The Humorous use of the Contrast Between Standard Educated English and Local Dialect in Scottish Jokes

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In most countries where English is the first language the educated middle classes tend to speak standard English and have relatively little difficulty in speaking to one another regardless of regional or national origin. Educated Americans, Australians, (Anglophone) Canadians, English, Irish, New Zealanders, Scots and Welsh have little difficulty in communicating with one another and this is equally true of most of those among them with regional forms of speech. They are audibly different but it is their universal quality that is most striking. This is the English that native speakers of other languages learn to read, write and speak from their textbooks.

Yet in addition to this universal English there exists also a treasure house of local modes of speech that differ markedly from nation to nation and region to region. All of them depart markedly from standard English in accent, vocabulary, usage and other respects but in quite divergent ways so that their speakers may be almost incomprehensible to one another as well as to speakers of standard English or to speakers of English as a second language. Typically the speakers of the broadest forms of local English will be drawn from the lower social classes. Educated middle class people will often be almost bilingual, speaking standard English with a mild regional accent to those of the same class (especially if speaking to someone from outside the locality) but with notable ability to shift into a form of the broad local speech if necessary. Its use, especially in dealing with the local lower classes indicates a certain local solidarity, neighborliness and a setting aside for the time being of differences in status in order to

make communication easier and avoid conflict. Typically it is men who will do this as the local speech is seen as having qualities of crude masculinity that are not alien to or rejected by most middle class men (except perhaps in the Netherlands) and this ability is particularly useful on all-male occasions where masculine solidarity regardless of class is being expressed (Oxley 1978). Often by means of the sharing of jokes women by contrast often seek to take on the speech patterns of higher social classes to further their social aspirations.

The broad speech patterns are particularly employed by men telling jokes and a skilled joke-teller will switch back and for between this form of speech and standard English for comic effect. There is a sense in which local lower-class speech patterns are inherently comic since they can be perceived not as languages of their own but as a mere distortion of the standard language, a departure from a standard form. For a speaker of standard English, a foreigner who has some knowledge of English or even someone from another region the local dialect will sound like a funny version of how the English language should be. When we go to amusement arcades and look at ourselves in a distorting mirror we laugh at the mangled image of our appearance that we see; people laugh at the way local English sounds for the same reason (Davies 1990, Guillois and Guillois 1979: 15). It is not just English speakers who do this; speakers of *hochdeutsch* will laugh at Swabians speaking dialect, French speakers laugh at 'Belgicisms' and the Spanish speakers of Colombia laugh at the way the Pastusos of Nariño speak that language (Davies 1990: 50-63).

However, the mockery of local speech patterns in this way is not a mere putdown based on class or region for it also indirectly affirms and celebrates those patterns. The jokes provide a vehicle within which they may validly be used and where the substitution of standard English would impoverish the joke. Also there is in any society affection for things that are local, particular, distinctive and traditional that offsets the value placed on the universal and this applies to forms of language too. Affection and recognition for the local patterns are contained within the mockery as well as recognition of differences in status and utility. Local publishers of joke-books written in local dialect or of phrasebooks explaining the forms and vocabulary of the local speech are able to sell their books both to local people as nostalgia and to visitors as picturesqueness.

The jokes studied here to illustrate and explain the way in which these language contrasts are used in jokes are taken from Scottish joke-books of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These collections of jokes and anecdotes were compiled by Scottish Protestant ministers of religion and intellectuals and published in Scotland mainly for Scottish readers but also with an English reade-

