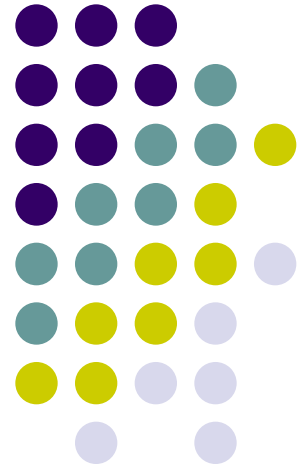# DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL LITERARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE

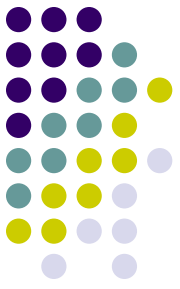# (16TH-19TH C.)

List of Principal Questions

- 1. Economic and Political Unification. Conditions for Linguistic Unity.
- 2. Progress of Culture. Introduction of Printing
- *Foreign Contacts in the Early New English Period*
- *Expansion of English over the British Isles*
- 3. Flourishing of Literature in Early New English (Literary Renaissance)
- 4. New Sources of Information about the Language. Private Papers. Didactic Compositions
- 5. Establishment of the Written Standard
- 5.1. The role of the London dialect
- 5.2. Normalising Tendencies. Grammars and Dictionaries in the Late 17th and 18th c.
- 6. Growth of the Spoken Standard
- 7. The main functional and dialectal divisions of the national English Language
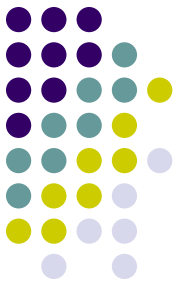
What is a national language?

- The formation of the national literary English language - the Early NE period (1475-1660)

- The "national" language = all the varieties of the language used by the nation (including dialects)

- The "national literary language" = only recognized standard forms of the language, both written and spoken

External factors which favoured the rise of the national language and the literary standards

- 1) the unification of the country

- 2) the progress of culture

1. Economic and Political Unification. Conditions for Linguistic Unity
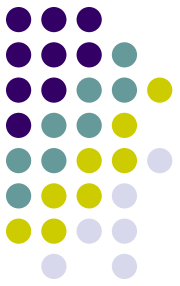
- 14th – 15th c. – famous peasants' rebellions
- New social groups: poor town artisans, the town middle class, rich merchants, owners of workshops, money-lenders
- 15th – 16th c. – trade extended the local boundaries + wool industry in the countryside
- The new nobility + rich townspeople = a new class – the bourgeoisie
- The poor artisans and monastic servants > farm labourers, wage workers, paupers

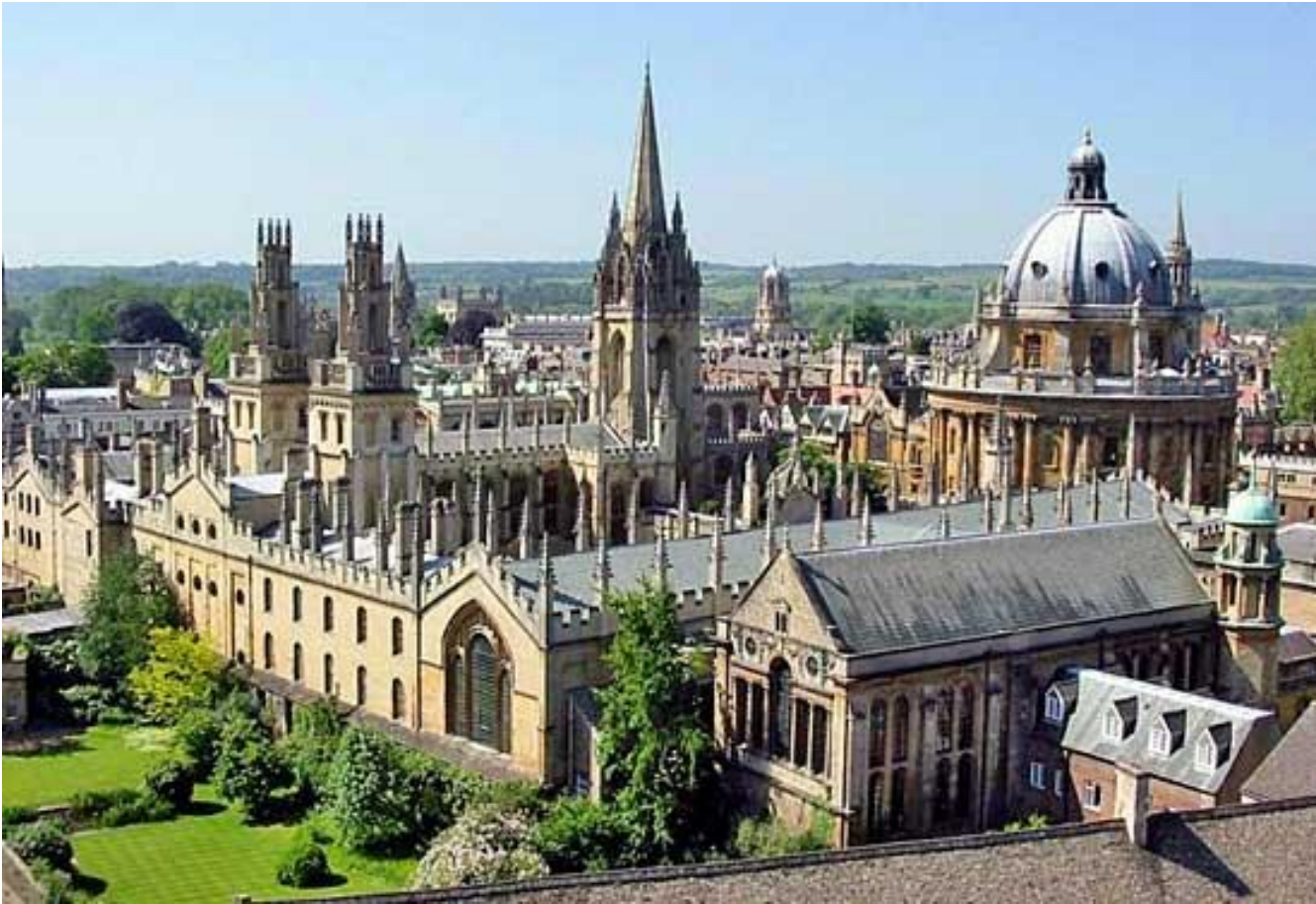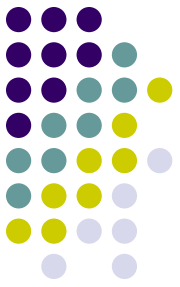# 1. Economic and Political Unification. Conditions for Linguistic Unity

