



COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

Course unit (module) title	Code
Accents and Dialects of English: Regional Variation Anglų kalbos akcentai ir dialektai: regioniniai skirtumai	

Lecturer(s)	Department(s) where the course unit (module) is delivered
Rūta Šileikytė Zukienė	Faculty of Philology, Institute of English, Romance and Classical Studies, Department of English Philology

Study cycle	Type of the course unit (module)
BA programme	Elective

Mode of delivery	Period when the course unit (module) is delivered	Language of instruction
Seminars	Autumn semester	English

Requirements for students	
Prerequisites: C1–C2 level of English	Additional requirements (if any): –

Course (module) volume in credits	Total student's workload	Contact hours	Self-study hours
5 ECTS	130	32	98

Purpose of the course unit (module): programme competences to be developed
<p>This course introduces students to the rich regional diversity of English in Great Britain and equips them with essential skills for independent study of accents and dialects. Students will explore the linguistic and social factors influencing the diversification of English, and become familiar with key terms and research tools used in dialectal analysis.</p> <p>The course delves into the historical contexts that shaped dialects across England, examining phonological residuals and innovations that contribute to each variety's distinctiveness. Regional seminars will focus on diverse dialects and accents including Northern English (Yorkshire, Tyneside, Northumbria), Scottish English and Scots, Scouse from Liverpool, Welsh English, West Country English, and varieties like Estuary English and Multicultural London English. Each seminar will analyze the historical, geographical, social, and linguistic features of these dialects, developing skills in identifying and analyzing their unique phonetic, grammatical, and lexical characteristics.</p> <p>Beyond linguistic exploration, the course aims to deepen students' understanding of British cultural diversity, enhance their listening and analytical skills, and cultivate intercultural competence. Practical exercises and creative tasks stimulate interest and foster a deep learning approach, encouraging responsible time management and academic integrity.</p> <p>By the end of the course, students will have gained a nuanced understanding of the linguistic diversity of Great Britain, enhancing their cognitive abilities and nurturing a lifelong curiosity about the world of languages that surrounds them.</p>

Learning outcomes of the course unit (module)	Teaching and learning methods							Assessment methods	
Students become thoroughly familiar with the regional classification of English dialects. They know and are able to use field terminology correctly. By applying specific research methods, they know how to find, analyse and comment on the authentic recordings of the native speakers of English.	Preparatory reading for in-class discussions, written assignments, individual research tasks on the chosen varieties of English.							Accumulative evaluation: oral presentation (30%); final exam (70%).	
Students have a proper understanding of the historical background of dialect formation in England. They are able to account for the main linguistic changes in the history of English that underlie the dialectal diversification of the language.	In-class discussions, written assignments.								
Students understand the role of the socio-linguistic parameters (the speaker's age, gender, education, etc.) on the nature of their accent.	Listening comprehension activities, in-class discussions, written assignments.								
Students are familiar with the linguistic features of the main dialectal areas in Great Britain. They know the principal features of individual accents' phonology and are able to identify the major accents by hearing their signature sounds.	Reading the assigned material, oral presentations, practical tasks of listening, transcribing of and commenting on the linguistic samples provided.								
Content: breakdown of the topics	Contact hours							Self-study work: time and assignments	
	Lectures	Tutorials	Seminars	Exercises	Laboratory work	Internship/work placement	Contact hours	Self-study hours	Assignments
1. Linguistic and social variability. Language, dialect and accent. Linguistic items and varieties. Geographical variation. The reference accent. The vowel system of Received Pronunciation (RP). Standard lexical sets.			2				2	4	1. Preparatory reading of the assigned material; written homework assignments. <i>Recommended readings:*</i>
2. How and why accents differ. The rise of innovations. System preservation. Splits and mergers. Regularization. Spread of innovations. The influence of literacy.			2				2	4	Upton, 2006, "Modern Regional English in the British Isles." Wells, 1999, Ch. 1.1: Linguistic and Social variability.
3. Residualisms. The Great Vowel Shift. NG coalescence. The velar fricative. THOUGHT monophthonging. The long mid mergers. The FLEECE merger. The FOOT-STRUT split. The NURSE merger. Pre-fricative lengthening. Yod dropping. PRICE and			4				4	8	Hughes et al., 2005, Ch. 4: Regional accent variation. Wells, 1999, Ch. 4.4: The north.

