Features of Scots

A resource for the Senior Phase and Scots Language Award
Contents

03  |  Forming negatives
05  |  Forming negatives in questions
06  |  Forming negatives after contractions
08  |  Present participles
10  |  Past tense of weak verbs
11  |  Past tense of strong verbs
12  |  Demonstrative pronouns
14  |  Plurals
16  |  Definite articles and possessive pronouns
17  |  Double modals
18  |  Northern subject rule
21  |  Wh-labiodentalization
Forming negatives

In Scots, negatives are formed by adding –nae or –na to auxiliary verbs. This varies between different regions. Examples are cannae/canna; cudnae/cudna; dinnae/dinna; didnae/didna; havenae/havena/hinnae/hinna; michtnae/michtna; shudnae/shudna; wullnae/wullna/winnae/winna.

An auxiliary verb is sometimes called a ‘helper’ verb – auxiliary comes from the Latin auxilium, to help.

In English, not would be added to, or used with, the verb to make the negative: cannot/ could not/ do not etc.

Here are some examples of this feature in texts:

“Listen tae the teacher, dinna say dinna
Listen tae the teacher, dinna say hoose
Listen tae the teacher, ye canna say maunna
Listen tae the teacher, ye maunna say moose”

from Listen Tae the Teacher, by Nancy Nicholson
Listen to the poem and see the full text by clicking here:
http://www.scotssangsfurschools.webs.com/listentotheteacher.htm

“I canna min’ it ever bein’ sae hot.
and
An’ I’d ha’e tae dee it. I couldna coont on him tae.
and
She’s a fechter. She’ll find her ain solution. Sae are you, Gladys. You two have spirit.
Noo, I hinna. I like an easy life. An’ my Frank was never een tae stand up tae onybody or onyth ing. Even you, Peggy, though you michtna think so, you’ll look for the saft route.”

from Fooshion, By Charles Barron.

“But an honest man’s aboon his might –
Guid faith, he mauna fa’ that!”

from A Man’s A Man for A That, by Robert Burns.
You can see the full poem and find out more about Burns by clicking here:
https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poetry/poems/mans-man-0
"Gonnae no" dae that…"

from Chewing the Fat.
You can watch the entire sequence of sketches featuring this catchphrase by clicking here:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=8yoOfHfCQ0w
Forming negatives in questions

In questions, Scots forms negatives with no. In North Eastern Scots, nae would be used. Examples are: Can ye no gie’s a haund? Have ye no seen the film? Wull they no be there?

In English, not would be used, usually contracted to, for example: can’t you; haven’t you; won’t you?

Here are some examples of this feature in texts:

“Ye gowk!’ replied Wullie. ‘Can ye no see that maist o them stanes are ower wee tae catch in the tines o yer fork? Use a spade, man, an ye’ll get the job done in five meenits!’”

from Daft Jackie, by James McGonigal.
You can read the whole story in Braw Brew by Liz Niven et al
And on the Scots Language Centre, with audio http://www.scotslanguage.com/articles/view/id/4499

“yeah but see if you’re gaun to be teachin [inaudible] as a subject at school as weel I think you’ll need to have aa this, will ye no?”

from Interview 10: Orkney woman talking about languages in Scotland.
You can hear and view the whole conversation, In The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015 by clicking here: http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=1411&highlight=will ye no

“Bonnie Charlie’s noo awa
Safely o’er the friendly main;
He’rts will a’most break in twa
Should he ‘ come back again.

Chorus
Will ye no’ come back again?”

from Bonnie Charlie, or Will Ye No Come Back Again, by Carolina Oliphant.
You can view the complete lyrics and read about the background to the song by clicking here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bonnie_Charlie
Forming negatives after contractions

Scots forms negatives with *no* after contractions too. In North Eastern Scots, *nae* is used. Examples are: *She’s no weel. I’m nae fussy. We’re no gaun there. I’m no daein that.*

Contractions are where new words are created by missing letters or sounds from two or more words. Apostrophes are used to indicate the missing sounds. This process is also known as elision.

