THE ETHNOLINGUISTIC VALUE OF SCOTTISH ENGLISH
IN THE CONTEXT OF CULTURAL REPRESENTATION

ЕТНОЛІНГВІСТИЧНА ЦІННІСТЬ ШОТЛАНДСЬКОГО ВАРІАНТА
АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ В КОНТЕКСТІ КУЛЬТУРНОЇ РЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦІЇ

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This article explores Scottish English as both a linguistic phenomenon and an ethnolinguistic symbol of cultural representation. Drawing on recent scholarship in sociolinguistics, phonology, and cultural studies, the paper situates Scottish English within the broader linguistic landscape of the Anglophone world, emphasizing its role in preserving national identity in a globalised context. Historical and sociocultural factors, including contact with Celtic, Norse, and Scandinavian languages as well as the political processes following the Union of the Crowns and the Acts of Union, are shown to have shaped its distinctive features. Special attention is given to its phonological traits, such as rhoticity and the Scottish Vowel Length Rule, which function as markers of cultural distinctiveness. Lexical borrowings and preserved archaisms, together with culturally loaded items such as national realia, toponyms, and symbols, further reinforce the linguistic encoding of identity. Grammatical and syntactic patterns, including the habitual be and plural yous, are examined as structural reflections of Scotland's historical linguistic continuity. The study also highlights the functions of Scottish English in literature, media, and everyday life, where its use indexes authenticity, solidarity, and cultural pride. Examples from classic and contemporary cultural production, such as Robert Burns's poetry, Irvine Welsh's novels, and Diana Gabaldon's Outlander series, illustrate how Scottish English continues to shape global perceptions of Scottishness. Ethnolinguistic analysis demonstrates its dual role as both a marker of social stratification and a flexible resource for code-switching between local and standardised forms. The findings suggest that Scottish English is not merely a regional variety but a dynamic cultural asset, central to understanding the interplay between language, identity, and cultural resilience. The article concludes by outlining avenues for further research, including comparative studies, corpus-based investigations, and pedagogical applications in English language teaching.

Key words: Scottish English, ethnolinguistics, language and identity, cultural representation, phonological features, Scots influence, linguistic diversity.

Стаття присвячена дослідженню шотландського варіанта англійської мови як мовного явища та як етнолінгвістичного символу культурної репрезентації. Спираючись на сучасні здобутки у сфері соціолінгвістики, фонології та культурології, автори розглядають шотландську англійську мову в ширшому мовному просторі англомовного світу, наголошуючи на її ролі у збереженні національної ідентичності в умовах глобалізації. Визначено, що історичні й соціокультурні чинники, зокрема контакти з кельтськими, норвезькими та скандинавськими мовами, а також політичні процеси після Унії корон і Акту про унію, визначили її відмінні риси. Особливу увагу приділено фонологічним характеристикам, таким як ротацизм та правило довготи голосних у шотландському варіанті англійської мови, що виконують функцію маркерів культурної відмінності. Лексичні запозичення й збережені архаїзми, разом із лінгвокультуремами – реаліями, топонімами, символами – додатково посилюють мовне кодування ідентичності. Проаналізовано також граматичні та синтаксичні особливості, зокрема вживання *habitual be* та форми множини *yous*, які відбивають історичну специфіку мовного розвитку Шотландії. У статті підкреслено значення шотландського варіанту англійської мови в літературі, медіа та повсякденному житті, де її використання символізує автентичність, солідарність і культурну гордість. Приклади з класичних і сучасних культурних практик, зокрема поезії Роберта Бернса, романів Ірвіна Велша та серіалу Outlander Діани Ґабалдон, ілюструють, як шотландська англійська мова формує глобальне сприйняття приналежності до шотландського народу. Етнолінгвістичний аналіз доводить її подвійне функціонування – як маркера соціальної стратифікації та гнучкого ресурсу для переходу у мовленні від локальних до стандартизованих форм. Доведено, що шотландський варіант англійської мови є не лише регіональним різновидом, а й динамічним культурним ресурсом, ключовим для розуміння взаємозв'язку між мовою, ідентичністю та культурною стійкістю. Окреслено перспективи подальших досліджень, зокрема у порівняльному, корпусному та методичному аспектах.

Ключові слова: шотландський варіант англійської мови, етнолінгвістика, мова та ідентичність, культурна репрезентація, фонологічні особливості, шотландський вплив, мовне розмаїття.

Problem setting. The issue of language as a marker of ethnic and cultural identity has long attracted the attention of linguists, anthropologists, and cultural historians. In the context of English, which functions as a global language with multiple regional varieties, the study of its national forms acquires particular importance. Among these, Scottish English occupies a special position, as it reflects not only the linguistic development of Scotland but also the symbolic dimensions of its cultural representation. The interplay between language and identity in this case goes beyond purely linguistic features and becomes a key element in constructing national distinctiveness within a broader Anglophone world.