- Political unification – 15th c. a centralised state

- Civil War (the Wars of the Roses) – 1455-1485 → strong royal power under Henry VII (the Tudor dynasty)

- The economic and political unification → consolidation of people into nations → the formation of national languages as the most important means of human intercourse

2. Progress of Culture. Introduction of Printing

- 15th -16th c. – a renewed interest in classical art and literature, a general progress of culture

- The Universities at Oxford and Cambridge (12th c.) – the centres of new humanistic learning

Oxford

Cambridge

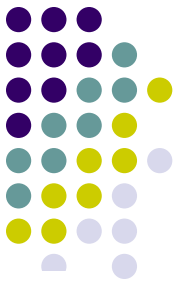http://www.liveinternet.ru/users/-la_camisa_negra-/

Introduction of Printing

- "Artificial Writing" – 1438 Johann Gutenberg (Germany)
- The first printer of English books – William Caxton

William Caxton (1422-1491)

- 1473 – own printing press in Bruges
- 1475 – the 1st English book: translation of the story of Troy
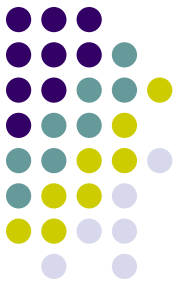- A few years later - Westminster

William Caxton (1422-1491)

- Device of William Caxton

William Caxton (1422-1491)

William Caxton (1422-1491)

- The specimen of W. Caxton's publication

William Caxton (1422-1491)

William Caxton
and early printing
in England

Lotte
Hellinga

William Caxton (1422-1491)

The earliest publications

- Poems of Geoffrey Chauser
- Poems of John Gower
- Compositions of Lydgate

William Caxton (1422-1491)

- The influence in fixing and spreading the written form of English

- London Literary English

- Cheap printed books available to a greater number of readers → spread of the London form of speech carried to other regions

- Caxton's spelling = standard

3. Flourishing of Literature in Early New English (Literary Renaissance)

- 16th c. – "age of Shakespeare" =
- Literary Renaissance =
- "Elizabethan Age"
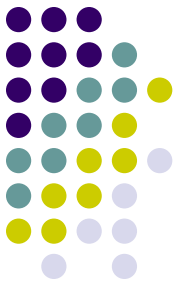
Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603)

"Elizabethan Age"

