent triangle" (Holmes, 2013: 139);

D. "We can say that *RP* developed from a South Eastern *accent*, that is, from a geographical *accent* into a social …" (Speck, 2011: 12).

E.



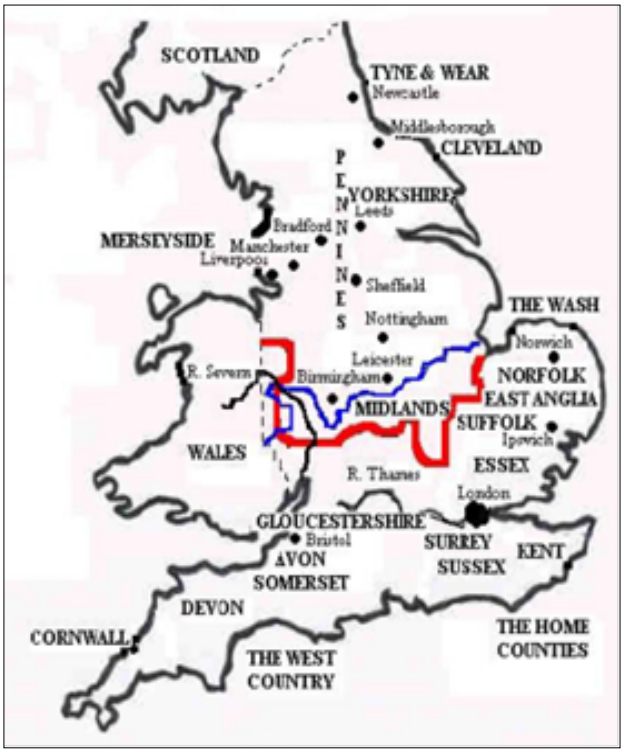
Assignment 3.

To see where RP started, on the map of England trace a triangle including London, Oxford and Cambridge as the corners of the triangle.

Source: UK Universities map, Maps of World, 2002-2017

Assignment 4. Work through P. 16-19, 25-28, 32-41 of *Beginner's English Dialectology*, 2008 by B.B. Katalin and answer the following points:

- Does Welsh English show significant resemblances to Scottish and Irish English? Why / Why not?
- Do many people in England speak RP? If not, what characteristics do they exhibit?
- What kind of regional division is marked by the Severn–Wash line? What distinguishes the linguistic north from the linguistic south?
- What regions does the linguistic north comprise? What are the major urban varieties there?



- As you can see in the map, the approximate boundaries of two rather salient pronunciation features (the so called *FOOT-STRUT Split* and *BATH broadening*) nearly coincide. Both lines roughly run from the River Severn in the west to the Wash in the east. Which of these lines (thick red or thin blue) marks the major dialect boundary and can be referred to as *the Severn–Wash line*. Which of these line marks the boundary between the linguistic north and the linguistic south?

The Major Linguistic Areas in England (*Source*: Katalin, 2008: 17)

- What is the best known urban variety of English that even found its way into popular culture and literature?
- Find two or three examples of Cockney rhyming slang.
- Can you instance differences between Englishes in England and Wales found in pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary? Give two or three examples for each.
- What is the name for the English-based variety in Scotland?
- Is there a general agreement as to whether Scots is a dialect of English or a separate language?
- What term is used to refer to Standard English with a Scottish accent?
- Is the linguistic situation in Ireland similar to the one in Scotland? Why / Why not?
- What three languages are spoken in Ireland?
- What is the difference between Anglo-Irish and Hiberno-English?
- Can you give instances of specific features of English in Scotland and Ireland (regarding pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar)?

🗝 **Assignment 5.** Make up a glossary of the following terms: *Brummy; Cockney; dialect levelling; Georgie; Scouse; Severn-Wash line.*