Preface for Newsletter Book

For many years the English instructors in the English Department at the University of Stuttgart's Language Center have published a newsletter for staff across the entire university. The purpose of this newsletter has been to provide language guidance to colleagues whose first language* is not English, to inform them of trends with the English language and culture, to help them expand their vocabulary and powers of expression, and to expose them to interesting and informative articles at an advanced level. To this end, each newsletter has three sections: grammar, vocabulary and intercultural communication. In each article, there is a monolingual glossary highlighting some potentially new or difficult words. There are also exercises that accompany most of the grammar articles as well as some of the other articles.

After having published our newsletter for over ten years, we felt it would be a worthwhile endeavour to compile our newsletter articles in a book and to make them available to a wider audience. The texts have been updated and reviewed as well as organized thematically. The non-grammar articles relate to the business world, academia and society in general.

The teaching faculty within the English Department have various backgrounds and this is represented not only in the topics of some of the articles, for example Welsh English and Midwestern English, but also in the authors' spelling and vocabulary choice. This diversity in language is a hallmark of modern English and is examined in various texts throughout the book.

Where appropriate and necessary, references have been provided in each article. The citation style can vary and this variation reflects the differing conventions across academic disciplines. For this book, the Chicago and IEEE citation styles were chosen as they can be found in a number of scientific and engineering publications as well as in the humanities, thus reflecting the wide array of topics covered in the book as well as some of the different practices across academic disciplines. The author-date, bracketed number and footnote systems are all used.

This book can be used as either a textbook, which readers can work through article by article, or as a reference book on specific topics. The English level of this book is C1/C2 (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), but readers at a lower level would also certainly benefit from the articles.

We would like to thank our faithful readers who have given us the motivation to continue publishing our newsletter over the years and made suggestions for further articles. We hope that our new readership will benefit from this collection of texts and find enjoyment in reading the book.

Stuttgart, January 2026

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Dr. Ines Böhner
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Cheryl Stenzel

* L1 is a speaker's first language, while L2 is their second language, L3 their third, etc. L1 is also sometimes referred to as "mother tongue". https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/teaching-knowledge-database/d-h/l1

1.3 Present Perfect Simple versus Present Perfect Continuous

Sylvia Grade

Let's look at the difference between

I've been reading your report. and *I have read your report.*

In the first sentence the activity hasn't been finished – "I'm still reading your report". The present perfect simple in our second sentence, however, expresses completion: "Here's your report. You can have it back". Similarly

I've been writing my dissertation. "… and there is no end in sight".
I've written my dissertation. "I'm going to hand it in on Monday".

Present perfect continuous is used:

1. **for activities continuing up to the present, often with an emphasis on length, with keywords related to time such as: *how long?, for/since, lately/recently***

   I've been working on my project all afternoon.
   I've been studying the data for months and hope to publish my results soon.
   How long have you been reading Law?

2. **to explain a present situation and give background information**

   I'm completely knackered. I've been slaving away trying to get this assignment finished.
   We've closed the cafeteria because it hasn't been making enough money.

3. **for repeated activities going on up to now**

   I've been phoning Peter every day since he gave his presentation.
   Susan has been working late this week.

4. **with *consider, mean, think***

   I've been thinking of changing my job.
   I've been meaning to get in touch with my tutor.

There are two important aspects when present perfect simple is used:

1. **when the activity expresses a quantity: keywords are *how much?*, *how many?* and *how many times?***

   I've read the first 10 pages of your dissertation.
   How many Chinese lessons have you had?

2. **with *it /that /this is the first /the second /the only/the last time, etc.***

   This structure is confusing for native speakers of German. The present tense is not used.

   This is the first time I've had to write such a long assignment.
   (The assignment is not completed. I'm writing it.)

   Is this the only time you've travelled to Manchester?
   (and you are here in Manchester)

Glossary

to read (Law)	to study a subject at university (British English only)
to be knackered	(UK slang) to be extremely tired, exhausted
to slave away	to work very hard

MORE INFO:

FOR with the present perfect and with the past tense

Most time expressions can be used with more than one tense. Depending on the tense used with *for* it can either mean "seit" (*for* and a present perfect) or "für einen Zeitraum von" (*for* and a past tense).

I've been studying at Stuttgart University for 3 years. I'm still at Stuttgart University.
I studied at Stuttgart University for 3 years. Now I live and work in Manchester.
I was at Stuttgart for a period of three years. But that time is over.