- Thomas More "Utopia" – 1516, translated into English in 1551
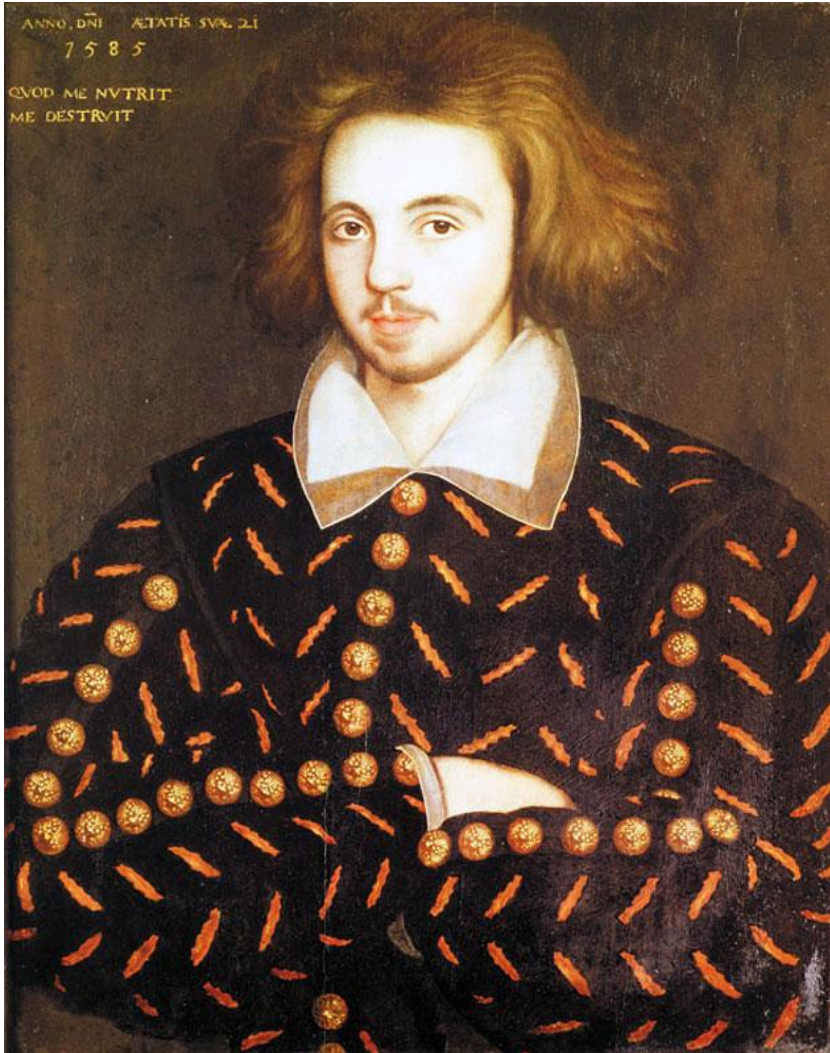- William Tyndale "Pamphlets" + translation of the Bible (1526)

Writers of the first order

William Shakespeare

- William Shakespeare (1564-1616)
- Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593)
- Bejamin Johnson (1573-1637)
- John Fletcher (1579-1625)

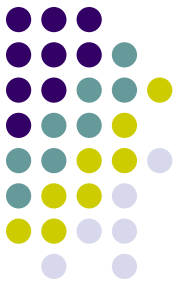# Christopoher Marlowe (1564-1593)
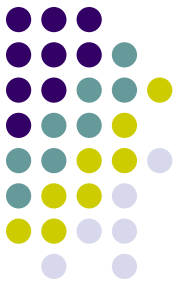

Benjamin Johnson (1573-1637)

John Fletcher (1579-1625)

"Elizabethan Age": Golden Age Movie

"Elizabethan Age": Golden Age Movie

"Elizabethan Age": Golden Age Movie

4. New Sources of Information about the Language. Private Papers. Didactic Compositions

- Spread of education – more people could read and write

- Numerous private letters – a fair picture of colloquial speech

- 16th -17th c.: books of instruction for pupils, didactic works - "correct writing"(i.e.spelling and pronunciation)

- Dictionaries

Dictionaries

- 1499 – the first English-Latin Dictionary

- 1604 - Robert Cawdrey's TABLE ALPHABETICALL CONTEYNING AND TEACHING THE TRUE WRITING, AND UNDERSTANDING OF HARD USUAL ENGLISH WORDS, BORROWED FROM THE HEBREW, GREEK, LATIN OR FRENCH

- 1616 - John Bullokar ENGLISH EXPOSITOR TEACHING THE INTERPRETATION OF THE HARDEST WORDS USED IN OUR LANGUAGE

Dictionaries

- 1623 - Henry Cockeram
ENGLISH-ENGLISH DICTIONARY

(a small volume contained explanations of common "hard" words, of "vulgar" words defined with the help of their bookish equivalents)