rship (Ford 1891, Geikie 1904, Gillespie 1904, Kerr 1903, Kerr 1904, Jerdan 1920, Johnstone 1897, Mackay 1882, Macrae 1896, Macrae 1904, Ramsay 1874 (1858), Rogers 1867). As an expression of the style of such jokes the Scots examples are among the best. One reason for this lies in the peculiar history of Scotland which at this time was a nation without a state, being in a long established political union with its much larger and wealthier neighbour, England. Also the native language of the Scots is English, an English related originally to that spoken in the North-East of England rather than that of the South-East of England from which standard English is derived. Originally many Scots would have spoken Welsh or Norwegian but these languages died out completely a long time ago. Very few Scots are the lineal descendants of the Gaelic speakers who invaded Scotland from Ireland fifteen hundred years ago and there are not many fluent speakers of Gaelic left. Scots is simply a version of the English spoken in England or rather versions, for the speech patterns in the different cities and regions of Scotland such as those of Govan or Aberdeen or the whustlin' Fifers or the Orkneys (originally Norwegian speaking) or Tonald the Highlander (tinged with Gaelic and turning *d* into *t* so that Donald becomes Tonald) or the borders are very different from one another. [These more subtle differences are also exploited in Scottish jokes but are beyond the scope of this article]. Over time considerations of economic, educational and social advancement have led middle class Scots to shift towards speaking standard English, which is in effect the official language of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Nonetheless they have a national pride in and affection for the more distinctively Scottish forms of English. In the late nineteenth century there was a fear among some of the ministers and intellectuals compiling the joke-books that these local forms might disappear. The compilers acknowledged that the rise of standard English was a mark of 'progress' and that a knowledge of it was a necessity for an ambitious 'Scotsman on the make' but they still had an affectionate nostalgia for the various old forms of local speech.

Many of the jokes they collected are based on the stylistic trick of setting up a conversation between two persons of different social backgrounds one of whom speaks standard English and the other one form or another of broad Scots. The use of the two forms enables the joke-teller better to convey the differences in social class and even in religious outlook that are the basis of the joke. Let us consider two examples of this at length. The first is taken from the Scottish Protestant minister, David Macrae's *National Humour* published in Paisley in Scotland in 1904 and the second from the work of Dean Edward Bannerman Ramsay's (Dean of Edinburgh) *Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character*

first published in Edinburgh in 1858, which by 1874 had gone into twenty two editions. (In each case I shall also add a free translation of the joke into standard English and in some cases simpler English for the benefit of those whose first language is not English).

An Edinburgh minister was officiating for a few weeks for a friend in a country district where Calvinistic orthodoxy and Sabbath observance were of the strictest. On the first Sunday, the minister, after service, took his stick in his hand and set off to enjoy a stroll. On the outskirts of the village, he happened to pass the house of one of the elders. The old man, who had observed him, came out, and asked if he was going anywhere on a work of mercy.
"No", said the minister, "I am just enjoying a meditative walk amidst the beauties of Nature."
"I was suspectin' as muckle," said the elder. "But you that's a minister o' the gospel should ken that this is no' a day for ony sic thing."
"You forget", said the minister, "that our Lord Himself walked in the fields with His disciples on the Sabbath Day".
"Weel", said the elder, doggedly, "I ken that. But I dinna think the mair o' *Him* ayther, for it."
(Macrae 1904: 50, for another but bowdlerized version see Geikie 1904)

Author's translation into standard and simpler English:

An Edinburgh minister was officiating for a few weeks for a friend in a country district where Calvinistic orthodoxy and Sabbath observance were very strict. On the first Sunday, the minister, after service, took his stick in his hand and set off to enjoy a stroll. On the outskirts of the village, he happened to pass the house of one of the elders. The old man, who had observed him, came out, and asked if he was going anywhere on a work of mercy.
"No", said the minister, "I am just enjoying a meditative walk amidst the beauties of Nature."
"I was suspecting as much," said the elder. "But as a minister of the gospel you should know that Sunday is not a day on which it is permitted to do such a thing."
"You forget", said the minister, "that our Lord Himself walked in the fields with His disciples on the Sabbath Day".
"Well", said the elder, doggedly, "I know that. But I don't think any the more of *Him* for it."

There sometimes appears to have been in our countrymen (i.e. the Scots) an undue preponderance of zeal for Sabbath observance as compared with the importance attached to *other* religious duties. The following conversation between Mr Macnee of Glasgow, the celebrated artist, and an old Highland acquaintance, whom he had met with unexpectedly, will illustrate .... the severity of judgment passed upon treating the Sabbath with levity ....
Mr Macnee begins, "Donald, what brought you here?"
[Donald:] "Ou, weel sir, it was a baad place yon; they were baad folk – but they're a God-fearin' set o' folk here!"
"Well, Donald," said Mr Macnee, "I'm glad to hear it."
"Ou ay, sir, 'deed are they; an' I'll gie ye an instance o't. Last Sabbath, just as the kirk was skailin', there was a drover chield frae Dumfries comin' along the road whustlin', an' lookin' as *happy* as if it was ta middle o' ta week; weel, sir, oor laads is a God-fearin' set o' lads, an'

they were just comin' oot o' the kirk – an' they yokit upon him an' a'most killed him!" [Ramsay 1874: 73]

Author's free translation into standard and simpler English:

There sometimes appears to have been in our countrymen (the Scots) a great deal of zeal for Sabbath observance as compared with the importance attached to *other* religious duties. The following conversation between Mr Macnee of Glasgow, the celebrated artist, and an old Highland acquaintance, whom he had met with unexpectedly, will illustrate .... the severity of judgment passed upon neglecting to observe the Sabbath....