The relevance of the problem lies in the fact that in today's globalised environment, smaller linguistic and cultural identities face the risk of being overshadowed by dominant standards. Scottish English, however, demonstrates how a language variety may preserve and transmit cultural values, thereby resisting homogenisation. Studying its ethnolinguistic value thus provides insights into the mechanisms by which language functions as a repository of collective memory and as a tool of cultural self-assertion.

From a practical perspective, such research is important not only for broadening the theoretical understanding of ethnolinguistics and linguo-cultural studies but also for developing educational and intercultural practices. Knowledge of how Scottish English encodes cultural meanings may contribute to more nuanced approaches in teaching English as a foreign language, particularly in contexts where awareness of cultural diversity within English is essential.

Analysis of the recent research and publications. Recent research on Scottish English has primarily focused on its phonetic and sociophonetic features [9], historical development [8], and attitudinal dimensions related to identity and social perception [6; 7]. Scholars have also addressed its role in political and cultural revivalism, particularly in connection with Ulster-Scots [4], and explored its melodic and prosodic characteristics [1; 10]. These studies provide valuable insights into the diversity of Scottish English and its sociolinguistic significance.

However, despite these advances, relatively little attention has been paid to the explicit ethnolinguistic value of Scottish English, namely, how its linguistic features operate as markers of cultural representation and collective identity. The connection between micro-level variation and broader processes of cultural self-assertion remains underexplored, as do the pedagogical implications for integrating this variety into English language teaching and intercultural education.

Therefore, this article sets out to address these gaps by examining Scottish English not only as a linguistic phenomenon but also as an ethnolinguistic symbol of cultural representation. **The aim** is to highlight its role in preserving and transmitting cultural values, thereby contributing both to theoretical discussions within ethnolinguistics and linguo-cultural studies and to practical considerations in EFL pedagogy.

Main findings. Scottish English occupies a distinctive place within the modern linguistic landscape of the English-speaking world. While it shares its roots with Standard British English, it has developed under the influence of Scots and Gaelic, which has resulted in a unique blend of phonetic, lexical, and syntactic features. This variety is more than a regional accent; it functions as a marker of cultural identity and collective memory, reflecting the historical and social experiences of Scotland.

From the perspective of ethnolinguistics, Scottish English provides valuable insights into how language preserves and transmits elements of national consciousness. It demonstrates the ways in which linguistic forms embody cultural traditions, values, and worldviews specific to the Scottish people. In the field of linguistic and cultural studies, its significance lies in showing how language both shapes and is shaped by social practices, literature, and everyday communication. By examining Scottish English, researchers gain a deeper understanding of the interaction between language and culture, which is at the core of both ethnolinguistics and linguoculturology.

The development of Scottish English cannot be understood without considering the historical and sociocultural background that shaped it. Linguistically, Scotland has always been a contact zone, where different languages and traditions intersected. The influence of Celtic languages, particularly Gaelic, left traces in vocabulary and placenames, while the contact with Old Norse during the Viking presence in the northern isles introduced additional lexical borrowings and contributed to phonological variation [8]. Later interactions with Scandinavian languages also reinforced these northern features, giving the Scottish linguistic landscape a layered and hybrid character.

Equally important were the political and cultural processes that framed the position of English in Scotland. Following the Union of the Crowns in 1603 and the political union of 1707, the prestige of Standard English grew steadily, while Scots, once a fully developed literary and administrative language, was gradually marginalized. This shift created the conditions for the emergence of Scottish English as a distinct variety, combining structural features

of English with substratal influence from Scots. At the same time, cultural practices such as the preservation of oral traditions, folklore, and literature allowed specifically Scottish elements to persist within the broader Anglophone framework [2].

From a socio-cultural perspective, Scottish English thus reflects not only the outcome of language contact but also the dynamics of identity negotiation under political centralisation and cultural integration. Its features bear witness to centuries of adaptation, resistance, and cultural resilience, making it a particularly valuable case for ethnolinguistic and linguocultural analysis.

One of the most salient aspects of Scottish English is its phonology, which sets it apart clearly from Received Pronunciation (RP). A key distinguishing feature is the treatment of post-vocalic /r/. Unlike RP, which is largely non-rhotic, Scottish English typically retains rhoticity in all positions, which not only affects pronunciation but also signals regional identity [9]. Another prominent characteristic is the realization of vowel sounds: the Scottish Vowel Length Rule conditions vowel duration differently from RP, producing a distinct prosodic rhythm that is immediately recognizable to listeners [8].