5. Establishment of the Written Standard

The middle of the 17th c.: written standard of the national literary language as the correct or "prestige" form of the language of writing

$\leftarrow$

- the economic and political unification of the country
- the progress of culture and education
- the flourishing of literature

5.1. The role of the London dialect

- Political and cultural centre of England
- Economic centre
- Commercial centre of the country
- → London dialect > a national language
- + other factors:
- Introduction of printing
- The literary activity of Chaucer
- → a literary language

London Dialect

- 5th-9th c. – political supremacy of a kingdom meant the dominant role of its dialect
- 9th c. – West-Saxon dialect = the official language
- After the Norman Conquest – French became the official language of the country
- 14th c. – English had taken the place of French

London Dialect

- Southern + Midland elements:

East Midland - populated, most developed district + Oxford and Cambridge

- East Midland features prevailed over Southern features

- London dialect - mixed

5.2. Normalising Tendencies. Grammars and Dictionaries in the Late 17th and 18th c.

- The age of the literary Renaissance → the period of "normalization" or period of "fixing the language"

- Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), the founders of the first English newspapers R. Steele and J. Addison, the authors of prescriptive English grammars and the great 18th c. lexicographers
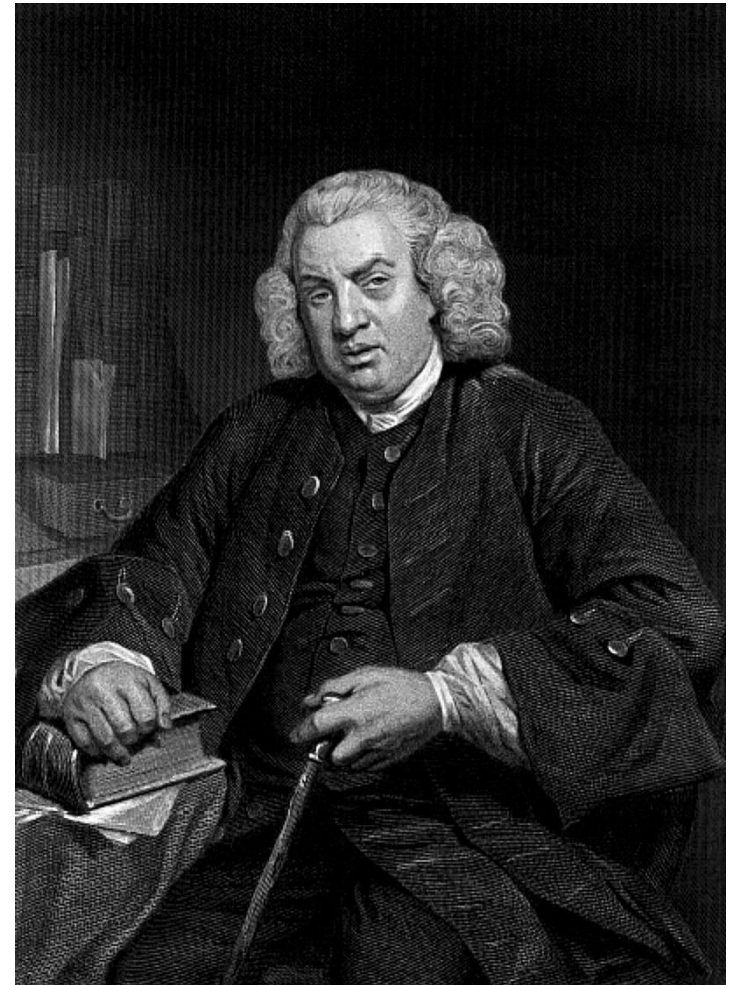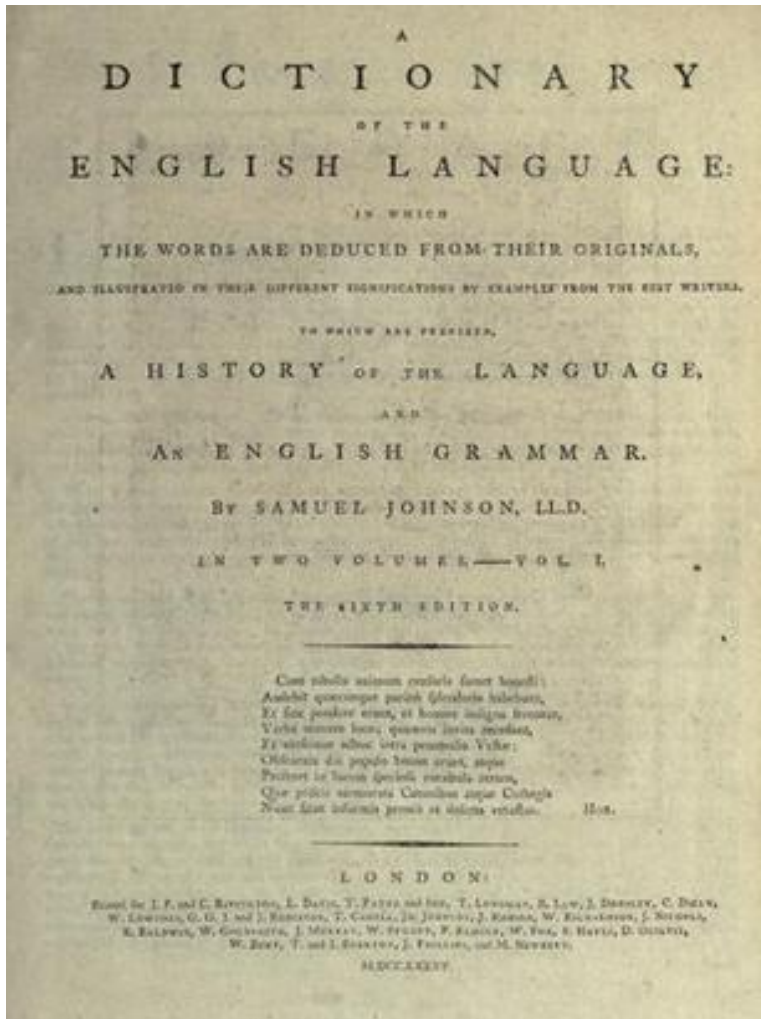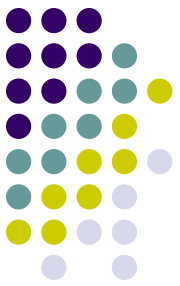
"Fixing the Language"