In English, *not* would be used: *I’m not fussy* or a different construction would be used: *She’s unwell/she’s ill.*

Here are some examples of this feature in texts:

“Oo say, oo say, ‘she’s no guid, she’s awfu guid”

from BBC Voices Recording: Hawick.
You can listen to and view the whole transcript of the conversation in *The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here: [http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=1430&highlight=she's no](http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=1430&highlight=she's no)

“I’m nae takin it oot
and
I’m nae ready
and
I’m nae tellin you again”

from Conversation: Buckie - Mother and child 05, recording 2: choosing what to have for tea. You can hear the entire conversation and view the transcript in *The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here: [http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=1610&highlight=i m nae](http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=1610&highlight=i m nae)

“For we’re no awa tae bide awa,
For we’re no awa tae lee ye,
for we’re no awa tae bide awa,
We’ll aye come back an see ye.”

from “We’re No Awa Tae Bide Awa,” traditional.
You can listen to the whole song, sung by The Corries, by clicking here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=QLdUNqYclpM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QLdUNqYclpM)
“The Order caws for the poll for this referendum tae be held on a day that the’r nae ither poll tae be held throu ony act o the Scots Pairlament.”*

from “The Embra Greement 2012”
You can read the full document by clicking here:  

* Davuit Horsbroch, faa owerset the scrieve, explains:

_The’r - the marra o this in Inglis is there are/there is. Scots the’r is reckont tae spring fae Norse det er. We see it in Shetland byleid as der/de’r or dir. The ither ane that oxters wi this is the war (Inglis there was/there were, an Norn (‘Norwegian’) as det var). In Shetland it becomes dey wir. Sae the Soothron for …on a day that the’r nae ither poll... wad be …on a day that there is no other poll…_

_The’r – the equivalent of this in English is there are/there is. The Scots the’r is thought to come from the Norse det er. This occurs in the Shetland dialect as der/de’r or dir. The other similar example is the war (In English there was/there were, and Norwegian as det var. In Shetland it becomes dey wir. So the English for …on a day that the’r nae ither poll.. would be …on a day that there is no other poll…_
Present participles

In Scots, present participles are formed by adding –*in*. In verbs that end in –*le*, the ending is –*lin*. Orcadian Scots usually adds –*an*. Examples are: *bletherin*, *greetin*, *hingin*, *lowpin*, *speirin*, *fleggin*; *cairryin*, *cooryin*; *guddlin*, *tummlin*.

Present participles are forms of verbs. They name the action of the verb (when they are gerunds). They also act as adjectives or adverbs.

In English the present participle tends to end in ‘*ing*’. There is no need for an apostrophe at the end of the word in Scots. ‘*Apologetic*’ apostrophes used to be added to Scots present participles, in the mistaken belief that they were English words missing a ‘*g*’

Here are examples of this feature in texts:

“Yet like the pechin pulsation o a muckle trapped bird,
and
Wi agonisin will, claws upon the slidderie ice
and
It wis despair I felt wis flyin
and
Nae bletherin or dirdum amang
The clatter o wheels o whurlan trolleys,”

from *A Keek Intae the Hospital Kitchen Aifter the Appointment wi the O.T.*, by Maureen Sangster

“That’s like when ye’re speirin, “Hoo’re ye daein?” I mean we’re nae wantin tae ken hoo ye’re daein.”

from BBC Voices Recording: Inverurie
"Sittin’ on yer mammy’s knee, 
Greetin’ for a wee bawbee 
and 
Noo he’s tumblin’ doon the stair 
and 
Oor wee Jeaninie wis lookin’ affa thin, 
A rickle o banes covered ower wi skin. 
Noo she’s gettin’ a wee double chin 
Sookin’ Couter’s Candy…”

from “Coulter’s Candy, by Robert Coultart
You can listen to the entire song, sung by Katherine Campbell and Ewan McVicar, read the lyrics and find out more about this old favourite by clicking here: 
http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/scotlandssongs/earlyyears/coulterscandy.asp
Past tense of weak verbs

The past tense of weak verbs is formed in Scots by adding –it or –t. In verbs that end in –le, the ending is –elt. Examples are: 
cleekit, gruppit, hingit, keepit, lowpit, roastit, scrievit, skelpit; blethert, gaithert, kent, scunnert, shairpent, telt; fankelt, tummelt.