Consonantal patterns further differentiate Scottish English. For example, /t/ is often realized as a glottal stop in certain environments, and /l/ tends to be clear in all positions, unlike the velarized /l/ of RP [3]. Additionally, the pronunciation of certain lexical items, including borrowed or archaic forms, reflects both historical substratal influence from Scots and ongoing sociolinguistic variation. These phonetic features are not merely neutral sounds but carry social meaning, indexing Scottish identity and signaling cultural distinctiveness in interaction.

Prosody and intonation also contribute to the ethnolinguistic value of Scottish English. The intonational patterns, stress placement, and melodic contour differ from standard British English in ways that make Scottish speech immediately recognizable, even to speakers outside Scotland [1]. These features provide listeners with cues about speaker identity, regional belonging, and, more broadly, cultural affiliation, highlighting how phonology operates as a medium of symbolic representation.

In addition to phonological features, Scottish English preserves a rich array of linguistic forms that function as cultural markers, linking language use with national identity. Among the most prominent are lexical items denoting national realia – objects, practices, and concepts unique to Scottish life. Words such as ceilidh (a traditional social gathering with music and dance), haggis (a national dish), or kirk (church) represent cultural practices and institutions deeply rooted in Scotland's historical and social fabric. Their continued presence in Scottish English illustrates how language encapsulates collective traditions and transmits them across generations [3].

Many words are inherited from Scots, a Germanic language historically spoken in Lowland Scotland, which itself incorporated influences from Old Norse due to Viking settlements in northern regions [8]. Examples include terms such as bairn (child), ken (know), and greet (cry), which preserve archaic meanings that have disappeared in contemporary Standard English. The consistent use of Scots words such as aye (yes) or wee (small) transcends their functional meaning, becoming emblematic of "Scottishness" itself. These lexical items, widely recognizable even beyond Scotland, serve as cultural shorthand, signaling belonging to a distinct community and reinforcing solidarity among speakers.

Toponyms further highlight the interplay between language and cultural geography. Place names such as Loch Lomond, Ben Nevis, or Inverness carry traces of Gaelic, Norse, and Scots linguistic layers, reflecting the region's complex historical encounters. Beyond their geographical function, such names embody cultural narratives, local myths, and collective memory, making them powerful ethnolinguistic symbols [6].

These lexical features are not merely decorative; they perform important ethnolinguistic functions. They distinguish Scottish English from other varieties, encode cultural knowledge, and provide a semiotic toolkit for expressing local identity. In educational and intercultural contexts, awareness of such vocabulary enriches the understanding of Scotland's cultural and linguistic diversity, making it a key area for both research and pedagogical application.

What is more, Scottish English exhibits several syntactic and grammatical patterns that distinguish it from Standard British English while reflecting its historical and regional roots. One notable feature is the use of the habitual be, influenced by Scots, which indicates repeated or customary actions (e.g., He be working late on Fridays). This structure encodes subtle social and temporal information and preserves an aspect of historical grammar that has disappeared in Standard English.

Other syntactic traits include variation in relative pronouns, the use of yous as a plural of you, and distinctive verb agreement patterns, particularly in subordinate clauses. These constructions, though often considered non-standard in formal English, are systematic within Scottish English and contribute to the variety's internal cohesion and expressive capacity [3].

Grammatical features also interact with lexical and phonological markers to create a highly recognizable speech profile. For instance, the co-occurrence of certain Scots-derived vocabulary with unique syntactic structures strengthens the ethnolinguistic identity of the variety.

These features serve as audible reminders of Scotland's historical trajectory and provide a sense of continuity between past and present. For many speakers, the use of Scottish English affirms belonging to a community with shared traditions, values, and historical experience, even when operating within a broader British or global framework [4].

Furthermore, national identity expressed through Scottish English extends beyond the private domain of everyday conversation. It manifests in public life, education, literature, and cultural production, where the deliberate use of this variety signals authenticity, pride, and resistance to linguistic homogenisation. In this sense, Scottish English is not only a reflection of identity but also an instrument of its ongoing construction, allowing speakers to position themselves within the complex interplay of local, national, and global contexts [6].

The cultural significance of Scottish English is most clearly revealed in the functional domains where it is actively employed: literature, media, and daily interaction. In literature, Scottish English has long served as a means of expressing authenticity, local voice, and cultural identity. Writers such as Robert Burns or Irvine Welsh use distinctive Scots-derived vocabulary and phonological stylisation to preserve the national linguistic heritage and make the Scottish worldview accessible to readers. More recently, the international success of Diana Gabaldon's Outlander series, and the subsequent television adaptation, has introduced global audiences to Scottish culture and identity. The use of Scottish English forms in dialogue, combined with Gaelic elements and culturally loaded expressions, plays a crucial role in creating an atmosphere of historical and cultural distinctiveness.