- J. Wallis GRAMMATICA LINGUE ANGLICANS (1653)

- Robert Lowth A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH GRAMMAR (1762)

- J. Priestley RUDIMENTS OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR (1761).

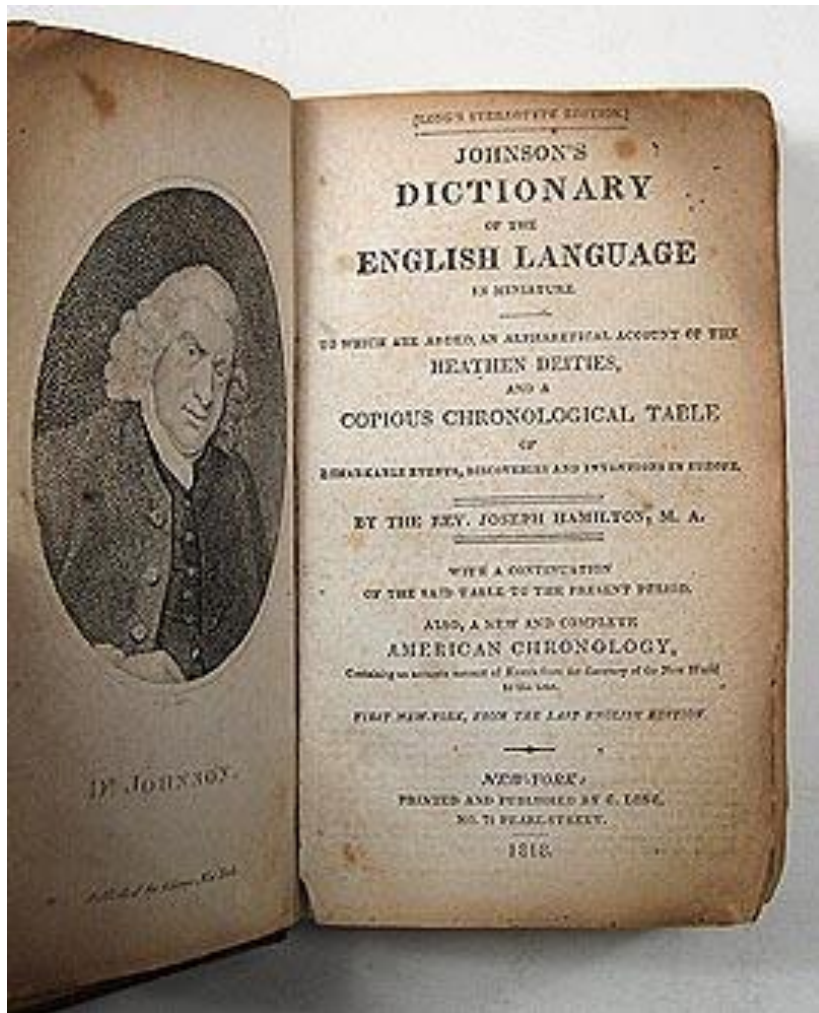- Lindley Murray ENGLISH GRAMMAR ADAPTED TO THE DIFFERENT CLASSES OF LEARNERS (1795)

"Fixing the Language"

- 1676 – E. Coles DICTIONARY OF HARD WORDS

- 1730 – Nathaniel Bailey DICTIONARIUM BRITANNICUM, A MORE COMPLEAT UNIVERSAL ETYMOLOGICAL ENGLISH DICTIONARY THAN ANY EXTANT (about 48,000 items).