CHOICE. Long mid diphthonging. The great divide.									Wales, 2006, Ch. 1: The North–South divide.
4. English in Northern England. History. Varieties. Phonological characteristics. Vocabulary and grammar. Case studies: <i>Tyneside English, Scouse, Yorkshire dialects and accents.</i>			4				4	8	Wells, 1999, Ch. 3.1: Residualisms. Trudgill, 2001, Chs. 9 and 10: Dialect grammar.
5. East Anglian English. Features: accent, grammar, phrases, vocabulary. Case studies: <i>Norfolk English, Suffolk English.</i>			2				2	4	2. Practical tasks: listening to linguistic samples; tasks of transcription; commenting on specific linguistic features.
6. East and West Midlands. Phonological characteristics. Dialectal vocabulary and grammar. Case studies: <i>Lincolnshire and Warwickshire dialects, Birmingham accent.</i>			4				4	8	<i>Recommended dialect archives:</i>
7. West Country English. History and origins. Characteristics: phonology, vocabulary grammar. Social stigma and future of West Country dialect. Case studies: <i>varieties of Devon, Somerset, Wiltshire and Bristol.</i> How to speak like a pirate.			2				2	4	IDEA – <i>The International Dialects of English Archive</i> <i>British Library Sounds</i>
8. Southern English. History. Varieties. Phonological characteristics. Vocabulary and grammar. Dialect levelling in South East England and the Home Counties.			2				2	4	3. Oral presentation on a selected variety of English.
9. London accents: Cockney, Estuary and RP. Characteristics of Cockney accent. Who speaks Cockney? Cockney rhyming slang. Estuary English and RP compared. Features of Upper RP. Front vowels. Back vowels. Intonation and voice. Who speaks ‘posh’? Multicultural London English.			4				4	8	4. Open-book exam.
10. English in Wales. A typical vowel system. Consonants. Prosodic features. Sociolinguistic variation in Cardiff English.			2				2	4	<i>*A full reading list will be provided at the beginning of the course.</i>
11. English in Scotland. Scottish Standard English. Scots. Accents in the Hebrides and the Orkney Islands. Monophthongs and diphthongs. Consonants. Prosodic features. Sociolinguistic variation.			4				4	8	
12. Preparation for the oral presentation.									10
13. Preparation for the final exam.									24
Total: 130							32	98	

Accumulative grading

Task	Weight, %	Deadline	Requirements
Presentation	30%	To be assigned	<p>Length: 15–20 mins + 5 mins for questions and discussion.</p> <p>Content: 1) Introduce your variety (briefly tell us about its history, geography, social attitudes etc.);</p> <p>2) Present its main phonetic and other linguistic features, e.g. specific vocabulary items or interesting grammar rules (if applicable);</p> <p>3) Play a sample recording (1–1.5 mins) and highlight its main phonological, grammatical and lexical features. To help your groupmates, please prepare a handout with the transcript of the sample speech!</p> <p>Assessment criteria: ability to collect relevant material and present it effectively to peers via visual and/or audio aids. Careful planning and timing, logical structuring, rapport with and involvement of the audience, Correct language usage. Academic integrity.</p>
Final exam	70%	Exam days in January	<p>Content: The exam consists of identifying and analysing 2–3 unknown samples of regional English followed by a number of theoretical questions related to the reading materials and topics discussed during the seminars.</p> <p>Questions for revision will be provided before the exam.</p> <p>Assessment criteria: ability to accurately identify and analyse regional English samples, demonstrating understanding of regional linguistic variations and features. Proficiency in addressing theoretical questions related to the reading materials and seminar topics, displaying depth of comprehension and critical thinking skills. Correct language usage. Academic integrity.</p>

Course literature

Author	Year of publication	Title	Publishing place and house or web link
Beal, Joan C.	2010	<i>An Introduction to Regional Englishes: Dialect Variation in England</i>	Edinburgh University Press
Chambers, J.K.; Trudgill, Peter	2004	<i>Dialectology</i>	Cambridge: CUP
Crystal, David	2005	<i>The Stories of English</i>	London: Penguin Books
Crystal, David	2003	<i>The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language</i> , 2nd edition	Cambridge: CUP
Garrett, Peter, Nikolas Coupland & Angie Williams	2003	<i>Investigating language attitudes: Social meanings of dialect, ethnicity and performance.</i>	Cardiff: University of Wales Press
Hughes, Arthur; Trudgill, Peter; Watt, Dominic	2013	<i>English Accents and Dialects: an introduction to social and regional varieties of English in the British Isles</i> , 5 th ed.	London: Hodder Arnold
Kirkpatrick, Andy	2010	<i>The Routledge Handbook of World Englishes</i>	Taylor & Francis Group
Trudgill, Peter	2016	<i>Dialect matters : respecting vernacular language</i>	Cambridge: CUP

Trudgill, Peter	2004	<i>Dialects</i>	London; New York: Routledge
Trudgill, Peter	1999	<i>The Dialects of England</i>	Oxford; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers
Upton, Clive	2006	"Modern Regional English in the British Isles" in Mugglestone, Lynda (ed.) <i>The Oxford History of English</i>	Oxford: OUP
Viereck, Wolfgang	1985	<i>Focus on: England and Wales. Varieties of English around the world. General series; vol. 4.</i>	John Benjamins
Wells, John	1999	<i>Accents of English</i> (3 volumes)	Cambridge: CUP
-		<i>British Library Sounds</i>	sounds.bl.uk
-		<i>British Library Accents and Dialects collection</i>	www.bl.uk/british-accents-and-dialects/collection-items
-		<i>IDEA – The International Dialects of English Archive</i>	www.dialectsarchive.com

NOTE:

Attendance requirements. Students are required to attend all seminars. Those who miss more than 30% of the seminars without a valid reason (e.g. illness documented by a doctor's note) will not be allowed to take the final exam.

Last update: 8 April 2026