In the media, Scottish English functions as both a marker of local identity and a resource for representing regional diversity within the United Kingdom. Television, film, and radio often employ Scottish English to index authenticity and differentiate Scottish characters from other British or international figures. The use of Scottish phonological and lexical features in public broadcasting both normalises and legitimises this variety, contributing to a broader recognition of linguistic diversity.

In everyday communication, Scottish English operates as a dynamic symbol of social belonging. It reinforces solidarity within communities, while also serving as a subtle boundary marker distinguishing Scottish speakers from other Anglophones. The consistent use of Scots-derived words like wee, aye, or lassie demonstrates how even small linguistic choices carry powerful identity functions. Moreover, as research on attitudes toward linguistic variation shows, Scottish English evokes strong associations with authenticity, friendliness, and cultural pride among both locals and outsiders [7].

Thus, across literature, media, and daily life, Scottish English fulfills not only a communicative function but also a cultural one. It enables speakers to maintain links with tradition, project authenticity in artistic expression, and embody national distinctiveness in global cultural flows. This multifunctional role highlights the ethnolinguistic value of Scottish English and its central place in studies of language and identity.

The coexistence of Scottish English with Scots dialects and Standard English further complicates the linguistic landscape of the region. Rather than existing as sharply separated codes, these varieties form a fluid continuum, enabling speakers to shift styles depending on context, interlocutor, or communicative aim. This phenomenon of strategic alternation, often described as bidialectalism, highlights the adaptive versatility of Scottish speakers, who may adopt more standardised forms in formal or international settings while reverting to strongly localised features in familiar, intimate, or culturally symbolic domains [5]. The interaction of these varieties reflects the dynamic balance between linguistic heritage and the pressures of global English.

Attitudes toward Scottish English and related varieties reveal the complex interplay between pride and standardisation. Many Scots regard their linguistic forms as emblematic of cultural distinctiveness and national identity, an attitude that has strengthened in recent decades in response to wider debates about self-determination and cultural preservation. At the same time, pragmatic considerations often lead speakers to modify their language, particularly in professional, academic, or cross-border communication, where Standard English is perceived as the more neutral or expected option. Nevertheless, the last decades have seen a growing recognition of Scottish English and Scots as valuable components of intangible cultural heritage, with renewed efforts to preserve them through literature, media, and even educational policy.

Taken together, these ethnolinguistic aspects underscore the multiple roles of Scottish English: as a social marker indexing identity and class, as a flexible code interacting with both standard and regional forms, and as a cultural symbol that continues to shape and reflect Scotland's evolving national consciousness.

Conclusions. The analysis of Scottish English in ethnolinguistic and linguo-cultural perspectives has shown that this variety constitutes far more than a regional form of English: it embodies the historical experiences, cultural values, and collective identity of the Scottish people. Its phonological, lexical, and grammatical features, many of which preserve traces of contact with Celtic and Scandinavian languages, not only distinguish it from Received Pronunciation but also highlight the deep continuity between language and cultural memory. The persistence of archaic expressions and borrowings, along with distinctive phonetic traits, underlines the capacity of Scottish English to serve as a repository of tradition while simultaneously adapting to the communicative demands of modern society.

The linguo-cultural dimension further demonstrates that Scottish English plays a vital role in representing national identity, functioning as a carrier of symbols, cultural realities, and place names that anchor discourse in the Scottish context. Its use in literature, media, and everyday life reinforces its symbolic value, ensuring that it remains a living marker of belonging and authenticity. At the same time, ethnolinguistic analysis reveals its role in structuring social relations, differentiating communities by class and region, and enabling speakers to negotiate identity through strategic code-switching between local, national, and standard forms of English.

The study also points to the ambivalent attitudes of speakers: while some perceive Scottish English as a valuable cultural asset, others accommodate to Standard English for reasons of mobility and international communication. This duality reflects broader tensions between linguistic diversity and global homogenisation, highlighting the need to preserve linguistic distinctiveness without isolating it from wider communicative networks.

Further research could expand in several directions. Comparative studies of Scottish English with other national and regional varieties of English would allow a deeper understanding of how local identities are linguistically constructed within the Anglophone world. Corpus-based investigations might provide more precise data on the frequency and distribution of distinctive features in different domains of communication, from digital discourse to professional settings. Additionally, interdisciplinary approaches combining sociolinguistics, education, and cultural studies could shed light on how awareness of Scottish English may be integrated into curricula for teaching English as a foreign language, thereby promoting sensitivity to cultural diversity within English itself. Finally, longitudinal research into shifting attitudes among younger generations could offer valuable insights into the prospects for maintaining or transforming the ethnolinguistic role of Scottish English in the future.

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