- 1755 – Dr. Samuel Johnson DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE (2 volumes)

Dr. Samuel Johnson DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Dr. Samuel Johnson DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

6. Growth of the Spoken Standard

- 17th – 18th c. – growth of the Spoken Standard
- Private letters
- Speech of various characters in 17th – 18th c/ drama

Spoken Standard

- Spoken forms of the language were never stable and fixed

- Oral speech changed under the influence of substandard forms of the language

- + professional jargons, lower social dialects

- + vulgar and incorrect forms from various functional and literary styles

7. The main functional and dialectal divisions of the national English Language

- The main functional divisions of the national English language formed by the 19th c.: standard or literary forms

  substandard forms

- The literary language = Written + Spoken Standard

- Written Standard - literary and functional styles:

  the belles-lettres style (with further differentiation between poetry, prose and drama),

  official style newspaper and

  publicistic style,

  scientific prose style
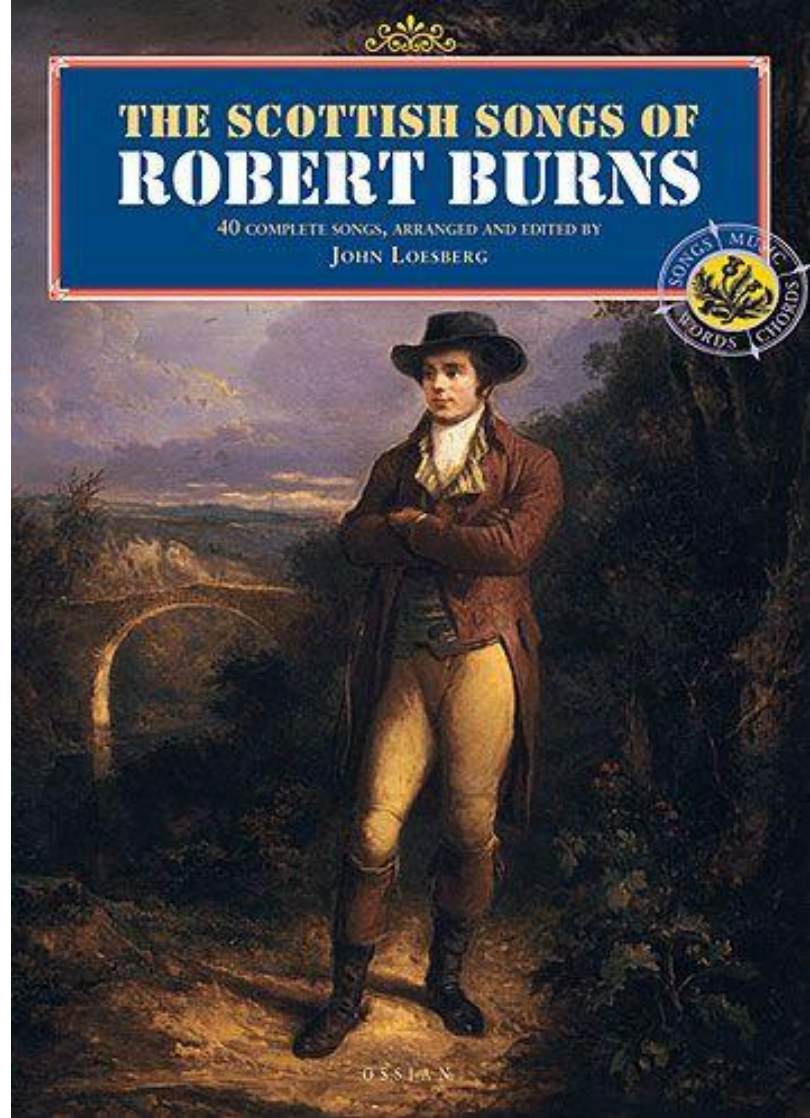
Spoken Standard

- More formal and less formal, colloquial varieties
- Local dialects
- Lower social dialects

Varieties of English

- Scottish – Robert Burns (1759-1796): Scottish dialect used for oral intercourse by the less educated people = local dialect → social local dialect

