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## **“PARTICULAR” FACTORS FAVOURING CONSERVATION OF LESSER-USED LANGUAGE VARIETIES (THE EVIDENCE OF AN ISLAND DIALECT OF SCOTS)**

*Key words: regional language, resettlement dialect, linguistic island, island dialect, sustainable development.*

Insular dialectology began mostly as a subdiscipline of the German language studies and for many years remained a part of them. However, as is known, speech islands are not confined to German dialects. For example, Ulster Scots (further on “US”), seems to be the only alive “classical” insular dialect group of Scots. Quite understandably, for Scottish and English scholars such phenomenon as speech island was not so topical as for their German colleagues, moreover, as regards US, it started to be studied much later than the other Scots dialects. Such classics as A. Ellis (1968), J. Murray (1873), J. Wright (1905) and W. Grant (1921; 1986) even do not mention US in their principal works or sections of works devoted to Scots. No one has characterized US as an insular dialect group so far.

Ulster Scots is an example of a variety of a lesser-used language becoming both the focus of public attention and an important tool of social policy. Its inclusion in the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 as an important element of the cultural heritage of the Protestant community was a historical event, which has led to some positive changes, mostly those of somewhat improved attitudes to this idiom within the community and without.

As there exist a number of features characterising the US language area as a speech island, and no one has designated it as such, our goal is to describe US as an insular, resettlement dialect group of Scots relying on available criteria (Hutterer 1982; Mattheier 1996) and to typologise it, correlating it with other insular resettlement dialects of Europe and the world. In theoretical and methodological terms, we rely on the works of H. Protze (1969), C.J. Hutterer (1982), P. Wiesinger (1983), K.J. Mattheier (1996), M. Putnam (2011), V. Schirmunski (1928; 1930; 1962), and others.

Besides, the evidence considered in the paper does not only confirm the island character of the area of Ulster-Scots, but also substantiates the conclusion that it is a factor counteracting the linguistic shift and favouring conservation of the idiom in question.

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