Mr Macnee begins, "Donald, what brought you here?" "Oh, well sir, it was a bad place where I was before; they were bad people – but they're a God-fearing set of people here!"
"Well, Donald," said Mr Macnee, "I'm glad to hear it."
"Oh yes, sir, they are indeed; and I'll give you an example of it. Last Sabbath, just as the congregation was coming out of the church, a cattle herder from Dumfries came along the road whistling and looking *as happy* as if it was the middle of the week; well, sir, our lads are a God-fearing set of lads, and they were just coming out of church – and they set upon him and almost killed him!"

Both jokes have a common structure and a common theme that is distinctive to Scotland. For much of the nineteenth century Scotland was a strongly and strictly Reformed Protestant country with its own separate national church the Church of Scotland which was Presbyterian in church organization and Calvinist in theology. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries religious divisions over church organization led to the secession from the official church of a substantial proportion of its members who formed new, even more fiercely Protestant, Presbyterian and Calvinist denominations within Scotland (Carswell 1927, MacInnes 1953, Reid 1960, Smout 1986: 186). Given that Scotland had no political independence the churches were the very carriers of a distinct Scottish identity (Reid 1960: 99-108, Davies 1992, Martin 1978: 102). To be Scots was to be Presbyterian and Calvinist. It was a situation that will not be altogether unfamiliar to Polish readers. The most striking outward sign of this identity was a national zeal for the observance of the Sabbath, for the keeping of Sunday, the Lord's Day as a day free of all work and even of all frivolous and pleasurable leisure, a day devoted to religion. It was almost a Christian version of the Jewish Sabbatarian tradition (Carswell 1927: 136). A similar tendency was also to be found in England, Wales and America (Davies 1992) but Scotland stood out in fidelity and fanaticism in this respect. The rigours of the Scottish Sunday in the nineteenth century have been well described by Donald Carswell (1927).

All secular amusements other than eating and sleeping, which were freely indulged in, were not merely forbidden; they were unthinkable ... The writing of letters was winked at in liberal families, always provided that they were not business letters and were posted after dark. To

> read a novel was scandalous, while to open a newspaper (except for the purpose of referring to church notices) was the abomination of desolation. For the purpose of going to or from church, but not otherwise, it was lawful for the laity (though not expedient) to ride in a Sunday tramcar. For a minister, however, who must testify to the Church's disapproval of Sunday tramways, a cab was a religious necessity (Carswell: 1927, 134-135).

Yet we can also see from Carswell's account that there were divisions within Scotland and that the more liberal Protestants, drawn mainly from the educated middle classes, did not believe in the rules about Sunday behaviour and were secretly breaking them (see also Geikie 1904, Kerr 1903 and 1904, Smout 1986). By contrast the rules were most strongly upheld by people of rather humble background living in rural areas. A clash of cultures had occurred between the urbane, liberal, educated middle classes and the less educated rural fundamentalists, a clash expressed in a serious form in the trial for heresy of Scotland's leading biblical scholar Robertson Smith by his own denomination the Free Presbyterian Church (Carswell 1927).

This clash of cultures was also a wonderful subject for comedy but in order to construct jokes about the situation it was necessary to devise or at least adopt a suitable style. The style used in the jokes taken from Ramsay (1874) and Macrae (1904) is that of counter-posing two forms of speech for comic effect the standard English of the urbane, liberal educated middle class and the broad Scots of the rigorous rural fundamentalists.

In the joke taken from Macrae [1904] a minister of religion from Edinburgh, the Scottish capital and a university town, a man of liberal inclinations, went to work in a strictly orthodox rural area. The visitor speaks the slightly pompous and precious English of the self-consciously educated minister and speaks of 'enjoying a meditative walk amidst the beauties of Nature'. This mode of expression is comic because it is too elevated a form of speech. There is nothing Scots about it and an English or Welsh minister might well have used exactly the same words. The minister is trying to imply that his stroll in the country with a stick in his hand is no more impious Sabbath breaking journey but a 'meditative' walk, an occasion for meditating upon the beauties of Nature provided by God and thus upon God Himself. The minister's mode of speech is, on the whole though, essentially similar to that of the narrator who also writes in a slightly arch and bookish standard English (which is why it has also been modified slightly in the 'translation').