Weak past tenses are formed for verbs which do not change their stem for forming the past participle. Strong past tenses are formed for verbs which change a vowel.

In English, the past tense of weak verbs tends to end in –ed.

Here are examples of this feature in texts:

“Bit a twa-three days aifter, fin it hid been oot an in, oot an in, an aye thinner lookin, it got a tooshtie o mait an syne we wis cleekit – it wis jist e hoose cat syne.”

You can view the full text of this short story in The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:

“His antlers telt a lang story, a hero’s story, of territory defended and hinds protected.”

from A Bonnie Fechter by Sheila Templeton.
You can read the entire poem and find out more about the poet by clicking here:
http://www.freewebs.com/makarpoet/sheilatempleton.htm

“Tam skelpit on thro’ dub and mire, and
They reel’d, they set, they cross’d, they cleekit,
Till ilka carlin SWAT and reekit,
And coost her duddies to the wark,
And linket at it in her sark!”

from “Tam O Shanter,” by Robert Burns.
You can read the entire poem and hear or watch various famous Scots reciting or performing it, as well as finding out more about the poems itself by clicking here:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/robertburns/works/tam_o_shanter/
Past tense of strong verbs

Scots strong verbs change their vowels to form the past tense. Examples of this are: *buy > bocht; drive > drave or dreeve (NE); techt > focht; greet > grat; may > micht; think > thocht.*

There are verbs which do this in English too: *run > ran.*

Here are examples of this feature in texts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“‘No,’ the boy says, the farmer says, ‘I bocht it for a hundred and fifty pound.’ And I says, ‘I’ll buy it aff ye.’”</td>
<td>from Conversation 05: Fife couple on shared memories. You can listen to the entire conversation and read the transcript in <em>The Scottish Corpus of Texts &amp; Speech.</em> Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here: <a href="http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=348&amp;highlight=bocht">http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=348&amp;highlight=bocht</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Tony felt like he cuid dae we a hug an a greet juist then bit aw he hud instead wis this hail torrent o information tae tak in. and He saw the busslin toon ablow him whaur a few Week back he hud been pairtyin bit whaur now fowks wir cairryin on their normal lives an naethin much hud changed it aw in thir day, an grat - grat a hail fist fou o tears.”</td>
<td>from Millenium Bug Cairry-oot, by Chris Ferguson You can view the entire short story, which NB concerns a diagnosis of HIV due to unsafe gay sex, in <em>The Scottish Corpus of Texts &amp; Speech.</em> Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here: <a href="http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=714&amp;highlight=grat">http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=714&amp;highlight=grat</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Awbody chairged wi a penal faut hes the richt tae be thocht innocent til pruved guilty conformand til law in a public trial whaur he hes haen aw the warranties necessar for his defence.”</td>
<td>from “Universal Declaration o Human Richts”, airticle 11. You can view the entire document, download it as a PDF, and read a bit about the Scots language by clicking here: <a href="http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/Language.aspx?LangID=sco">http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/Language.aspx?LangID=sco</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demonstrative pronouns

Scots uses three different demonstrative pronouns, depending on how far away the thing being ‘pointed at’ is. So, this yin here; that yin there; thon or yon yin ower there and thir yins here; thae yins there; thon or yon ower there. In each case, the thing is further away from the speaker.

In English only this/these and that/those are commonly used. Yonder used to be used more commonly in English, in the way that thon/yon are used in Scots now.