English Revisited, Tips, Tidbits and Tutorials © FELDHAUS VERLAG, Hamburg

Exercise

1. Hi Laura. It's me, Sam. I hope you _____ long for me. I'm stuck in traffic in Stuttgart.
   a) aren't waiting b) haven't waited c) haven't been waiting

2. Oh, hi Sam. Good you're calling. I _____ to get hold of you for the last half hour.
   a) tried b) have been trying c) am trying

   I _____ your office three times but there was no answer.
   c) have been ringing b) ring c) have rung

3. Unbelievable! Our IT department _____ £2m profit this year.
   a) has made b) made c) makes

4. I'm tired now. I _____ my essay. Let's grab a coffee!
   a) am writing b) write c) have been writing

5. That is the fifth cup of coffee I _____ this morning! I really have to kick this habit!
   a) have been having b) have had c) am having

6. I'm selling my car. I _____ it now for over 10 years. Time to get a new one!
   a) have had b) have been having c) have

7. Where is Paul? Still in the cafeteria? He _____ a lunch break now for two hours!
   a) has had b) has been having c) has

8. At a job interview:
   How long _____ in your present job?
   a) have you worked b) have you been working c) are you working

   I've been working for XY for one year. Before that I _____ for YZ for five years.
   a) have worked b) have been working c) worked

9. I _____ about your job offer
   a) have been thinking b) have thought c) think

   and I _____ to accept it.
   a) decide b) have been deciding c) have decided

Glossary

to grab a coffee	to have something quickly because you are in a hurry
to kick a habit	to stop, to quit

2.26 Beginning and Ending emails in British English (BE) and American English (AE)

Cheryl Stenzel

In the feedback received over many years of teaching business English, a highly requested topic is an overview of the correct forms of address to use when writing formal letters or emails.

The opening and closing following statements reflect both the degree of formality of the situation and the familiarity of the correspondents with each other. The table outlines the correct forms of address for British English (BE) and American English (AE) correspondence. We have also included a section on letters and emails to friends.

(Note that email and e-mail are both possible)

Punctuation.

BE has now adopted the open punctuation system of letter writing. This means that there are no punctuation marks following the opening or the closing address. Now all you have to remember is to forget them!

In AE any abbreviated words are followed by a full stop, e.g. Mr.

(Note that a full stop is called a period in AE.)

The salutation for business correspondence is followed by a colon, e.g. Dear Mr. Smith:

Closure

BE: When closing a formal letter or email, remembering the "Sir Faith and Mr Sin rule" can be a helpful reminder of the correct closing address.

AE: The most frequently used expression to close a letter is *Sincerely* followed by a comma.

Ms or Mrs

The most common errors are made when addressing women. The term *Mrs* should **only** be used if the writer is sure that the lady in question is married. The equivalent of *Frau* is generally *Ms*. The term *Miss*, on the other hand, is commonly only used for young girls (under 18). So, if you want to be politically correct, stay with *Ms*. In the UK, it is thought to be more courteous to address women as *ladies* (e.g. "the lady behind me in the queue"). In North America, do not forget to place a full stop or period after Ms. and Mrs.

Addressing academics: students' perspective

In the US, any teacher or freelance lecturer may be addressed as *Professor* both in writing and in conversation. For example, freelance university instructors are called adjunct professors. As a result, some university professors may prefer to be addressed as simply Doctor to stress the fact they have completed a PhD. However, the two, i.e. *Professor Doctor XYZ,* (or even Mrs./Mr. Professor) should not be used together as is the case in German. In the UK, *Professor* is the preferred form of address.

Among peers

Professors are generally on a first-name basis with one another once a working relationship has been established. At conferences, you would introduce other professors, however, with their title.

Capitalization

Unlike in German letters, in English correspondence the first word after the salutation is capitalized. Example:

Dear Mr Smith

The University of Stuttgart is pleased to inform you that …

Adjunct

Attached in a subordinate or temporary capacity to a staff member, see article 3.9

[1] false friend: academic means a professor or university instructor/researcher and not a university graduate
[2] The short form "Best," can be used when you have written to someone before. In some emails you don't even need a closing. You simply write your first name.
Further remark: All things considered, the exact degree of formality required will be dictated by the personality of the respondent. If in any doubt, however, it is always a better idea to err on the side of formality since a more formal approach is effectively taken as a sign of respect--and very few people can take offence at that!

Situation: when writing to…	Unknown persons	a person whose name is known, but not his/her marital status (formal)	a married female whose name is known (formal)	colleagues, managers, established business contacts	an unknown academic[1]	friends / casual acquaintances
British English						
Opening	Dear Sir/Madam	Dear Mr Jones Dear Ms Jones	Dear Mr Jones	Dear Jasmes Dear Jennifer	Dear Professor Jones Dear Dr Jones	Hi Jim Hi Jenny
Closing	Yours faithfully	Yours sincerely	Yours sincerely	Best regards/ Warm regards/ Kind regards Best wishes **Less formal:** Regards Yours (+ your first name only)	Yours sincerely	Bye for now Catch you later All the best Cheers! Cheerio! Hugs Love (Love is only for close friends and family)
American English						
Opening	Dear Sir/Madam: Dear Sir: Dear Madam:	Dear Mr Jones: Dear Ms Jones:	Dear Mrs Jones:	Dear Jasmes: Dear Jennifer: (a comma can also be used here because it is less formal)	Dear Professor Jones: Dear Dr Jones:	Hi Jim! Hi Jenny! Dear Jim, Jim,
Closing	Sincerely Sincerely yours,	Sincerely Sincerely yours,	Sincerely Sincerely yours,	Best regards,[2] Best wishes, Regards, (+ your first name only)	Sincerely	Take care. See ya! Have fun! Gotta' run! All the best! Love, or Lots of love (for close friends and family) (NOTE: A closing remark ist not always necessary.)