The elder, a powerful and respected lay officer of the local church where the visiting minister has just been preaching is suspicious of the minister's behaviour. For a strict observer of the rules the only legitimate reason for taking such a journey would be 'a work of mercy' such as visiting a sick or distressed parishio-

ner. The elder feels that it is particularly inappropriate that a minister of the Gospel should go for a stroll on a Sunday for mere enjoyment and speaks to this effect in broad Scots. It is not difficulty for an English or Welsh person to *read* and understand the gist of the elder's comments for its Scottishness is conveyed by conventional markers notably spellings of words that seek to convey the elder's distinctive pronunciation and the use of locally preferred but widely known alternatives such as 'muckle' for 'much'. In the punch line at the end of the joke (Raskin 1985) the elder says in broad Scots that he does not respect and admire Jesus for having broken The Sabbath. It is of course absurd for him to criticize the founder of his religion, the Son of God, the Messiah in this way and the punch line is an excellent example of the **style** in which punch lines should be written for it is short, sudden, indirect and unexpected. These are the stylistic characteristics that define a good punch linen i.e. a good ending to a joke (Davies 1990: 63).

It is singularly appropriate for the elder to speak in broad Scots for he is defending a practice that is distinctly Scottish, a practice that was a way of defining Scottish national identity and a separate Scottish form of Christian identity against those of other peoples. To be Scottish was to be Sabbatarian. He is defending Scottishness.

Neither the minister nor the Scottish listeners to and readers of the joke will have doubted the value of keeping the Sabbath and asserting Scottish identity in moderation. The elder is a figure of fun because his old-fashioned rigour and excessive attention to **Scottish** religious custom has led him into absurdity. Yet he is also a source of nostalgia. The elder represents what the ministers and other Scots think they once were; he represents 'the ancestors'; he represents the true, undiluted ideal-typical Scottishness. As such he is an ambiguous figure towards whom the Scots will feel ambivalent , for the elder is worthy of respect and affection as well as being laughably absurd and bigoted. In making fun of him the Scots are engaged in self-gratulation and self-promotion as well as self-mockery (Davies 1990: 7-8, Davies 1993, Mulkay 1987). The joke proclaims *both* "look we are distinctive in our beliefs and language" *as well as* "look our educated people are urbane and liberal and speak standard English". Which of these messages predominates will depend on whether the particular joke teller and his or her audience are drawn from the nationally and religiously conservative people of the humbler classes in the remote and rural areas speaking broad Scots and their sympathizers who see them as the bearers of national character or from the urban well educated middle class liberals with their refined English. Yet *both* are always present. Neither group of Scots completely disassociates itself from the other,

there is always a strong element of identification with the other group of brother Scots. In this respect humour theorists such as Dan Ben-Amos (1973) are wrong to suggest that there is strong mutual rejection of or antagonism between any two such sections of a coherent national or ethnic group. In particular it should be noted that the minister and the elder have no difficulty in understanding one another and, in holding a mutually intelligible conversation. The minister may not choose to speak broad Scots but he is well acquainted with it, it is an ordinary part of his daily experience of other Scots. Nor is there any sign that he despises or rejects the Scottish tongue of the elder for the elder's speech is not alien to him in the way it would be to an outsider speaking only or schooled only in standard English. However, this kind of sentiment of part identification, part disassociation is best indicated if the style and mode of discourse are humorous. Serious *bona fide* discourse (Raskin 1985) demands far too much in the way of clear delineation and demarcation.

Very similar points may be made in relation to the conversation between Mr Macnee and Donald in the second joke. Mr Macnee is a man of the wider world, a celebrated artist from the great cosmopolitan and cultured city of Glasgow, then known as the second city of the (British) Empire. Mr Macnee speaks standard English and is known by his actual name, by his surname dignified by the prefix 'Mr'. Donald is a Highlander from the mountains, from the remote and supposedly backward rural periphery of Scotland. He is known only by his first name Donald, a generic name bestowed on Highlanders in jokes much as an Irishman might be called Teague or Paddy, a Welshman Taffy or Dai, Rhinelanders Tünnes and Schäl, Poles from Silesia Antek and Fransek. They are not individuals but merely representatives of a group lower in the status order.