- Anglo-Irish – the main language of the population of Ireland – a variety of English with a strong Irish accent

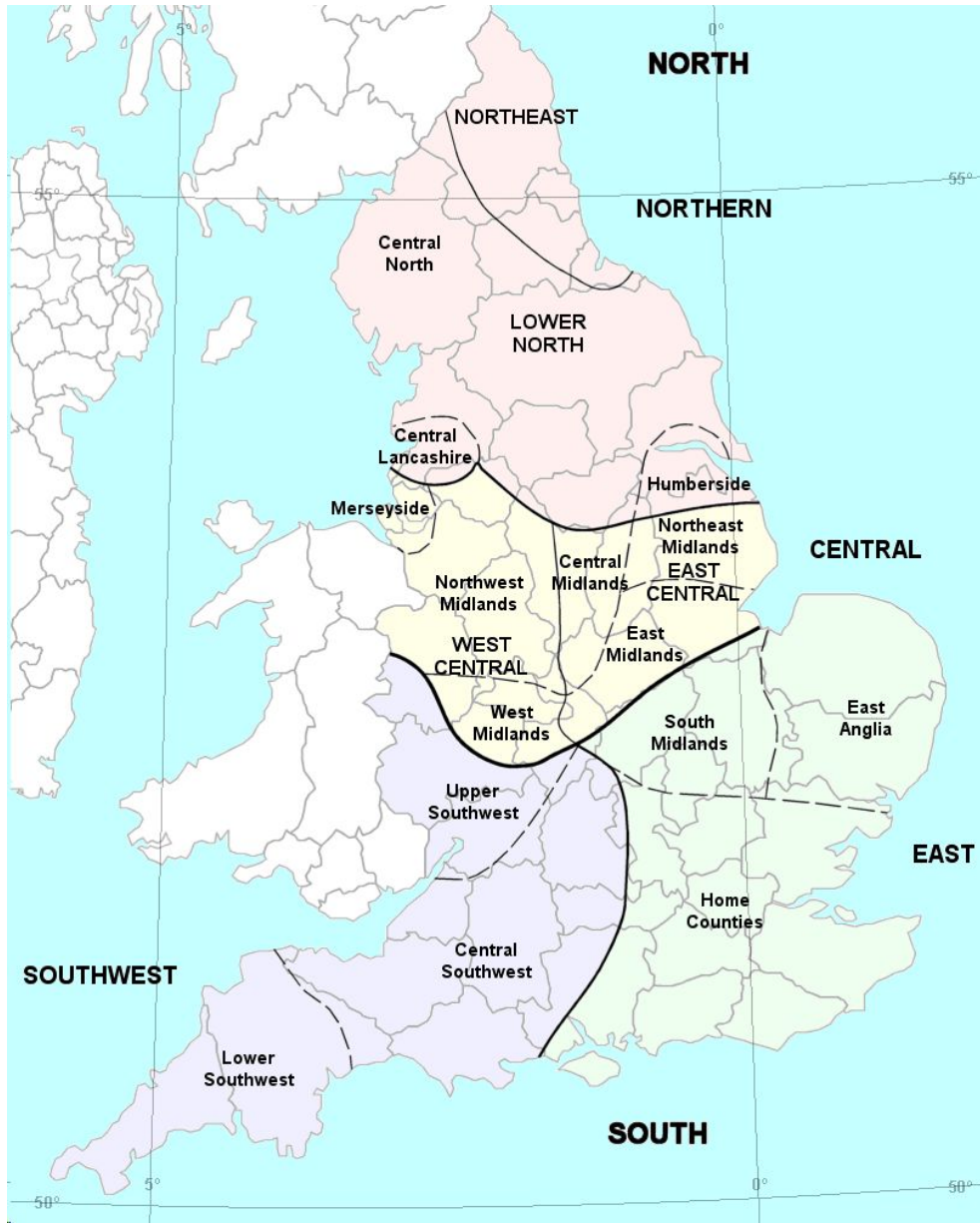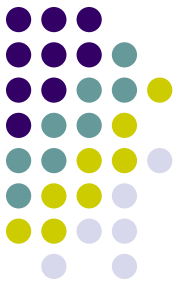- Celtic language are also spoken in Wales, Scotland and the Isle of Manx

Robert Burns (1759-1796)

Dialectal Divisions in England

- the *Southern* dialects, subdivided into East- and West-Southern;

- the *Midland* dialects subdivided into *Eastern, Central,* and *Western;* (the term *Midland* is also used as an equivalent of *Central);*

