Can Scots and Australians understand each other?

English accents around the world

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Mała ankieta 1

Mała ankieta 2

Kto mówi „tyn kuń”?

Rolnik
Góral
Babcia?
Taksówkarz z Dębca

Śmieszne? Dlaczego?

Coraz rzadziej spotykany sposób mówienia
Tylko wśród niektórych grup społecznych
Wymowa większości Polaków – zwłaszcza młodszych – jest ‘standardowa’

Dialect vs. accent

W antrejce...  
Dialect: regional differences in  
 v vocabulary  
 g grammar  
 p pronunciation

Accent: regional and social differences only in pronunciation

English is different from Polish

Spoken around the world
There are many standards
(Only ONE in Polish...)
A native English speaker may see e.g. a university professor speaking standard English with an accent different from his/her own

Standards: written, spoken

You may say there’s a ‘standard written’ English (differences are small)
But it can be pronounced in many ways...
Two main standard pronunciations:
RP (Received Pronunciation): England
General American: USA

RP vs. General American

Main differences in pronunciation:
RP is ‘r-less’, i.e. /r/ is pronounced only before a vowel:
red, carry, for Anna have /r/
start, near, square, car do not have /r/
GenAm is ‘r-full’: /r/ is pronounced wherever it’s spelled
Who's speaking???

- There's no /ɒ/ vowel in GenAm, so e.g.
  - lot, got, God, what have /ɒ/
- An American on an English train hears...
  - This is your /ɡɑː/ speaking...
  - Oh my God! Am I dead yet?
- General American: God /ɡɑː/, guard /ɡɑːrd/
- RP: guard /ɡɑːrd/, God /ɡɑːd/

General American from pop culture (music, movies, TV etc.)
- General American from pop culture (music, movies, TV etc.)
- RP from the teaching of English abroad, especially in Europe

Other accents

- But many other accents around the world
- There is quite a lot of tolerance, especially towards 'educated' accents
- E.g. 'educated' Scottish accents have some prestige in England...
- Everybody, in any language, speaks with an accent
- Just that you don't notice if it's similar to your own

Other well-known accents

- Europe:
  - Northern English
  - South-Western English
  - Scottish
  - Irish
  - Welsh

America:
- New England (North-Eastern USA)
- New York
- Southern USA
- California
- Canada
- Jamaica and rest of the Caribbean

Rest of the world
- Australia
- New Zealand
- South Africa
- ...
- India
- Nigeria
- etc.

Scotland

I live in a place called Coupar, which is in Fife, on the northeast coast of Scotland. It's just above Edinburgh... but the accent is actually very different to Edinburgh. Fife isn't a city, nor is it a town. It's more of a district, with lots of little towns and villages all joined together. Lot of countryside there, but we do have some big towns as well. Fife itself could be split into two parts. I'm from the east coast of Fife, but we also have the west of Fife and, again, you would notice that the accent and dialect is totally different over there as well.

I've lived in Fife all my life, apart from when I moved to university when I was eighteen. Since I've come to Newcastle to go to university my accent has changed slightly, and I find it difficult to speak in my natural accent down here because people just don't understand me... always people comment that – when I go home – that I talk differently... My parents have lived in Fife all of their lives as well. My dad is a chef and my mum is a nurse. And all my grandparents and all my family live in Fife, so I've got a real Scottish background.

It is nice, again, to go home to see all my friends, see all my family, and they always say that I've gone posh, when I go home. Things... different things about living in Fife is the dialect, obviously. Instead of saying "I don't know" people up there would say "I dae ken"... if we'd say, it's things like "I'm not going out tonight" instead of "I'm not going out tonight"... drop t's and don't pronounce t's on words...
Scotland
- ‘R'-ful: all r’s pronounced, some strongly
- /æ/ in words like understand, dad almost like Polish /a/ in e.g. Ala
- /ɪ/ in words like it, is etc. almost like /e/
- Very ‘sharp’ vowels in words like go, home and say (not diphthongs)
- ‘Strange-sounding’ vowels in words such as town, out and nice, Fife
- Quite a lot of ‘glottal stops’

Australia
- /ɪ/ in words like division almost like Polish /i/
- /e/ in words like legend almost like /i/
- /æ/ in words like man almost like /e/

Australia
My first theatrical experience was in that same class. We were in grade one or two with the same group of people, and were doing an Australian Christmas story, and the role I had to play was a little kangaroo, Joey. I recall having to wear a friend’s little dancing leotard and stockings with a stocking tail stuffed with paper. So I looked like a kangaroo with little ears stuffed on my head.

Australia
- air
- recall having to wear<br>ears<br>Australian English is ‘r-less’

Australia
- hide under a table
- paper
- tail
- people
- Santa came out and then...
- ‘Shifted’ diphthongs

Problems?
- To an Australian...
- Scottish bad may sound like Bud
- Scottish bit may sound like bet
- Scottish say may sound like see...
Problems?
- To a Scottish person...
- Australian bad may sound like bed
- Australian bit may sound like beat
- Australian tall may sound like tile
- Australian ears may sound like is...

Problems?
- Some people say that Scottish and Australian (or maybe London) are the two most distant accents of English...
- Scottish patient at an Australian hospital:
  - I’ve only come here to die!!
  - No, no, today!

Problems?
- But in general people can ‘tune into’ another accent quite quickly
- Especially if they know that other people can speak with different accents
- Remember, everybody speaks with an accent!
- But it’s ONE language, after all
- Or is it?...

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London
- Mum’s housewife, always has been, had me brother 18, shotgun wedding. If you wanna know how long me Mum and Dad have been married, find out how old me brother is. He was born in August, they were married on April – the only parents in the goddamn world that were married on April the 1st, if you please...

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London
- 18
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- Carter
- old
- face, stay, price, prize, fire, mouth
- bath, after, dance, start
- ‘rzless’
- Vowels quite like in Australia (some diffs.)
- But ‘glottal stops’ like in Scotland

Northern England: Newcastle
- Leeds is OK, but, like I said, I prefer Newcastle. And also, I don’t really do a lot in Leeds, I don’t get to see a lot of it because I haven’t got much money so only ever get to go on student nights and stuff like that. I don’t experience much of the culture of Leeds, if there is any.

Northern England: Newcastle
- ‘coz there’s exams coming up
- strut, foot
- trap
- face, stay, goat

Northern England: Newcastle
- Vowels and ‘glottal stops’ like in Scotland
- But ‘r-less’
- No separate vowel for words such as much, money, stuff etc. – these have the same sounds as foot, put etc. (different from Scotland – typical for the whole of Northern England)
More information