Here are examples of this feature being used in texts:

“THERE wis a time lang syne when the Sultan o a desert country taen it intae his heid tae build up his country’s transport system an bring it mair intae line wi thon o some o his neibours.

and

The Sultan cried aw his advisers thegither an got thaim telt that he wantit his country tae hae a modern transportation system an aw, foondit on thon prototype “cuddy” system.

and

“Naw!” said the first yin, “Thae kind o feet micht be aw richt for in the toons or e’en in landwart airts

and

A doot thae kind o feet micht sink intae the sand an the cuddy micht end up cowpin

and

Thon wis juist yin o the mony chynges the comatee cam oot wi.”

from Aboot Cuddies an Camels, by Robert Fernie 2015.

“Yon cascade wis loupin wi troot a’ day
Thir a’ awa, nae mair tae shift.

and

Ah’ll hae a pint Jock, wae yon dram

and

Anywhar near yon dry stane wa’

and

Aff went a pooskie Joc frae yon neddie field

Yon gadgie wis nashin rubbin his jeer,

and

A’d rither hae a yarrie oan a butter piece
Than pick oot yer bool yon wee lead baa's.”

from A Blether an Wee Bevvy, by Peter Mitchell McCulloch
“By yon bonnie banks and by yon bonnie braes,
Where the sun shines bright on Loch Lomond,”

from “Loch Lomond”, traditional.
You can listen to the entire song, sung by Runrig, and view the lyrics by clicking here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=rbb9aRSQpsY
Plurals

Some Scots nouns have distinctive, irregular plurals. Examples are: coo > kye; ee > een; shae > shuin or sheen.

Most Scots nouns have plurals formed by adding an ‘s’, as in English.

There are fewer examples of irregular nouns in English, but they do exist: ox>oxen.

Here are examples of this feature in texts:

“Ehm, but ye ca – ye can get kye as well, that tae me that’s mair milkin cause the house coos were aye kye.
and
Kye, would one o oor folk hae said kye?
Kye, ehm aye a bittle back I ce- I certainly u- didnae use masel but aye that’s right
and
right enough, kye. They they spoke about kye”

from BBC Voices Recording: Inverurie.
You can listen to the entire conversation and view the transcript in The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:
http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=1427&highlight=kye.

“Isie wis fully as clean as Minnie, her peenie wis aye like the driven snaa an her sheen shone like sharn on a weet lea rig.
and
Yestreen, he’d pued Minnie’s sledge tae the smiddy ahin Prince, the horse, sae the smith could fit the muckle shelt wi iron sheen…
and
The aunts hid bin busy aa evenin, washin Minnie’s faither, an dressin him in hgis Sabbath suit, even doon tae blaikenin his sheen afore they pit them ontae his feet.
and
Bit maistly, fowk kent that the milk hid arrived ootbye, fin Derkie or Daisy strukk their iron sheen against the cassies a twa three times
and
‘Lordsake fit a wecht, ye maun hae steens in yer sheen”

from Minnie by Sheena Blackhall.
You can view the entire novella in The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:
http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=1496&highlight=sheen
You can hear Sheena blackhall reading her work by clicking here:
http://www.scotslanguage.com/pages/view/id/14
In the same kinna wey there wis certain words ye juist daurna say an maist particlar on a Sunday. **Shae** or **shuin** wis ne'er heard an got replaced wi "dinnae mentions" or "dinnaes" for short.

from Scots Tung Wittins 167, by Robert Fairnie

“Young Robie was the brawest lad,
The flower and pride of a the glen;
And he had owsen, sheep and kye”

from “Bonnie Jean,” by Robert Burns.
You can read the entire song and hear it as well as reading background information, by clicking here: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/robertburns/works/bonie_jean/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/robertburns/works/bonie_jean/)
Definite articles and possessive pronouns

Scots uses the definite article and possessive pronouns in distinctive ways. For example: *I'm comin doon wi the cauld; She's gaun tae the scuil; I'm awa tae ma bed; That's for yer Christmas.*

The definite article is *the* (*da* in Shetland, *e* in Caithness). Personal pronouns are words used as substitutes for the pronouns *I* (*Ah*), *you* (*ye, du, thou*), *he, she, it* (*hit*), *we* or *they* (*dey, dir*), which are themselves used as substitutes for nouns.