- the *Northern* dialects

- The dialects are distinguished by counties or shires, e. g. the dialect of Somersetshire, the Yorkshire dialect
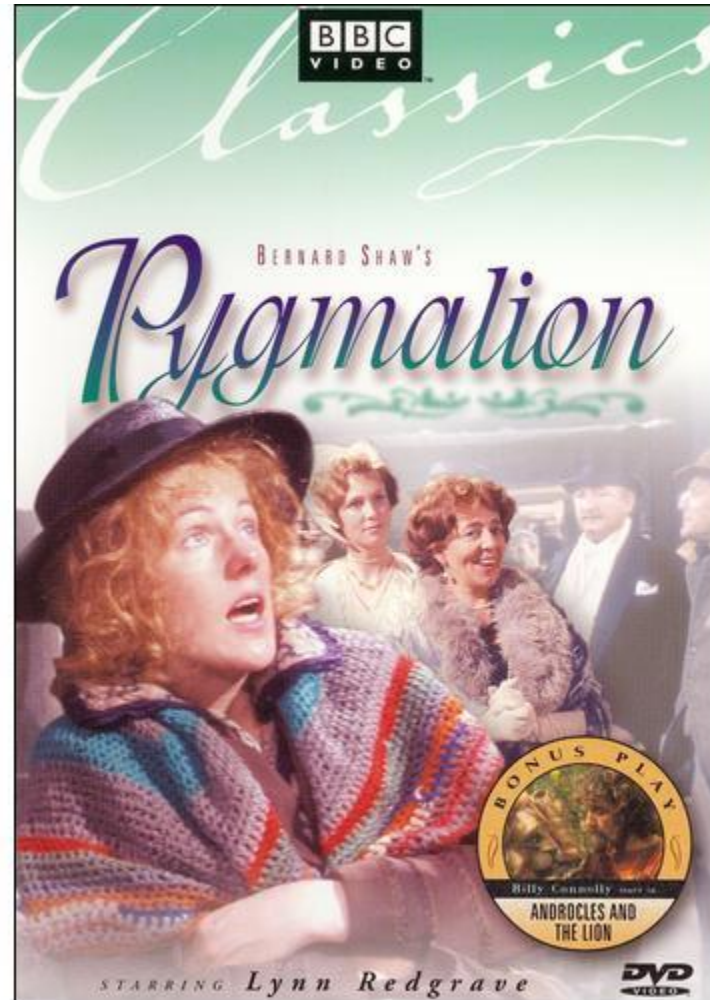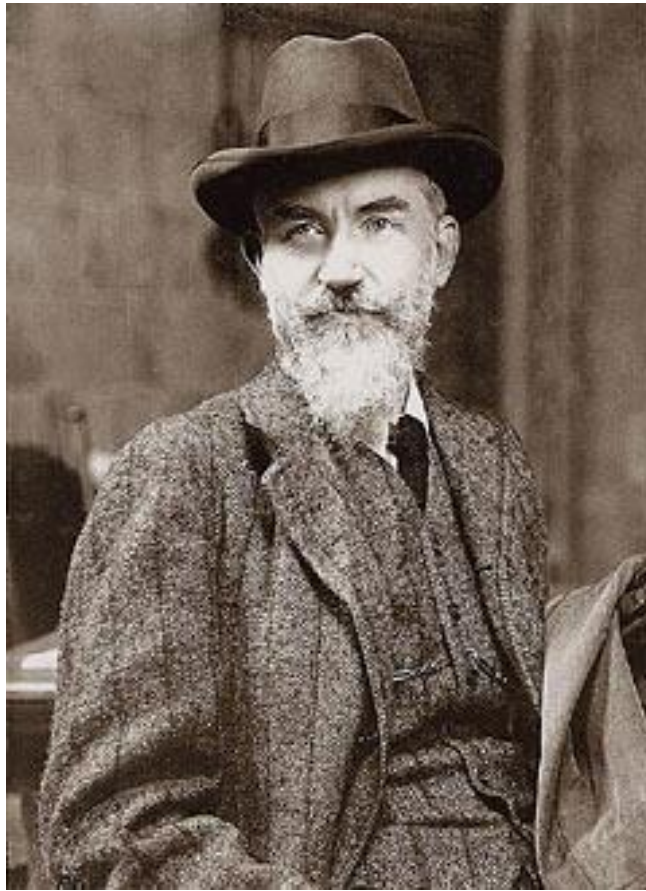
A Map of Modern English Dialects

Social Dialects

- London's **Cockney** is of particular interest
- 16th c. spelling
- Oral speech used by the lower ranks of Londoners
- **PYGMALION** by G.B. Shaw

G.B. Shaw

London's Cockney

PYGMALION
GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

'a joy from start to finish'
SUNDAY INDEPENDENT

SUMMARY

- 1. Conditions for Linguistic Unity.
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