Sprachenzentrum Universität Stuttgart, 2014, Cheryl Stenzel

3.25 Scots English

Dr. Ines Böhner

Language is identity and identity is language. The lingo we grew up with makes us feel amongst kin – though newcomers might not understand a word (Bookes 2018)! In a place like Scotland, where people have always broadly defined their cultural identity as not being English, the native language Scots and Scottish English are of paramount importance when it comes to cultural identity (Flower and Darrah 2020-2023; Kay 2006). This is documented in countless brilliant and enjoyable YouTube clips like the "Scots Elevator Skit" (see https://youtu.be/HbDnxzrbxn4&t=5s) or "Air TrafficControl" (see https://youtu.be/UGRcJQ9tMbY&t=2s) and movies (see Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Scottish_films). So, what are the differences between Scots, Scottish English and English?

Scots and Scottish English are varieties of English and as such are Germanic languages that are mostly spoken in Scotland as opposed to Scots Gaelic, a Goidelic or Celtic language still spoken in parts of Scotland. Scots is rooted in the Northumbrian dialect of Middle English and – over centuries – developed (also by adopting some Gaelic) parallel to Inglis (English), which emerged from the East-Midlands dialect and morphed into the Standard English we know today (Bookes 2018; Flower and Darrah 2020-2023; Kay 2006). As a language in its own right, Scots has a distinct pronunciation, grammar and lexis (Bookes 2018). It should not be confused with Scottish English, which developed from the 17th century onwards because the English spoken in the south of the British Isles largely became the standard in official settings in Scotland, such as church matters, education and public administration. It is safe to say that over the centuries Scottish English with its distinct pronunciation but more standard English vocabulary and grammar has been used in formal situations in which speakers radiate their educational background, whereas Scots has remained the language of the working class, the salt of the earth. For many who grew up as Scots speakers and went through secondary and tertiary education, learning Standard English went along with feeling discriminated against, being ridiculed and tongue-tied (Bookes 2018; Flower and Darrah 2020-2023; Kay 2006).

Today Scots comes in a variety of dialects (the most prominent of them being Central Scots, Northern Scots, Island Scots and Southern Scots with their sub-dialects) and is different things to different people. It is "a living language which is as complex as its speakers are. It is often mixed with other languages in conversation – with English, but also with Urdu, Polish, Arabic, Romani, Gaelic and more" (Flower and Darrah 2020-2023). And as Scots, Scottish English and Standard English are all spoken in Scotland, it comes as no surprise that people may mix all three depending on the situation (Kay 2006).

So, writing about Scots in a 600-word piece does not suffice to do the topic justice but maybe kindles the reader's appetite to learn more about this unique and endearing language, where a "yes" becomes "aye" and a "no" becomes "-na/-nea", where a "woman" is a "lass(ie)" and a "bloke" a "ladd(ie)", where if you know something you "ken" it and most things become "wee", i.e. little.

There is also a host of good advice such as: "Dinna fash yersel'!" (Don't worry!)

"There's always time for a wee blether." (There's always time for that little friendly chat.)

"A nod's as guid as a wink tae a blind horse." (However hard you try, some people will not get it.)

"Mony a mickle maks a muckle." (Many little bits add up to a full bowl/large sum, referring to the proverbial Scottish thriftiness.)

A reminder not to tell the experts how to do their jobs is expressed as you "dinnae teach yer granny tae suck eggs!"

Finally, a innocent word like "fine" as an answer to "How ye daein?" (How are you?) can mean anything from "really good" to just indifference (Bookes 2018 Murphy 2022).

Glossary

lingo	jargon or particular language of a group of people
kin	related group of people
to be of paramount importance	to be extremely important
variety (of language)	different form of language, e.g. British English, American English
to be rooted in	to be based in/on
to morph	to change into
in its own right	on its own, independent of sth. else
salt of the earth (said of people)	good, honest, reliable and hard-working
tertiary education	university or college
tongue-tied	too nervous or embarrassed to speak
to do justice to a topic	to deal with a topic appropriately
endearing	easily likeable
a host of	plenty

References

Bookes, Ian ed. Scots Dictionary: The Perfect Wee Guide to the Scots Language. Glasgow: Harper Collins, 2018.

Dempster, Michael. "We'r Needin tae Talk Aboot Wir Language". TEDxInverness, 2016. Retrieved on 5th January, 2023 from: https://youtu.be/vRnQ8lYcvFU