English tends to use the indefinite article: *a* *cold*; or miss the article altogether: *going to school*. Similarly, the possessive pronoun is usually not present in English: *I am going to bed*.

Here are examples of this feature being used in texts:

>We use that, we talk aboot *the rugby* an *the golf*, we get *the cauld*, oo gaun along *the street*, oo've got *the crescent*, we use *the* a lot, as oo get aulder, oo get *the pains*.

from BBC Voices Recording: Hawick.

>Ah knew ah'd bettur say somethin' 'cos she wiz still up, an' if ah'd crept up till *ma bed*, she'd hiv thought somethin' wiz up and
Ah went back upstairs, an' lay on *ma bed*.

and

>Look, I'll have to rush - I've got to go to *my work* this morning.”

from *Beginning* by Dave Howson.

>“Bairns that breks the law shuidna be treatit cruel like. Thay shuidna be gien *the jyle* alang wi adults an shuid can get tae see thair famly.”

Double modals

In some areas of Scotland, Scots uses double modals. For example: *I used tae cud dae that; Ye’ll no can see her the day; We micht can get a bus.*

A modal verb is an auxiliary verb used to show likelihood, permissibility, obligation and so on: *can, cuid, maun, may, micht, shall, shuid, wad, will, yaised tae,* in Scots.

Standard English uses one modal verb only: *I used to be able to; You cannot see her.* Most dialects of Scots follow the English example.

Here are examples of this feature in texts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ye’ll no can</th>
<th>eat then the wey ye git tae eat the noo. Juist you think yersel braw lucky wi wht ye’v hid.”</th>
<th><em>Picters in Yer Heid,</em> by Robert Fairnie. You can view the complete memoir in <em>The Scottish Corpus of Texts &amp; Speech.</em> Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here: [<a href="http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=115&amp;highlight=ye">http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=115&amp;highlight=ye</a> ll no can](<a href="http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=115&amp;highlight=ye">http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=115&amp;highlight=ye</a> ll no can).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>I’ll no can</em> follae you”</td>
<td>from “Lanarkshire,” by Matthew Fitt You can read the complete poem, which is translated from Estonian, and read about both poets and the poem by clicking here: <a href="https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poetry/poems/lanarkshire">https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poetry/poems/lanarkshire</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Ay, it’s a frichtsome craitur, the Hairy Etin. Whiles at nicht, whan the wind blaws, ye’ll hear the soond o him chappin … Jings! Whit’s that?” …”</td>
<td>from <em>The Adventurs o Tintin; The Derk Isle,</em> by Hergé. You can read more about this text, its background and see a panel from the graphic novel by clicking here: <a href="http://tintinscots.com/about/">http://tintinscots.com/about/</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You <em>used to could go</em> through the estate from th’ Auchinleck side.”</td>
<td>with kind thanks to Dr Jennifer Smith, University of Glasgow. This feature travelled to Appalachia. Here is a song by Joel Jacks featuring the expression <em>Might Could</em> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sY3cB5fjMXE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sY3cB5fjMXE</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Northern subject rule

Some Scots speakers follow the Northern subject rule. For example: *My feet’s gey sair; Thae bairns is awfie quiet.*

This rule states that where the subject is a noun or a personal pronoun not next to the verb, the third person singular verb is used, regardless of person.

In English this usage is seen as bad grammar (although it is often used in speech).

Here are examples of this feature in texts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Cuddy futrats is exclusive tae the Toy Shop Ballater”</td>
<td>from <em>Ballater Toy Shop sketch</em>, Scotland the What</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ot__1K4c0Zw">www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ot__1K4c0Zw</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“for presently England is brocht in the bowellis of our cuntry, and them that hes brocht them in intendis to wraik quhom they pleis,”</td>
<td>from Letter fae Sir Weelum Kirkcaldy o Grange</td>
<td><a href="http://media.scotslanguage.com/library/document/Kirkcaldy%20o%20Grange%20%201570.pdf">http://media.scotslanguage.com/library/document/Kirkcaldy%20o%20Grange%20%201570.pdf</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fricative sounds

Some Scots words make use of the fricative sounds [x] and [hw]. For example broch, loch, dicht, fecht; wheech, whummle.

Linguists call this ch sound a voiceless velar fricitive. It’s voiceless because you don’t use your larynx (or voicebox) to make it; it’s velar because it’s made using the part of the mouth known as the soft palate, or ‘velum’; and it’s fricitive because the sound is made by friction from air passing through that part of the mouth. The wh sound is bilabial, rather than velar, because it is made using both lips.

English does not have the same ch sound, with loch pronounced lock. The wh is largely pronounced the same way as w, making Wales and whales homonyms: words which sound the same.

Here are examples of this feature being used in texts:

“ta sit
on da briggistane, broch at wir backs;
let faa da fear, recount da bravery.”

from Fedaland, by Christine De Luca
You can view the entire poem and a glossary from Reefed in, in The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:
http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=332&highlight=broch

“You say light. We say licht
You say night. We say nicht.
You say bright. We say bricht.
You say sight. We say sicht.
You say right. We say richt.
You say fight. We say fecht.
It’s a braw bricht meenlicht nicht, the nicht.”

from Scotspik by Wendy de Rusett.
You can view the entire drama activity script in The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:
http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=583&highlight=dicht.

“She’s that casual aboot it, she can jist walk past a shelf and wheech sumpn intae her pocket afore anybdy notices, never gets caught”

from All That Glisters by Anne Donovan.
You can view the entire short story in The Scottish Corpus of Texts & Speech. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved April 2015, by clicking here:
http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=359&highlight=wheech
You can watch an interview with the author about her work and access lots of educational resources about the text by clicking here:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zhxyr82
"Whit’s that?
and
No a tongue I dinna ken whit ye’d ca it but they were”

from BBC Voices Recording: Dunbar.

“Just a wee deoch an doris, just a wee drop, that's all.
Just a wee deoch an doris afore ye gang awa.
There's a wee wifie waitin' in a wee but an ben.
If you can say, "It's a braw bricht moonlicht nicht",
Then yer a'richt, ye ken.”

from *A Wee Deoch and Doris*, by Gerald Grafton and Harry Lauder
You can watch and listen to the entire song, sung by Harry Lauder by clicking here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRiyLbSDJz8
**Wh-labiodentalization**

North Eastern Scots uses an initial *f-* rather than *wh-* in many words. For example: *foo, far, fan; fit like?* The *f* tends to be used in all words beginning with *wh* in other Scots dialects, or indeed in English: *fusky, fuskers, fite (whisky, whiskers, white).*

Linguists call the process that led to this distinction *Wh-labiodentalization.* It is where the *wh* and *f* sounds have merged. *F-* is the *voiceless labiodental fricative* sound; *fricative* because it is produced by constricting air flow through a narrow channel where the sound is made, *labiodental* because it is made using lips and teeth and *voiceless* because you don’t use your voicebox to make the sound.

Here are examples of this feature in texts:

“In Glesga toun, it’s **Whit** and **Wha**
And **Whaur** that they say there.
and
For it’s **Fit**, **Fa**, **Fan** and **Far** they say”
from *The Wizard o the North*, by Sheena Blackhall
You can read the entire poem by clicking here: [http://www.abdn.ac.uk/elphinstone/kist/search/display.php?sbl112.dat](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/elphinstone/kist/search/display.php?sbl112.dat)

“If ye went intae the toon it was a rare occasion, **fit** we cried the toon then.
and
Eh **fit** else now, **fit** else dae ye wear?
and
Aye, **Far’s** my ma?
and
It was like a- an off-white but y-you could actually feel the oil **fan fan** you were knittin wi it”
from *BBC Voices Recording: Aberdeen.*

“‘Oh dearie me,’ says Geordie, ‘Man, aat’s afa, **fit** a shock…’
and
‘Weel, that’s **fit** A heard onywye…’”
from *The Rumour*, by Andy Stewart
You can watch and listen to Andy Stewart reciting his poem by clicking here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=bA9DGEEa9Lk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bA9DGEEa9Lk)