Yet there is again an ambiguity and an ambivalence here. Donald is in a sense more Scottish than Mr Macnee, for it is Donald who represents the Scots (described by Ramsay, the compiler as 'our countrymen') in attitudes and speech, not Mr Macnee who is somewhat colourless and déraciné. It is Donald who is the real Scot.

Donald's style and mode of speaking English is even more Scottish than that of the elder in the previous joke, using Scottish dialect words like 'skailin'' or 'yokit' which though easily understood by Mr Macnee (who thus maintains his Scottish identity, albeit more faintly than Donald) are incomprehensible to speakers of English from outside Scotland. Donald's utterances are also written down so as to give some idea of the distinct way in which he pronounces standard English words (or words with a very close equivalent in standard English) rather than employing the usual conventional spellings as when whistling beco-

mes 'whustlin", the becomes 'ta', well becomes 'weel', out becomes 'oot' and almost becomes 'a' most'.

Once again the punch line is in broad Scots as Donald reveals that the God-fearing members of his church expressed their finer Christian convictions by attacking and nearly murdering a lone, harmless visiting stranger from another less zealous part of Scotland merely because he had whistled on Sunday. We laugh at Donald's foolishness and simplicity in thinking that this is the highest way in which Christian sentiment can be expressed. Yet it is only by giving the punch line in dialect that it can be made clear that the story is a joke. If an account of this incident had been written in standard English rather than using a conversation employing two forms of the language it wold have been shocking rather than funny. It is the use of dialect that enables us to focus on Donald's comic naivity rather than on the reality of a savage and bigoted assault on an innocent visitor.

Donald's version of Scottish English as rendered by Dean Ramsay is much broader than that ascribed to the elder in the joke recorded by the Rev. David Macrae. It is important to note that the *first* edition of Ramsay's (1874) book was published in 1858. Much of his material was collected even earlier and it is possible that the joke about Donald is as much as fifty years older than Macrae's joke about the elder.

Besides Ramsay's book was *entitled 'Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character'*. Ramsay was self-consciously seeking to preserve local humorous anecdotes in their original form and using them to illustrate traits seen as characteristically or even uniquely Scottish. Macrae's stories are also intended to convey Scottishness *but* they are only one section of his book , *National Humour* which also has sections on the humour of other English speaking nations such as the Americans, the Irish and the Welsh. In consequence the Scottishness of the Scots English employed has been diluted. The very act of writing the stories down shifts them in the direction of standard English and the need to make them accessible to a wider audience shifts them even further. Macrae is still using two contrasting kinds of English for humorous effect but the gap between them is smaller. By the 1930s A.H. Charteris (1932) a Scotsman who had become Professor of International Law in the University of Sydney in Australia was complaining in his book *When the Scot Smiles* that the gap had shrunk even further as publishers of Scottish jokebooks sought a larger market in England and in other English speaking countries.

We can see this in a joke to be found in 'Fergie' Ferguson's (1933) collection of jokes *The Table in a Roar* published several times in the 1930s. Several of the

chapters in Ferguson's (1933) book consist of Scottish jokes but there are also chapters of American, Irish and American jokes about lawyers, doctors and artists and the book makes no pretence to make any kind of comment on Scottish life, unlike many of the earlier compilations made by Scottish ministers and intellectuals. Nonetheless the joke cited below does still employ some elements of Scottish speech and does refer to a distinctive aspect of Scottish Calvinist theology, the doctrine of predestination. It is a doctrine stretching back to St. Paul and St. Augustine that states that God has in some sense chosen in advance (or at least knows in advance) which men and women will be assigned to heaven in the next world (the elect) and which will be consigned to Hell (the reprobate). Everyone's fate is thus predestined and can not be altered by an individual's conduct or by any amount of good works. It is a doctrine that is difficult to understand and has given rise to much argument and even schism within the Reformed Protestant churches as may be inferred from Ferguson's (1933: 26) joke:

> Always ready in a tight corner and quick to meet an emergency, a faithful member of a Glasgow kirk, much addicted to too frequent liquid refreshment, met one of the elders of his congregation as he the tippler, came out of a public-house one Saturday night. Unsteady, but wary, he bade the elder 'a fine night'! But the elder fixed him with a meaning glare in his eye. Not a bit abashed, the unsteady one invited the other to gaze at that 'bonnie mune' shining in the clear frosty night. Still that steady, boring gaze. Then, the embarassed one links his arm in the elder's and confidentially says: ' Now, Elder, tell me, between man to man, what dae ye really think aboot predestination?'
>
> 'We'll talk about predestination, Sandy, when you are in a more fitting condition'.
>
> 'Na, Na Elder, when aw'm sober a dinna care a damn aboot predestination!' (Ferguson 1933: 26, See also Kerr 1904: 169)

Author's translation

> Always ready to react to an emergency, a faithful member of a Glasgow church much addicted to too drinking alcohol, met one of the elders of his congregation as he, the frequent drinker, came out of a public house one Saturday night. Unsteady but wary, he wished the elder 'a fine night!'
> But the elder stared at him with a meaningful glare in his eye. Not a bit bothered by this, the drinker invited the other to look at the 'beautiful moon' shining in the clear frosty night. Still that steady, hard stare. Then, the embarrassed one linked his arm in the elder's and confidentially said: ' Now, Elder, tell me, between man to man, what do you really think about predestination?'
> 'We'll talk about predestination, Sandy, when you are sober.
> 'No, Elder, when I'm sober I don't care a damn about predestination!'

This time the joke hardly needed translating. Nonetheless the same stylistic trick of adding to the humour of the joke by employing two versions of English

(standard English and Scottish English) in a conversation is used. This time it is the elder, as the person of greater education and authority and higher status who speaks in standard English. It is the lower status drunken Glaswegian who speaks Scottish English. The elder is formal and pompous and uses the phrase 'in a more fitting condition' rather than the more direct and straightforward 'when you are sober' or 'when you aren't drunk'. It is though not a peculiarly Scottish way of speaking, an elder or deacon of an English or Welsh Protestant church would have used just such a phrase. As usual he is the guardian of propriety and good conduct but he does not speak Scottish English in the manner of Macrae's elder scolding a person of higher social standing. It is the lower status drunk who is referred by the generic Scottish name 'Sandy' (short for Alexander) and it is he who speaks the punch line. The style and pattern of the story thus remains unchanged but the markers to indicate Scottish speech are fainter and there is an absence of obscure dialect words. It is a continuation of the changes that occurred between Ramsay and Macrae.

Today Scottish jokes are translated into or reinvented in languages as diverse as Italian (Bramieri 1980: 292, 314) and Slovak (Korecky 1985: 191, 193, 196) and it is not easy to convey the contrasting forms of English used in these language. No doubt it could be done but it would be difficult to do and not an entirely successful venture. It would hardly be worth it for a mass-produced joke book. It would somehow be false to try and convey the distinction by using regional forms of those languages and in any case readers from Firenze or Bratislava might find these regional versions impossible to understand. Indeed so far as I know even the best editors of joke books about the Scots in languages other than English (Guillois and Guillois 1979A) do not attempt to convey to their readers the distinctive qualities of Scottish English. The worst editors manage to garble even the personal names of the Scottish characters in the jokes and the accompanying cartoons are a travesty of Scottish natural dress in which kilts are no longer tartan but striped or even spotted.

The jokes remain funny when they are translated into standard English which proves that the use of the two forms of language is not the only or even the main technique being used in the jokes. Nonetheless it is a stylistic device that makes the jokes funnier in both their written and perhaps especially their spoken form. The switch between the two forms of English in the course of telling such a joke not only displays greater skill on the part of the joke teller but also conveys indirectly the comic standing of one of the partners in a conversation and it is he or she who gets to speak the punch line.

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Humorystyczne wykorzystanie kontrastu między angielszczyzną standardową a dialektami lokalnymi na przykładzie dowcipów szkockich

Wiele dowcipów wykorzystuje jako dodatkowy element humorystyczny stylizację na rozmowę osób o różnym statusie społecznym, mówiących różnymi odmianami tego samego języka. Osoba o wyższej pozycji używa standardowej odmiany języka (w tym przypadku angielskiego), natomiast osoba o niższym statusie społecznym posługuje się w większym lub mniejszym zakresie formą lokalnego dialektu (w tym przypadku szkockiego-angielskiego). Efektywność tego rodzaju stylizacji zależy od tego, na ile lokalna odmiana języka znana jest odbiorcy.