

**Undergraduate Thesis Assessment Rubric**  
**Department of English, Faculty of Education, University of West Bohemia**

Thesis Author: **Ivan Audes**  
 Title: *Dialect Research of the United Kingdom*  
 Length: 34 pages  
 Text Length: 31 pages

<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	<b>Scale</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1. Introduction is well written, brief, interesting, and compelling. It motivates the work and provides a clear statement of the examined issue. It presents and overview of the thesis.	Outstanding Very good <b>Acceptable</b> Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
2. The thesis shows the author's appropriate knowledge of the subject matter through the background/review of literature. The author presents information from a variety of quality electronic and print sources. Sources are relevant, balanced and include critical readings relating to the thesis or problem. Primary sources are included (if appropriate).	Outstanding Very good <b>Acceptable</b> Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
3. The author carefully analyzed the information collected and drew appropriate and inventive conclusions supported by evidence. Ideas are richly supported with accurate details that develop the main point. The author's voice is evident.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable <b>Somewhat deficient</b> Very deficient	See comments overleaf.
4. The thesis displays critical thinking and avoids simplistic description or summary of information.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient <b>Very deficient</b>	See comments overleaf.
5. Conclusion effectively restates the argument. It summarizes the main findings and follows logically from the analysis presented.	Outstanding Very good <b>Acceptable</b> Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
6. The text is organized in a logical manner. It flows naturally and is easy to follow. Transitions, summaries and conclusions exist as appropriate. The author uses standard spelling, grammar, and punctuation.	Outstanding Very good <b>Acceptable</b> Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
7. The language use is precise. The student makes proficient use of language in a way that is appropriate for the discipline and/or genre in which the student is writing.	Outstanding Very good <b>Acceptable</b> Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
8. The thesis meets the general requirements (formatting, chapters, length, division into sections, etc.). References are cited properly within the text and a complete reference list is provided.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable <b>Somewhat deficient</b> Very deficient	See comments overleaf.

## Final Comments & Questions

The author makes the point on p. 6 that "Generalisations about language varieties are always slightly dangerous." This is a fair comment but in what follows Mr Audes is frequently hoist by his own petard. Elsewhere, he goes to the opposite extreme, describing as "unique" to one city or region linguistic phenomena which can be heard in various parts of the UK. Overall, the work is too haphazard, superficial and, at times, just plain wrong. Below is a list of some of the main issues which need to be dealt with at the defence.

– On p. 7 we read "The higher a person's position on the social scale, the less his speech is regionally marked." (Hughes, Trudgill, 1979, p. 10). Nevertheless, this is not the rule." If this is not 'the rule', then what is the point of the statement (and citing it) at all? Unfortunately, Mr Audes offers no further elucidation.

– The author notes that both the Liverpool and Manchester dialects are influenced by Irish immigration but never considers why, in that case, the two are so completely different when there is a mere 34 miles separating the two cities. Further, the author suggests the use of *yous* for plural *you* is a Mancunian feature; however, this reader has heard it used far more in Liverpool than Manchester – and also, for that matter, in Glasgow, where, again, it is most likely a result of Irish influence.

– On p. 10 how can the author claim *bairn* and *canny* are "words used uniquely by Geordies" when both these terms have a wide currency in Scotland as well as other regions of the north of England?

– The second and third paragraphs on p. 13 are incoherent; if, however, the author intended to claim at the beginning that negative concord is a unique feature of West Midlands English, it only takes him a few lines to refute his own argument. Nor are irregular past tense or past participle forms unique to this region: *she done it* can certainly be heard both in London and the north of England – and quite possibly in other areas of the UK too. In fact, the author tends to overuse the word *unique*, though in the case of the East Anglian dialect(s) at least the term is relativised: "They tend to speak with the Norwich dialect, which is rather unique within East Anglia" (p. 14); the meaning of "The dialect spoken in the county of Norfolk is quite unique" – also on p. 14 – is ambiguous.

– On p. 15, defining Cockney as "a type of rhyming slang that is nowadays used by some working-class inhabitants of London" is a gross over-simplification, the result of which is that the author totally ignores all the features of pronunciation and grammar which are so typical of the dialect. It is surprising this did not occur to the author himself when selecting his disappointingly stereotypical text for analysis in the practical section: leaving aside the fact this is a 19th century literary text which may say more about Charles Dickens' representation of Cockney than the dialect itself, the passage does not contain one single instance of rhyming slang.

Two questions arising from the one-page section on Southern English (which in fact represented solely by Cockney):

(a) In what way is Cockney "a widely under-estimated part of the English language"?

(b) Why does the author completely ignore the relatively recent phenomenon of Estuary English, whose speakers include such high-profile celebrities as Victoria Beckham and Jamie Oliver?

– On p. 16 the author states that "Scottish English is a broad term and should be further developed." This is true; nonetheless, the author needs only a page and a quarter to deal with it. It is not, therefore, altogether surprising that no proper distinction is made between Scottish English and Scots – which is a pity because this might have helped the reader to make at least some sense of the unreferenced assertion on p. 20 that "Ulster Scots is basically a language variation of Scotch, so it is close to Scottish and English." The terminological inexactitude carries over into the "Analysis" on p. 22, where Mr Audes provides further evidence of his belief that the terms 'Scottish English' and 'Scots' may be used in free variation; on p. 23, however, as if to make confusion worse confounded, the reader learns that Irving Welsh's *Trainspotting* is "written in Standard English, Standard Scottish English as well in Scots [*sic*]".

– Welsh English receives just three-quarters of a page, so are we to assume that, unlike Scottish English, Welsh English is uniform throughout the country, with 'h'-dropping the sole difference between north and south?

From a formal point of view there are numerous cases where citations stand in isolation rather than being properly incorporated into the text: one example, from Hughes & Trudgill, is cited above – and has the additional problem of a missing quotation mark at the beginning; another, from Crystal, on p. 5 even uses a footnote to provide the source author's name. Still worse than this, perhaps, is the inaccuracy of the direct quote from Yule, also on p. 5. For comparative purposes, here are the two passages in question. First from Mr Audes: "There are two main groups, which are usually identified as 'middle class' and 'working class'. Members of the middle class strata have more years of education, execute non-manual work and typically live in the urban territories. 'On the contrary, the working class strata have far less years of education and commonly perform manual work.'" (Yule, 2006, p. 206)[.] And now Yule's original: "The two main groups are generally identified as 'middle class', those who have more years of education and perform non-manual work, and 'working class', those who have fewer years of education and perform manual work of some kind."

Bearing in mind all the shortcomings of the work, one can suggest a grade of no more than **dobře** at best – this on the assumption that Mr Audes will offer a satisfactory defence of his thesis, including a response to the points raised above.

Reviewer: Andrew Tollet

Date: 20th August 2015

Signature:

