

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

Thesis Author: **Kamila Švajcrová**
 Title: *British English dialects with focus on dialects of Sussex and Kent*
 Length: 60 pages
 Text Length: 44 pages

Assessment Criteria	Scale	Comments
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 Acceptable 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 Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	The problem with this section, as well as the others below which have likewise been marked as 'somewhat deficient', is that the author devotes far too much space in the main text discussing issues which are totally irrelevant to her topic. Examples of this are provided in the Final Comments box overleaf.
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 Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
4. The thesis displays critical thinking and avoids simplistic description or summary of information.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
5. Conclusion effectively restates the argument. It summarizes the main findings and follows logically from the analysis presented.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable 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 Acceptable 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 Acceptable 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 Somewhat deficient Very deficient	

Final Comments & Questions

In the Introduction the author claims the dialects of Sussex and Kent have had a *crucial influence on the currently morphing form of the standard variety [of British English]*. This is certainly an eye-catching statement which arouses the reader's interest, but then so much greater is the disappointment that the justification for the claim never properly materialises. Instead, the theoretical section of the text is all too often perilously close to deviation from the topic and, on some occasions, in the opinion of this reviewer, oversteps the mark. At times, it reads more like a general introduction to linguistics, with copious amounts of space devoted, amongst other things, to descriptions of parts of speech (different categories of verbs, adverbs etc.) the four main sentence types and obligatory clause elements.

Section 2.1.1 should be entitled "Celtic languages" rather than *The Celtic Language*; however, the relevance of these older mother tongues to the topic is not immediately obvious since, apart from a limited number of lexical items (mainly geographical and cultural), the influence of Irish, Scottish Gaelic and Welsh on English has always been minimal.

One can perhaps make a case for including paragraphs on some of the most prominent English accents, such as Scouse, Geordie and Brummie, even if these are far removed from the area the author claims primarily to be focusing on. One problem which does arise here is the implication that the selected vocabulary items given as examples are specific to the dialect in question when this is simply not the case. For instance, the Brummie *pop* for a fizzy drink is also widespread in both Lancashire and Yorkshire; the same is true of the popular valediction *ta-ra*. As regards Kent dialect words, the reviewer was unable to verify the authenticity of *scram* as a word for food (p. 30), though it does bear a striking resemblance to 'scran', which is commonly used with the same meaning in the north of England and Scotland. (Just as an aside on the subject of food, the Mancunian *bramcake* mentioned on p. 25 should probably read 'barm cake'.)

Given the catchment area embracing Southern Standard English, considerably more space in the thesis should have been devoted to the phenomenon of Estuary English, a term generally acknowledged to have been coined by EFL teacher David Rosewarne in 1984, although on p. 27 the author seems to suggest it was being used by Gepp as long ago as 1920. Either way, in a work supposedly focusing on the dialects of Kent and Sussex, one would have expected rather more in-depth coverage of these than a mere seven pages out of 31 in the theoretical section, and preferably without such extraneous information as the following: *Apart from the county's cities, there are natural riches to admire, too, i.e., the Kent Downs AONB, North Downs – white chalk cliffs along the coast. Several islands also belong to the region – the Isle of Sheppey, of Grain and Thanet. Historically, Kent was exposed to raids and invaders from Europe, given the county's proximity to the continent across the Strait of Dover; there are ruins of Roman settlements from 43 CE along the coast today (pp. 27-28).* Similarly with Sussex, the reader learns that *Most of the county lies on the Weald massif, including the South Downs National Park and chalk cliffs along the coastline. The area has been inhabited since the Neolithic age and poses a significant role due to the Homo heidelbergensis excavation site in Boxgrove, West Sussex (p. 30).* Again, the relevance of this to English dialects is not immediately apparent. It is also surprising that approximately half of the Sussex section is based on a source dating back to 1877.

From a technical point of view, the standard of language throughout the work is generally very good; it is just a pity so much of the content itself is basically irrelevant to the chosen topic. In addition to this, there are a couple of minor issues, one of which is quotations not being smoothly incorporated into the main text: this is particularly evident in section 2.3 (p. 18). The second point is that as a general principle it is not good to mix fractions and decimals in the same list, even less so when the fraction is only an approximation and the other stats are expressed to one decimal point: *nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of our sample were Czech and the remaining 28.1% varied* (p. 36).

The list of references is impressive, albeit incorrectly formatted: book titles should be italicised, not the publisher, and the latter should be preceded by the place of publication.

Recommended grade: **dobře**

Reviewer: Andrew Tollet

Date: 28th August 2023

Signature: