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Scots and English in Scotland (1984)¹

Edited by Caroline Macafee, 2015

Editor's Introduction

This paper is one of two chapters that AJA contributed to the first edition of *Language in the British Isles*, hence the references *passim* to his other paper in the volume ('Scottish accents and dialects', 1984, 2015). Both papers draw on his important 'Scottish speech: a historical view with special reference to the Standard English of Scotland' (1979a), in which he introduces his 5-column model of speakers' selectional options, makes a distinction between dialect-switching (more usually known as 'code-switching') and style-drifting, and introduces the idea of covert Scotticisms,² concepts that have continued to inform discussion of Scottish speech and writing. As it has not been possible to include the 1979 paper in the present edition, additional points and examples from it have been included here in notes, covering especially the historical origins of the Scots-Scottish English speech continuum (and see also notes to 'Scottish accents and dialects').

The present paper concentrates on the modern Scots-Scottish English speech continuum. The main additions to the 1979 paper in this area are the concept of 'Ideal Scots' (which AJA first introduced in 'The good old Scots tongue: Does Scots have an identity?', 1981b, 2015), and an attempt, in broad strokes, to characterise the typical range of sociolects in Lowland Scotland (as he observed them at that time). AJA's two chapters in the first edition of *Language in the British Isles* are replaced in the second edition (Britain ed., 2007) by a briefer account by Paul Johnston (2007), who retains the 5-column model and the idea of code-switching versus drifting.

For further references, see the Editor's Introduction to 'Scottish accents and dialects' in this edition (1984, 2015).

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A version combining both AJA's contributions to that volume was also translated into Japanese by Y. Matsumura ed. in *English Around the World* (Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1983). Some notes are added below from the English original of this (AJA's typescript).

The text has been edited for uniformity of style with other Aitken papers and some bibliographical references have been expanded or added. 'Scottish', with reference to the language, has been changed to 'Scots'. Quotation marks have been removed from some technical terms. The original page numbers are shown in square brackets. All notes are editorial.

² For this topic, see the companion paper 'Scottish accents and dialects' (1984, 2015).

[517] Introduction

Nearly all Scots of the present day command some variety of English and most Scots have it as their native language. In this chapter we are concerned only with the varieties of English and Lowland Scots native to those parts of Scotland which lie east and south of the ‘Highland Line’, the Scottish Lowlands. For a brief discussion of the Highland Line and a map showing the limits of the Lowland area, see Aitken (1984, 2015). For the other indigenous languages of modern Scotland – Scots Gaelic, still spoken, mostly in the Hebrides, by 1.5 per cent of the country’s total population of 5.2 million, and for the ‘post-Gaelic’ or ‘Hebridean’ and ‘Highland’ English which accompanies or has succeeded it in the Hebridean and Highland areas in which it still is or formerly was spoken, see MacKinnon (1984), Shuken (1984), respectively.

Northern English in earlier Scotland: the origins of ‘Scots’

The first speakers of an Anglo-Saxon language, the ancestor of Lowland Scots, arrived in what is now Southern Scotland early in the seventh century, as a northern offshoot of the Anglian peoples then comprising the kingdom of Bernicia or northern Northumbria. The areas which these first English speakers in Scotland occupied, as defined by place names containing ‘early’ Anglo-Saxon place-name elements, consisted of a wide swathe of what is now south-eastern and southern Scotland, then and later known as Lothian,³ along with less extensive settlements along Solway⁴ and, perhaps rather later, in Kyle in mid-Ayrshire.⁵

Before the twelfth century the English-speaking part of Scotland was limited to these south-eastern and southern areas (except, perhaps, for the royal court of King Malcolm III and his queen, Margaret, a princess of the ancient royal house of Wessex, whom he married about 1070). There is also evidence, from chronicle record and place names (see Nicolaisen, 1976: 121 f.) that by the tenth and eleventh centuries the Gaelic language was in use throughout the whole of Scotland, not excluding English-speaking Lothian,⁶ though no doubt the longer established Northern English continued to be the ^[518]dominant language there. In origin Gaelic was the native language of the Scots of Alba or Scotland, the kingdom centred north of the Forth and Clyde, whose kings in the tenth and eleventh centuries also gained dominion of the more southerly parts of an expanded Scottish kingdom. Brythonic or British (i.e. Welsh) in the south, Pictish in the east and Scandinavian in the west and north also contributed importantly to the place nomenclature of Scotland.

Until the late eleventh century the trend was toward the linguistic dominance of Scotland by Gaelic. The reversal of this trend followed the accession of the ‘Normanised’ kings of Scotland, particularly King David I (1124–53) and his immediate successors. Thereafter place-names and

³ AJA’s typescript (see note 1) gives as examples:

Whittinghame and *Tynninghame* in East Lothian, *Coldingham* in Berwickshire, *Mersington* and *Upsettlington* in Berwickshire and probably *Haddington* in East Lothian, *Yetholm* in Roxburghshire, *Jedburgh* (formerly *Jedworth*) in Roxburghshire, *Newbattle* in Midlothian, and many names in *-wick* in the same region, such as *Berwick* and *North Berwick* ...

⁴ “*Shearington, Smallholm, Buittle, Whithorn*” (AJA’s typescript: see note 1).

⁵ “*Prestwick, Fenwick, Maybole*” (AJA’s typescript: see note 1).

⁶ “... attested by a sparse sprinkling of place-names of Gaelic origin there, such as *Old Cambus* (Berwickshire), *Innerleithen* (Peebleshire), *Balgone* (East Lothian), and *Balerno* (Midlothian) (AJA’s typescript: see note 1).

other indications show a spread of the English-speaking area beyond the confines of Lothian, first to other parts of southern Scotland, then in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries to eastern Scotland north of the Forth. This expansion of English speaking in Scotland accompanies, and is evidently closely associated with, the acquisition of lands in Scotland by Anglo-Norman and Flemish landowners, with the establishment in the areas concerned of new monastic houses with monks from England and France, and with the foundation of new royal and baronial burghs peopled with immigrant burgesses from England and elsewhere, whose *lingua franca* was Northern English (see especially the discussions and maps of mottes, religious houses and burghs in McNeill and Nicholson, 1975 [McNeill and MacQueen, 1996]). So began the long retreat of Gaelic before varieties of English, a retreat which, despite strenuous efforts on the part of some Gaels to arrest it, seems still to be continuing today.

By the fourteenth century the dominant spoken tongue of all ranks of Scotsmen east and south of the Highland Line was the Northern dialect of English known to its users first as ‘Inglis’ (or ‘English’) but later (from 1494) also as ‘Scots’, and to modern philologists as ‘Older Scots’. By the eighteenth century the same tongue had superseded the old Norse or Norn speech formerly spoken under the Norse earls in Caithness, Orkney and Shetland (see Barnes, 1984). By the second half of the fifteenth century Older Scots had become the principal literary and record language of the Scottish nation, having successfully competed in this function with Latin. Hence in the later fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries there were two national languages in use in Britain, metropolitan Tudor English in the kingdom of England, and metropolitan Older Scots in the kingdom of Scotland. Linguistically these two were close relatives, representing respectively Southern and Northern dialects of ‘English’, the tongue descended (with many transmutations) from that of the Anglo-Saxon invaders of fifth-century Britain. But they were, of course, far from identical. Metropolitan Tudor English was the sixteenth-century ancestor of Modern Standard English, supplying the ‘English’ component of Table 1, below. Older Scots (an exhaustive record of which is supplied by the *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue*) is the ancestor of the Modern Lowland Scots dialects, and supplies the ‘Scots’ (i.e. the non-standard) component of Table 1.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries considerable numbers of ^[519] land-hungry Scots, chiefly from the western and south-western shires from Clyde southwards, settled in large enclaves in northern Ireland, in the Plantation of Ulster. As a result the speech of their present-day descendants shares many of the features of Scots described in Aitken (1984, 2015) and indeed must be reckoned as dialects of Scots (see further Harris, 1984).

The current situation: options and varieties

Had Older Scots retained its former autonomy from English, we might have had in Britain today a language situation resembling that of modern Scandinavia, with Scots occupying a position like that of, say, Swedish, and (Standard) English that of Danish; or (perhaps a closer parallel) Scots might be occupying the position of Catalan, (Standard) English that of Castilian Spanish. But Scots did not retain its autonomy. The attractions of the great literature of late Medieval and Early Modern Southern English,⁷ the fact that the Scottish Reformed Church, before and after the

⁷ In the 1979a paper (p. 89), AJA quotes “Sir William Alexander, one of the self-styled ‘Scoto-Britanes’ who followed James VI to London after 1603” to illustrate the contemporary sentiment that Scots was a homely language compared with Tudor English:

Reformation of 1560, depended upon Tudor English versions of the Bible and the Psalter,⁸ and other political and social influences predictable from the history of the times (the Union of the Crowns of the two nations came in 1603), led to the adoption by Scottish writers, from about the middle of the sixteenth century, of a mixed dialect in which both Older Scots and Tudor English equivalent forms (e.g. both *guid* and *good*, both *hale* and *whole*, both *kirk* and *church*, both *ken* and *know*) co-existed as options.⁹ Through the late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries the non-Scottish options gained in popularity over their Scottish equivalents. And this mixed form of literary Scots began in the seventeenth century to be followed by a mixed dialect of a similar sort on the lips of the Scottish aristocracy, by now in frequent communication, and at times inter-marriage, with their English compeers. (For a much fuller account of these events and of the later history of Scots and English in Scotland, see Aitken 1979a.)¹⁰ So there arose the modern Scots

The language of this Poeme is (as thou seest) mixt of the English and Scottish Dialects; which perhaps may be un-pleasant and irksome to some readers of both nations. But I hope the gentle and Judicious Englishe reader will beare with me, if I retaine some badge of mine owne countrie, by using sometimes words that are peculiar thereunto, especiallie when I finde them propre, and significant. And as for my owne countrymen, they may not justly finde fault with me, if for the more parte I vse the English phrase, as worthie to be preferred before our owne for the elegance and perfection thereof. Yea I am perswaded that both countrie-men will take in good part the mixture of their Dialects, the rather for that the bountifull providence of God doth invite them both to a straiter union and conjunction as well in language, as in other respects. (Sir William Alexander, *Darius*, ‘To the Reader’ [1603], 1921: cxcvi)

⁸ “One of the crucial facts in the history of Scots is that it never had its own translation of the Bible, and that Scottish worshippers of this time sang from an English Psalter” (Aitken, 1979a: 91). While this meant that worshippers regularly heard readings from the Bible, and sermons modelled on its language, the result was not unmixed English: Robinson (1983: 59) argues that in the late sixteenth century “what was written as English could be and was pronounced as Scots”.

⁹ In the 1979a paper, AJA discusses the lack of a feeling of linguistic loyalty amongst Scots in the 15th–17th centuries (with occasional exceptions), so that there was no patriotic objection to the infiltration of English forms. In ‘Variation and variety in written Middle Scots’ (1971: 183–4; 2015) he also observes that without the Middle Scots “habitual tolerance of spelling variation, the changes in popularity of particular variants and the introduction of new variants, including the anglicised spellings common in later sixteenth-century texts ... could of course hardly have occurred”.

¹⁰ Apart from exiles such as John Knox, whose language AJA examines in detail in ‘The pioneers of anglicised speech in Scotland: a second look’ (1997, 2015), the indications are that speech (unlike writing) remained fully Scots into the 17th century, but following the Union of the Crowns, there “seems to be a suggestion that those Scots lairds who sold up land to support them on fortune-seeking visits to London anglicised their speech as well as their manners” (1979a: 91). AJA quotes William Lithgow’s ‘Scotland’s Welcome to King Charles’ of 1633 (1863: 94); Lithgow writes of these emigrés:

Whose *Riggs* speake *English* & their falted *furres*
Forgetting *Scots* can *speek* with gilded spurres.

The English troops who were garrisoned in Scotland in the 1650s may also have had some linguistic influence (as Samuel Johnson suggested: see Addendum A to ‘Scottish accents and dialects’, 1984, 2015, in the present edition) but the most important factor was “the great increase which occurred in this century in contacts of all sorts between the landed gentry of Scotland and landed and wealthy English people” (1979a: 91). London became a marriage market for Scotland as well as England: AJA cites Marshall (1970: 44–9, 108–9), who calculates that 62 out of 454 marriages of Scots peers in the 17th century were with wives from south of the Border, though a much smaller proportion of daughters of Scottish peers married outside of Scotland. “After the Restoration, every Scotsman of the nobility was likely to spend part of his time in Southern England ... and nearly all other eminent Scots ... visited London for shorter or longer periods” (1979a: 91, citing MacQueen, 1957: 179–80, 249–50, 275–6, 446 ff.), and a few were beginning to send their sons to school in England (p. 92, citing Donaldson, 1961: 296–9; MacQueen, 1957: 250).

Paper 23: Scots and English in Scotland

Written sources do not necessarily reflect speech habits, of course, but the private correspondence of the 17th century gentry does suggest a hybrid language, which AJA exemplifies in the 1979a paper, and examines in detail in ‘The pioneers of anglicised speech in Scotland: a second look’ (1997, 2015). Particularly telling are spellings that, without being the usual English spellings, reflect English pronunciation, suggesting that the writer was familiar with that pronunciation, e.g. *no* (know) in a passage from John Lauder of Fountainhall’s *Journals* (1900: 54), which AJA quotes (1979a: 92), and other examples that he lists (pp. 92–3):

- *towe*, *tow* (= two, in place of Scots *twa* or *twaie*) – 1610 *Inventory* of Lord Bruce of Kinloss, another of the ‘Scoto-Britanes’ (Wilson ed., 1839: xi);
- *wan*, *tow* (= one, two; in place of Scots *ane*, *twa* or *twaie*) – 1652 *Atholl Papers* (Stephen, 1956: 121);
- *how* (= who; in place of Scots *wha* or *whae*) – 1654 *Ane Account of the Familie of Innes* (Forbes ed. Innes, 1864: 175);
- *tu* (= two) – 1657 *The Records of Elgin* (Cramond ed., 1903: 302).

“The choice of word-forms and vocabulary in their private correspondence seems to suggest that their speech passed through a stage when there was rather inconsistent vacillation between native and imported Southern options in these respects – such as we get from working-class Scots ‘style-drifters’ today – to a variety which fairly consistently preferred Southern English forms and words” (p. 93). See also Meurman-Solin’s ‘CSC The Corpus of Scottish Correspondence, 1500–1715’, and research based on it, including Meurman-Solin (2001).

By the early 18th century, a form of speech that favoured Scots selections (columns 1 and 2) was associated with conservatives, eccentrics like Braxfield and Auchinleck, and the common people. Thus in 1710 Sir Robert Sibbald contrasted “that Language we call Broad Scots, which is yet used by the Vulgar” and “the refined Language of the Gentry” (Aitken, 1979a: 93–4, citing Sibbald, 1710: 15–16). Through much of the 18th century, the Scottish intelligentsia were haunted by a “horror of lexical and idiomatic Scotticisms” (p. 94). AJA gives the example of *The Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence*, (1692: 89 ff.), where “the use of Scottish words and locutions contributed to the ludicrousness which Scottish Episcopalians ascribed to the sermons and some other writings of seventeenth-century Presbyterian preachers” and Laick’s *An Answer to the Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence*, (1693: 57), where he explains defensively that the preacher, Rutherford’s, aim was “to use the meanest Phrase to make himself the better understood by those he wrote to; which shows his Humility and Condescension”. However AJA’s example from *Ravillac Redivivus* ([Hickes], 1678) should be discounted as evidence of Scottish attitudes, as Bailey (1991: 71–2) has pointed out that “the author was not a Scot but an Anglo-Catholic Englishman ... pretending to be a Scot in this anonymous pamphlet written for an English audience”. The pretended Scots professes “a great Veneration for our own and the Northern *English* Language, upon the account of the Anglo-Saxon” but has nevertheless come to England to learn the language and asks his correspondent to “faithfully Admonish me of all the Scotticisms, or all the Words, and Phrases that are not current *English* therein” (quoted by Aitken, 1979a: 94–5).

The English of the Scottish gentry of course had a recognisable Scottish accent, as Rev. Thomas Morer observed in 1689:

They have an unhappy tone, which the gentry and nobles cannot overcome, tho’ educated in our schools, or never so conversant with us; so that we may discover a Scotchman as soon as we hear him speak: Yet to say truth, our Northern and remote English have the same imperfection. (Aitken, 1979a: 95, quoting Brown ed., 1891: 272–3)

The Augustan culture of 18th century England, which stigmatised anything “unrefined”, “vulgar” or “provincial”, was a strong influence in Scotland, though there were “some dissentient voices” (p. 95) like those of the poets Allan Ramsay, who, in his 1724 Preface to *The Ever Green* (1970: 237), castigates the “affected Class of Fops” who, shown “the most elegant Thoughts in a Scots Dress, they did as disdainfully as stupidly condemn it as barbarous”; and Alexander Ross, who writes, in the ‘Invocation’ to his 1768 *Helenore or the Fortunate Shepherdess* (1938: 11):

Speak my ain leed, `tis gueed auld Scots I mean;
Your Southren gnaps I count not worth a preen.
We’ve words a fouth, that we can ca’ our ain,
Tho’ frae them now my childer sair refrain,
An’ are to my gueed auld proverb confeerin,
Neither gueed fish nor flesh, nor yet sa’t herrin.

linguistic situation, modelled in Table 1. This model offers a macrocosmic sample of the total body of vocabulary and morphology in principle available to all native Scottish speakers, and a microcosmic view of the options accessible to each individual speaker. It will be seen that it contains a large common core of invariants (column 3) and variants or options of selectional phonology and of vocabulary and grammar in the outer columns. Further examples of the various categories are to be found in Aitken (1984, 2015).

“The self-consciousness of the Scots intellectuals and middle classes about the provinciality of their English speech ... is already in evidence in the records of the Fair Intellectual Club, founded in 1719 for educated young ladies of Edinburgh, in which the first president complimented her members on the propriety of their English ‘considering how difficult it is for our country people to acquire it’. The well-known consequences of these notions include the publication, from 1752 onwards, of several alphabetical lists of Scottish words and expressions, compiled expressly so that Scots people could learn to avoid them in their writing and speech, and the descent on Edinburgh, from 1748 onwards, of a long line of English, Irish and anglicised Scottish lecturers on elocution, spearheading the attack on the Scots accent” (Aitken, 1979a: 96). For further reading on this subject, AJA refers (n. 7) to MacQueen (1957, especially chs. 1, 7, 8), Craig (1961, especially chs. 2, 8 and associated notes), Smith (1970: 107 ff.) and Templeton (1973: 8–10). “The ludicrous aspects of the vogue when at its height around 1760 have been entertainingly recalled by Robert McLellan in his play *The Flowers o Edinburgh* (1947)” (n. 7).

Certain Scotticisms, e.g. *to come*, or *sit, into the fire*, the past participle form *proven*, and the verb *evite* were eliminated, but “as many or more others, equally subject to overt condemnation by the eighteenth-century and later compilers of lists of Scotticisms, are still very much with us – such as *angry at, tomorrow forenoon, the length of* (as far as), and *ill to guide*” (p. 96).

“Around 1785 the extreme self-consciousness and the strident note of linguistic insecurity which mark the middle years of the century die out” (p. 96). Cruickshank (2012/2013) takes up this point in her examination of Scotticisms in the 1760s–1780s correspondence of James Duff, 2nd Earl Fife, to his factor. He regularly uses optional Scotticisms (e.g. *tod*), suggesting unself-consciousness about their use in this context.

“Some of the remarks we read thereafter, especially those directed towards a new aim, that of totally extirpating the continuing broad Scots of the lower orders, which was now regarded as ‘a mass of perfect and absurd corruption’ (Dalyell, 1801: x), are in tones which imply the complete confidence of the writers themselves in the propriety of their own English” (pp. 96–7). In this context, AJA quotes *The Statistical Account of Scotland* (1795, Peterhead, p. 592):

The language spoken in this parish is the broad Buchan dialect of the English, with many Scotticisms, and stands much in need of reformation, which it is hoped will soon happen, from the frequent resort of polite people to the town in summer.

Early in the 19th century, the establishment position ceased to be that the total extinction of vernacular Scots was desirable. The publication of Jamieson’s dictionary in 1808 was influential in this, as were other antiquarians and the Scots Romantic writers. (AJA elaborates on this theme in his ‘Address and Toast to the Immortal Memory of Robert Burns’, [1990], 2015.) For patriots such as Lord Cockburn it was now “a matter for nostalgic regret” that Scots was “going out as a spoken tongue every year” (p. 97, quoting Cockburn, 1874: 189). To illustrate “some of the linguistic and linguistic-mythological conditions and attitudes to which the foregoing events had led” (pp. 97–8), AJA quotes *The New Statistical Account of Scotland* (1845, Banff, pp. 35–6):

Among the higher and better educated classes the English language may be heard spoken in tolerable purity both as to idiom and pronunciation: there are few who cannot express themselves in English, still fewer who do not familiarly understand it when spoken to them. Unmixed Scotch is never to be heard. The most common dialect is a mixture of Scotch and English, the Scotch used being of the somewhat vicious kind, known, I believe, by the name of the Aberdeenshire. The Scotch, however, is gradually wearing out. Every person remembers the frequent use, in former years, of terms and phrases that are now seldom to be heard but among the older and more secluded. Even however in what is called by courtesy speaking English or using English words there is often a sore lack of the genuine English pronunciation.

Around the middle of the 19th century, we begin to find value judgements on different varieties of ‘Scotch’ (see further ‘Scottish accents and dialects’, 1984, 2015: n. 38).

Being only two-dimensional, the model has inevitable limitations, such as its failure to incorporate a regional dimension (on which also see Aitken, 1984, 2015, *passim*). It also ignores the important fact that the different items which make up the totality of choices vary individually and collectively in their social and stylistic markedness between groups of speakers and for each individual speaker of the 5 million or so speakers concerned. For many middle-class speakers column 4 and 5 items are stylistically unmarked, whereas most items ^[520] of columns 1 and 2 are stylistically marked as ‘Scotticisms’ (see Aitken, 1984: 107; 2015) and some in other ways (e.g. also as ‘vulgarisms’, Aitken, 1984: 108; 2015). Some working-class speakers have, however, rather different, and to ^[521] some extent converse, stylistic values. The localised and non-standard items, the Scotticisms, have for long been regarded as appropriate to ‘lower-class’ speech or highly informal middle-class speech styles, and occur chiefly there (and in certain literary settings such as ‘broad Scots’ lyric, comic and satiric verse and Scots drama, both the realist and the farcical).

Though the matter remains uninvestigated, it is possible to suggest tentative groupings of speakers in terms of their habitual responses to the sets of choices offered by the model.

At one extreme there are those numerous speakers who operate fairly exclusively from columns 3 to 5, except that they employ both ‘obligatory covert’ and sporadic ‘stylistic overt’ Scotticisms (see Aitken, 1984, 2015) and they do this in one of the Scottish accents. Hereafter we shall term this variety, as realised with one of the Scottish accents described below, Scottish Standard English and when, most usually, it is realised with one of the accents favoured by middle-class or ‘educated’ speakers it will be termed Educated Scottish Standard English. Of all Scottish speakers, users of Educated Scottish Standard English display the smallest stylistic range between their informal and formal styles. Scottish Standard English is commonly heard also from lower middle- and working-class speakers in public speaking and when addressing middle-class interlocutors. This is our group 1 variety.

A second group of middle-class speakers (our group 2), perhaps with the men outnumbering the women, along with many or most of the lower middle class and some of those whom some sociologists have dubbed ‘respectable working class’, operate much less exclusively, though still preponderantly, from columns 3 to 5. Such speakers make moderately frequent, though inconsistent, recourse to column 2, though more often for function words including ‘weak forms’, such as [ʌ] for *I*, *-na* or *-nae* for *-n’t*, *no* for *not*, *-in* rather than *-ing* (present participle), than for content words. Speakers of this group have recourse to column 1 much less frequently than to column 2, except in ‘stylistic overt Scotticism’ function.

A more frequent recourse to column 2 content-words (*hame* for *home*, *hoose* for *house*) and some column 1 items, with quite regular and consistent preference for some items from both of these, but inconsistency for many other items, is characteristic of informal working-class speech. Such speakers may be thought of as straddling the table but with a bias towards the Scots (columns 1 and 2) side of it. These we shall call group 3.

A small number of working-class speakers, chiefly elderly, from some rural districts, are rather more consistently Scots than this. They may be thought of as based firmly on columns 1 to 3. Some of these may be mono-dialectal: they fail to adjust their styles towards columns 4 and 5 when addressing non-local interlocutors or in more formal settings as most other Scottish speakers do. These speakers supply our group 4.

Table 1 ^[30.1]. A model of modern Scottish speech¹¹

‘Scots’		‘English’		
1	2	3	4	5
bairn	hame	name	home	child
brae	hale	hole	whole	slope
kirk	mare	before	more	church
ken	puir	soup	poor	know
darg	muin	room	moon	job of work
cuit	yuis (n.)	miss	use (n.)	ankle
kenspeckle	yaize (v.)	raise	use (v.)	conspicuous
birl	cauld		cold	spin
girn	auld	young	old	whine
mind	coo	row /rɔu/	cow	remember
sort	hoose	London	house	mend
	loose	winter	louse	
	louse /lɔus/	feckless	loose	
ay /əi/	pay /pəi/	bite /bəit/	pay	always
gey /gəi/	way /wəi/	tide /təid/	way	very
kye /kəe/		tie /təe/		cows
een	deed /did/	feed	dead	eyes
shuin	dee /di:/	see	die	shoes
deave /di:v/	scart	leave	scratch	deafen, vex
gaed	twaw, twae	agree	two	went
ben the hoose	no /no:/	he	not	in or into the inner part of the house
	-na, -nae	his	-n’t	
		they		
		some		
	/ʌ/ (= I)	I		
	/o/ (= of)	of /ʌv/		
		‘Obligatory covert Scotticisms’		
		Most of word-order		
		Morphology		
		Syntax		
		Phonology (system and rules of realisation)		

Speakers of groups 1 and 2, more unequivocally speakers of group 1, are held to speak what they and other Scots call ‘English’, though, as we have ^[522] seen, they pronounce this in a Scottish manner. Speakers of groups 3 and 4, especially the latter, are described by their compatriots, and often by themselves, as speakers of ‘Scots’, of ‘broad Scots’, even of ‘good Scots’ or, sometimes, simply as ‘broad’ speakers.

¹¹ *Leave* also has a Scots form, *lea*, though used variably. *Louse* (more commonly spelled *lowse*) in column 2 here is the adjective; the verb (to loosen) is pronounced /lɔuz/. The items /di:/ and /no:/ should properly be in square brackets: length is not phonemic.

This version of the model has been revised slightly from the one in AJA’s 1979a paper, with *no* ~ *not* and *-na* ~ *-n’t* being shifted from columns 1/5 to columns 2/4. There is also a larger and slightly modified selection of examples: there are of course innumerable examples that could be cited.

There is another variety of Scots. This is the imaginary ‘Ideal Scots’ which stands as an ideal of perfect performance in ‘Scots’ for the ‘best’ speakers and writers. A performer in this variety would select columns 1 and 2 items with total consistency, never permitting his discourse to be diluted with column 4 and 5 options. It need hardly be added that, a few literary *tours de force* (*Johnny Gibb of Gushetneuk?*, *Eppie Elrick?*¹²) apart, this variety exists only in the imagination of its advocates, who are however, more often than not, themselves Educated Scottish Standard English speakers: no one actually speaks, and few even write, with this consistency to the Scottish options, not even group 4 speakers.

Speakers of all four groups vary widely in the size and make-up of their repertoires of column 1 and column 2 items: the ‘educated’ Scot, more or less well versed in Scottish vernacular literature, will command a different list of Scots words and forms from that at the disposal of the rural peasant, and the lists of both of these are likely to be more extensive than, and different from, that of the urban working-class housewife (see further, Aitken, 1984:107–8; 2015). It will be seen that groups 2 and 3 allow of wide variation between individual speakers in preferences for particular single items, and there is little doubt that such variation does exist: probably no two speakers of these groups agree exactly in their behaviour in this respect. With some speakers there may also be a tendency to polarisation of choices: with such speakers either *You hae a guid hame* or *You have a good home* are more likely than, say, *You hae a good hame* or *You have a guid home*, and *Yaize* (= Use) *your ain* is more likely than *Yaize your own*. Yet there are certainly other speakers who appear (in their less formal styles) to display little consistency of this sort. In truth, no studies of the vagaries of practice in this respect have yet been made, though in one investigation the inconsistent behaviour of some Edinburgh schoolchildren in operating variants of this sort has been noted (Romaine, 1975).

Some speakers of groups 2–4 display a tendency to ‘drift’ in the direction of the more prestigious, fully English, variety, by more frequently (though not necessarily invariably) preferring an ‘English’ (columns 4 or 5) item when addressing ‘English-speaking’ interlocutors. As well as this common ‘upwards convergence’ phenomenon (towards the more socially prestigious variety, group 1 Educated Scottish Standard English), the situation also offers opportunities for observing ‘downwards convergence’ (say of group 2 speakers in a mainly group 3-speaking environment) and, no doubt occasionally, of ‘divergence’ (of group 3 or 4 speakers reacting hostilely to what they take to be linguistic pretentiousness, say of group 1 speakers). ‘Style-drifters’ may also be observed to drift away from preferring English (columns 4 and 5) options, as they become familiarised to a strange interlocutor or a formal setting.

^[523] Style-drifting is not, however, the only possibility. Many group 3 and 4 speakers are capable of ‘dialect-switching’ from their habitual vernacular into school English (i.e. a style based almost entirely on columns 3 to 5), with or without a de-localising adjustment of accent, in addressing non-vernacular-speaking strangers or when away from home. The ability to switch cleanly from one ‘dialect’ to the other in this way seems to be most common with speakers from the most conservatively-spoken regions (perhaps the only regions in which group 4-type speech occurs at all commonly) but some working-class group 3 speakers from all regions possess it also.

¹² These are both North-Eastern novels. *Johnny Gibb of Gushetneuk in the Parish of Pyketillim*, by William Alexander, was first published in serial form in the *Aberdeen Free Press* in 1869–70 and in book form in 1871. There is a modern edition by William Donaldson (Tuckwell Press, 1995). *Eppie Elrick (an Aberdeenshire Tale of the '15)*, by William P. Milne, was published in serial form in the *Buchan Observer* in 1954–55, and in book form in 1955.

Every small Scottish community – a hamlet, a school staff-room, a hospital ward – is likely to contain speakers from several of the groups of Scottish speakers described above, as well as speakers of Hebridean or Highland and of non-Scottish, most commonly England-derived, varieties of English. Customarily, all intercommunicate freely and without difficulty. Where interlocutors are familiar and at ease with one another, but of course only if this is so, convergence may be slight or non-existent.

Something like this situation has probably operated from the time when Southern English influence became a noticeable feature of Scottish speech in the seventeenth century.¹³ Clear indications that a situation of the sort existed become numerous in the second half of the eighteenth century, when we hear often of hybrid Scots-English: “Neither gued fish nor flesh, nor yet sa’t herrin” (1768);¹⁴ or of local Scots speech that is “improving and approaching nearer the English” (*The Statistical Account of Scotland*: Mauchline, p. 114; many of the accounts of the local speech in this collection imply a hybrid situation of this sort);¹⁵ and similar remarks appear constantly thereafter. Some of these accounts are cited in Aitken (1979a; and 1981b, 2015).

One slightly surprising result of the few sociolinguistic investigations of Scots speech which have as yet been completed (Romaine, 1975; Macaulay, 1977; Reid, 1978)¹⁶ which are chiefly of phonological items whose range of realisations includes pronunciation ‘vulgarisms’ (see Aitken, 1984: 107; 2015) is the surprisingly early age (below six) by which children have learned to dialect-switch or style-drift according to the sociolinguistic rules of their community, perfecting this skill in the next few years (Romaine, 1975, 1979; Reid, 1978). The ability to recognise the different stylistic options and to perform in this way is, it seems, an important part of the language competence of Scots.

Accents of English in Scotland

The accents with which the several varieties of Scots speech described in the previous section are realised range from fully local and vernacular accents, many of the features of which are mentioned in Aitken (1984, 2015), to ‘hybrid’ varieties approximating Anglo-English accents such as RP. To date the fullest overall account of these accents appears in Abercrombie (1979, 1991) and in Aitken (1979a).

^[524] All Educated Scottish Standard English accents, as employed regularly by most group 1 and some group 2 speakers (as these are characterised on p. 521) share a large number of systemic and realisational features with local vernacular Scottish accents, as employed by group 3 and group 4 speakers. The shared systemic items can be seen in Table 1 of Aitken (1984, 2015), and some of the shared realisations are mentioned in that chapter (pp. 100, 102), as well as the Scottish Vowel-length Rule described on pp. 94–9; others are mentioned in Aitken (1979a: 99 f.).¹⁷ Some Educated Scottish Standard English speakers have characteristic local realisations of some vowels, and all Educated Scottish Standard English speakers have local realisations of some consonants shared with working-class speakers of their own localities. Many Educated

¹³ Prior to that time, as AJA explains in the 1979a paper, Scots speakers had only columns 1–3 to select from.

¹⁴ For the reference, see note 10.

¹⁵ For discussion of language attitudes as revealed in *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, see Millar and Horsbroch (2000), Millar (2003, 2004).

¹⁶ For recent sociolinguistic work and further references, see Lawson ed. (2014).

¹⁷ See notes to ‘Scottish accents and dialects’ in the present edition (1984, 2015).

Scottish Standard English speakers adopt the vernacular local treatment of unstressed syllables ('educated' North-Eastern speakers, for example, commonly operate Buchan vowel-harmony, without, as a rule, being aware of this); and most share some local supra-segmental habits: in all such ways Educated Scottish Standard English speakers possess more or less localised accents. Just as the range of Scotticisms employed by users of these accents is not homogeneous throughout Scotland (see Aitken, 1984: 108; 2015), so the Educated Scottish Standard English accents themselves display regional variation.

In other ways, however, the Educated Scottish Standard English accents as a whole are differentiated from local vernacular speech and approximate a single national norm: in the differences of vowel system and vowel selection from vernacular Scots displayed in Tables 1 and 2 of Aitken (1984, 2015), and at the realisational level, in giving some vowels, (notably vowel 15 /ɪ/, and vowel 6 /u/, and vowels¹⁸ 12a /ɔ/ and 18a /ɔ/ or /ɒ/) realisations approximating those of RP rather than the realisations current in the vernacular of their locality (for example most vernacular Scottish accents employ much opener and more centralised realisations of vowel 15 /ɪ/ than are acceptable as Educated Scottish Standard English). Vowel 16a¹⁹ appears to be predominantly an Educated Scottish Standard English, not a vernacular Scottish, phenomenon. And the 'vulgarisms' of pronunciation described in Aitken (1984: 108; 2015) are eschewed by Educated Scottish Standard English speakers.

The several sets of features just summarised are criterial for the group of Scottish accents we are calling Educated Scottish Standard English – those accents which Scots find acceptable as 'educated' accents or appropriate for 'educated' (really, middle-class) speakers, which indeed are almost invariably used by such speakers, and which most usually accompany the group 1 set of lexical choices identified above. Speakers operating the group 1 or group 2 varieties, but failing to preserve the distinctions from local vernacular speech specified in the previous paragraph, qualify as Scottish Standard English, but not Educated Scottish Standard English, speakers. Many such speakers do, of course, exist, especially among the 'lower middle classes' and the 'respectable working class', many as habitual Scottish Standard English^[525] speakers, some as speakers of this variety only on formal occasions, with strangers or away from their own locality.

The types of Educated Scottish Standard English accent we have just described are the most conservative, most fully Scottish and most socially widespread of this group of accents, each local version sharing some, but not all, features with its own local vernacular. Another sort of accent of this group, which typically displays fewer localised features (replacing these with standardised national features) and which, in system and realisations, is more closely assimilated to RP and other Anglo-English accents, is the type which might be called 'hybrid'. This range of accents is further identified on p. 526, below.

Alongside the more or less native and Scottish forms of Scots speech which we have been considering, there is widely current in Scotland a prestigious and influential variety which cannot in the same way be considered as in any sense native to Scotland: namely, Standard English pronounced with an RP accent. Both as dialect and as accent this variety of English derives from England; however, RP-accented English (often, it is true, accompanied by a few stylistic overt Scotticisms) is, without exception, the speech of all members of the hereditary

¹⁸ Vowel 12a in Aitken (1984, 2015) refers to the Scottish Standard English /ɔ/ vowel corresponding to RP /ɔ:/. Some dialects of Scots have a vowel of this height as their realisation of vowel 12 (as in *snaw*, *auld*, etc.) but for other Scots speakers it is additional to their system. Likewise 18a as the Scottish Standard English /ɔ/ (or, for more RP-like accents, /ɒ/) vowel when it corresponds to RP /ɒ/.

¹⁹ /ë/ as in *seven*, *earth*.

landed gentry of Scotland, the lairds and clan chiefs and of the Scottish member of the royal family, the Queen Mother, since these persons have from the eighteenth century and earlier been accustomed to educate their children in expensive English private schools (the so-called 'Public Schools') or the few similar establishments in Scotland, and have, since the seventeenth century, mixed (and intermarried) with the same social caste in England. Similar kinds of English, also originating in England, are to be heard from the large and growing number of English immigrants (5% in the 1971 Census)²⁰ to be found everywhere throughout Scotland, many of these occupying senior managerial and technical posts and often active and of standing in local affairs.

Until recently this kind of English, differing from typically Scots varieties and accents, was manifestly the ultimate 'top-dog' variety in Scotland as well as in England. It remains the variety which is most in evidence on the grandest social occasions. It is the variety most often heard from airline employees (though not from the servants of the railway or the bus companies). Cinema and television advertisements are most often in RP accents (but not those for beer, which are commonly in Scots accents). Announcers and newsreaders for the BBC in Scotland are invariably RP-accented speakers or speakers with hybrid accents. Today, presenters and speakers on Scottish radio (both the BBC and local stations) more often than not have Scottish accents, but these are predominantly middle-class ones: working-class dialects and accents are largely confined to interviews, phone-ins and fictional dialogue. The Scottish presence is even less on television, but on similar lines. Of course Scottish listeners are even more exposed to media from furth of Scotland, where non-Scottish accents, especially RP, naturally predominate.

^[526] The prestige enjoyed by RP and similar English-accented varieties of English in Scotland, evidenced in all these and other ways (in Muriel Spark's *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* it is the ENGLISH school girl who is the model of elegant diction in the Scottish girls' school class), appears to provide the explanation for the emergence (at what date is at present unclear) of a range of Scottish accents which are in essence compromises or hybrids between the more conservatively Scottish of the Educated Scottish Standard English accents described above and RP. These hybrid accents are characterised linguistically in Abercrombie (1979: 75–81; 1991) and in Aitken (1979a: 110–14).²¹

Whereas (as we noted on p. 525) the more conservatively Scottish of the Educated Scottish Standard English accents encompass a wide social range of users, from 'respectable working-class' through 'lower middle-class' to 'middle-class', these 'hybrid' accents are fairly exclusively middle-class in their provenance. Among the social group which includes advocates, solicitors, accountants, doctors, professors and some teachers they appear to predominate. As Abercrombie has pointed out (1979: 75; 1991), these accents are fully established, 'hereditary' and institutionalised, just as much as the more distinctively Scottish ones: they are not just casual imitations by single individuals of RP speakers.

In attractiveness, 'elegance', absence of 'uncouthness', it is probable that some of the 'hybrid' accents we have just considered would rate higher for many native speakers of English, and for most Scots, than the more conservative Educated Scottish Standard English varieties, though both could fairly be described as socially 'acceptable'. The same cannot be said of the more distinctively working-class accents; nor can it be said of the so-called 'Morningside' or 'Kelvinside' accent (so named from these middle-class districts in Edinburgh and Glasgow where this type of accent is held – probably erroneously – specially to flourish). This accent is

²⁰ 8.7% in the 2011 Census.

²¹ In the present edition, see 'Scottish accents and dialects' (1984, 2015: n. 12).

widely believed to represent casual and inaccurate imitations by its speakers of their social betters – to result from pretentiousness, affectation or ‘talking posh’.²² Its salient characteristics are a few features, mainly of realisations of vowels, which do indeed appear to have resulted, at least originally, from hypercorrect imitation of RP: *naice* for *nice*, *faive* for *five*, *ectually* for *actually*, and others; the presence of only one or two of these features is enough to identify and stigmatise this stereotype. It has been known as a stereotype for at least the whole of the present century. Its speakers are typically middle-class and (perhaps especially) lower middle-class group 1 speakers, much more often women than men, it seems; I have observed it only in speakers from Central Scotland; but it is not apparently otherwise regionally restricted, and is certainly not confined to the districts which give it its most popular names – there are others – though it does indeed occur there.

The very few subjective reaction investigations of attitudes to the different types of Scots accents so far reported (Cheyne, 1971; Romaine, 1980) confirm^[527] that speakers with RP-like accents are regularly judged to be of higher wealth, status, ambition, leadership, good looks and self-confidence; to native Scots accents are left only the more homely and likeable personality traits, such as ‘good heartedness’.²³

What is special about Scots?

Part of the answer to this question is, obviously, the linguistic substance itself, much of it, as we saw in Aitken (1984, 2015), unique to Scotland.

Lowland Scotland is not, of course, alone in manifesting a bi-polar stylistic continuum, with styles ranging from a more prestigious Standard English, in Scottish and non-Scottish varieties and accents, to fully local non-standard varieties, in which the choice of Scots elements (columns 1 and 2, and Scots phonology and phonetics) is maximal. Similar ranges between local varieties of Standard English and ‘the full local dialect’ operate, for example, in English regions such as Yorkshire, and in post-creole continuum situations such as that of Jamaica (see e.g. De Camp, 1971).²⁴

But it has been and can be claimed, first, that the linguistic distance between the two extreme poles of the Scottish continuum is greater than in any comparable case in the English-speaking world, and, second, that distinctively Scots elements are in more frequent spoken (and, as we shall see, also written) use over a socially much more widely dispersed range than in any of these other cases. The term ‘linguistic distance’ is used as a way of expressing the fact that Scottish speech possesses more numerous contrasts of the column 2 versus column 4 sort, and that more of these are phonetically striking (of a considerable phonetic distance, like the phonetic distance between the vowels of *hame* [hem] and *home* [hom], or *yaize* [je:z] and *use*

²² Johnston argues that this speech variety has its roots in a hyper-RP accent promulgated in England as well as Scotland through the teaching of elocution (1985).

²³ There is also in the 1979a paper a discussion of the social implications of increasingly anglicised middle-class accents, as potentially increasing the gap that broad speakers have to cover to achieve social acceptability, though AJA observes that there is greater accent tolerance than 30 years previously. He is keen to see “the broadcasting media display more favour to the more Scots and vernacular kinds of accent than they at present do” (p. 115). Cf. his letters to the press on the subject of Scottish accents in broadcasting (see ‘Letters to the *Scotsman* on the subject of accent (1956, 1977)’, 2015), and also his 1995 talk ‘The Playboy of the West Germanic World’ (2015).

²⁴ In the 1979a paper, AJA notes that a perceptive discussion of the phenomenon, with reference to Scottish speech, appeared in Hill (1958: 450), in advance of Ferguson’s (1959) discussion of ‘diglossia’ (1979a: n. 1).

[ju:z]). The term also conveys that there are also more numerous lexical oppositions to Standard English (column 1 versus column 5) than in other British dialect regions: the most important witnesses to this are the contents of the *Scottish National Dictionary* (SND) (over 30,000 entries, few obsolete) and the *English Dialect Dictionary* (EDD). In addition, I am asserting that the Scots use more of these non-standardisms more often and over virtually the whole social range, than are similar non-standardisms used elsewhere in the English-speaking world, including creole-speaking areas.

The greater durability of Scotticisms in Scottish tradition and the greater willingness of the Scots to use them reflect what appears to be a greater ‘dialect loyalty’ by Scottish speakers of all the Scottish regions than is evinced by their English cousins towards THEIR non-standard dialects. According to Glauser (1974: 276, 282–3), it is much more common to find that a dialect form or word continues to be used on the Scots side of the Scottish-English Border than the converse of this, i.e. survival of a dialect item on the English side when Scottish speakers know only the standard item.

This more persistent dialect loyalty of the Scots is loyalty to more than a ^[528] dialect. The non-standardisms (of columns 1 and 2) used by them and which they regard (erroneously in some cases; see Aitken, 1984: 105; 2015) as peculiar to Scotland, they label Scots, and some Scots at least regard them as part of the Scots ‘language’. The Scots language has strong associations with Scotland’s identity as a nation and it has, since the fifteenth century, shared the national name. Among those who have written or spoken of Scots as the national language of the Scottish nation have been Gavin Douglas in 1513, King James VI (of Scotland) and I (of England), various seventeenth-century Scots writers, Allan Ramsay the poet, Alexander Ross the eighteenth-century regional poet, Robert Burns, Walter Scott, Lord Cockburn the celebrated Edinburgh judge and raconteur, Robert Louis Stevenson, Lewis Grassie Gibbon, Hugh MacDiarmid and many Scots today, including, of course, the advocates of a ‘restored’ or ‘promoted’ Scots (on which see below). However, there has also been a (perhaps smaller) body of Scots, including J. A. H. Murray (1873: 91) who have regarded Scots as a mere dialect of English, or, in Murray’s case, as merely part of the Northern English dialect.

Further support to the notion of a Scots ‘language’ comes from Scotland’s uniquely copious and distinguished vernacular literature, albeit this has been until quite recently restricted to genre and lyric verse, prose dialogue and first-person (quasi-oral) narrative, and to settings and topics of purely Scottish provenance. Most of this literature is in the mainstream literary Scots tradition, in something like a standard variety of literary Scots. This is based loosely on an idealised conservative form of spoken Central Scots – a Central Scots version of ‘Ideal Scots’. This form of literary Scots employs an orthography that is variable within certain circumscribed limits. This orthography draws most of its symbolisations from literary Standard English but retains also a few of the conventions of Older Scots (e.g. *ui* optionally with *u-e* and *oo* to represent vowel 7 (see Aitken, 1984, 2015: Table 1) and *ch*, optionally with *gh*, the phoneme /x/). The mainstream literary tradition includes probably all of the internationally known names of Scottish literature – Burns, Scott, Hogg, Stevenson, MacDiarmid – and many others. But there have also established themselves several deviant traditions, drawing on the stereotypes and shibboleths of certain regions and conforming to the ‘local standards’ of these regions, or specialised in other ways. A distinctive literature in the Scots of North-Eastern Scotland has existed since the eighteenth century (beginning with Robert Forbes, Andrew Shirrefs, John Skinner), a Shetlandic literature since the nineteenth (see Robertson and Graham, 1952). Since then the range of local and social

varieties expressed in literature has continued to expand, most strikingly in recent decades (on which see McClure, 1979a).²⁵

In quantity, distinction and variety this literature far outshines the dialect literatures of any other part of the English-speaking world. Scotland is unique among English-speaking nations and regions in possessing its own great literature in both ‘standard’ and ‘dialect’ versions of its own language, even though this is restricted to literary functions and localised settings.^[529] Furthermore, many Scots, such as Walter Scott and Hugh MacDiarmid, are very conscious that a form of Scots formerly was (in the sixteenth century) the full ‘standard’ or ‘official language’ of the then separate Scottish nation. Nevertheless, though Scots in this way possesses literary status and though some of those who (more or less) speak it are influenced by patriotic loyalty towards it, the sole official and transactional language of the country today, in ordinary general reference, remains Standard English, and Standard English in its various accents and varieties is manifestly the prestige speech.

Good and Bad Scots

In this chapter we have operated a binary model of the potential claimants for the allegiance of Lowland Scottish speakers – ‘English’ and ‘Scots’. In this form the binary model implies an awareness that Scotland and Scots do have their own distinctive traditions. As Sandred (1983) and others have pointed out, many working-class Scots appear, to some extent at least, to lack this awareness and hold a version of the binary model in which the opposed varieties are simply ‘proper English’ and ‘slang’. As is often the case, the members of society most strongly conscious of traditions and culture are the ‘educated’ – who are perhaps rather better represented among the middle class; and this also accounts for the greater knowledge and use by this group of the stylistic overt Scotticisms described in Aitken (1984: 107–8; 2015).

In the course of the last two centuries the binary model of Scots has been giving place to a trinary one, particularly among ‘educated’ and middle-class Scots, themselves normally Educated Scottish Standard English speakers. The components of this trinary model are (approvable) ‘Scots-English’ (i.e. Educated Scottish Standard English), (said to be approvable) ‘genuine Scots’ or ‘Good Scots’, and (not approvable) ‘slovenly corruptions of Scots’ or ‘Bad Scots’. ‘Good Scots’ is commonly identified with archaic and rural varieties ‘whether of the Borders or of Buchan’, and is believed to approximate to ‘Ideal Scots’ (see p. 522); ‘Bad Scots’ is the variety of Scots common among the working classes of urbanised Central Scotland – ‘Urban Demotic’ – marked by free use of those ‘vulgarisms’ of accent and of usage identified in Aitken (1984: 108; 2015).

Yet without the protection of an ‘educated’ accent or an approved literary setting, it is certain that even ‘Good Scots’ vocables are far from finding universal or unqualified approval. Tape-recorded specimens of conservative rural Scots speech (our group 4) have been known to amuse middle-class Scottish audiences almost as much as specimens of more unquestionably Urban Demotic varieties; and Sandred’s findings in his investigation into attitudes to lexical Scotticisms seem to point in the same direction. It seems that approval of ‘Good Scots’ items and loyalty to the ‘Scots language’ is by many more readily accorded to ‘Ideal Scots’ and its abstracted components than to the coarse reality of actual performance, associated as this is with^[530] socially objectionable speakers. Some who profess approval of ‘Good Scots’ for historical and

²⁵ Also McClure (2000).

patriotic reasons, and who admire its use in literature, may yet discourage in children's speech the use on any occasion of identifiably vernacular Scots forms (i.e. those which are not covert – see Aitken, 1984: 105–7; 2015) for social reasons (see Sandred, 1983). The whole issue of attitude and its relation to performance and to education is clearly highly various and complex but as yet far from fully understood and virtually unstudied.

Reviving Scots?

From 1776 to the present, almost every commentator on Scots has repeated the almost universally agreed belief that it is 'dying'.²⁶ Some earlier suggestions for restoring or reviving it are mentioned in Aitken (1981b, 2015), and a recent discussion of ways of doing so is McClure ed. (1980). It was not however till the early 1970s that there arose several organisations devoted to "the promotion of Scots as a language" or "the furtherance of Scotland's languages", including the Association for Scottish Literary Studies, with a membership, in 1980, of over 700 and which has a very active Language Committee, and the Scots Language Society, originally called the Lallans Society, with several hundred members. One aim of these organisations is to promote awareness of the language and literature of Scotland, present and past, which was until recently almost totally and scandalously neglected in Scottish education (see Aitken, 1979b; 1981, 2015; McClure, 1979b). Another aim of some people, for example McClure, has been the preservation and development of Scots as a distinct language, as an important part of the cultural heritage of the Scot. One proposal for so doing is reminiscent of the methods used for the (more or less) successful promotion of Nynorsk in Norway: see especially McClure (1980) and Aitken's riposte in the same volume (1980, 2015).

If what I have called 'New Scots' (Aitken, 1980, 2015), in imitation of the term 'Nynorsk', were somehow to be made available as a literary, official, private and transactional language in the manner proposed by McClure, it would require to have norms to preserve its own distinctiveness and for pedagogic reasons. It can hardly be doubted that these would be on the lines of existing mainstream literary Scots (rather than one of the divergent varieties of literary Scots). A foretaste of what this might be like can be seen in the Scots Language Society's journal *Lallans*. *Lallans* is almost entirely in literary Scots and with a few other, very much more occasional, pieces in other publications, it breaks new ground in that it uses Scots for the narrative as well as the dialogue of its short stories and for serious essays on a variety of topics (but mainly of particular Scottish concern). These *genres* have hitherto been virtually confined to Standard English rather than Scots. *Lallans* also contains notices and advertisements in Scots, such as the following:

²⁶ The Scots pole of the continuum suffers attrition with each passing generation, as AJA describes in the 1979a paper (pp. 88–9):

Thus items from columns 1 and 2 of Table 1 disappear and column 3 is correspondingly enlarged by items formerly from columns 4 and 5 – items like, say, *icker* (an ear of corn) or, in many dialects, *lift* (the sky) or *aik* (an oak) or, in some dialects at least, *bate* (a boat) or *aits* (oats). This, then, reduces the Scottishness of the system. But it is a very long way from anglicising it totally, as we can see by looking at the writings of any of our modern writers in the 'stairheid vernacular'.

He is unwilling to concede that what is happening is language death, taking the long history of reports of this to indicate that it is a myth ('The good old Scots tongue: Does Scots have an identity?', 1981b: 81–2; 2015).

[531] *Scots Literature Competition 1978*

The Scots Language Society offers prizes for scribe in the Scots tongue. There are three classes: Age 18 and over with prizes of £20, £10 and £5; age 12–17 with prizes of £10, £5 and £2.50; and under 12, prizes of £5, £3 and £2.

Entries must be original and never before printed. They may be (a) Poems up to 60 lines; (b) tales up to 3,000 words; (c) plays that take no more than 25 minutes to perform. Each entry must be signed with a byname, and the byname should be printed on the outside of a sealed envelope, that has inside the entrant's real name and address, and, for them under 18, the date of birth.

(From *Lallans* 9, Mairtinmas 1977)

This is evidently a word-for-word rendering of an equivalent notice in Standard English. As a performance it looks as if it is derived from a competence in Standard English. The choice of the modal *may* is perhaps revealing of this, since this is unidiomatic in modern spoken Scots (and in Scottish Standard English), which has only *can* in this application (the advertisement appeared repeatedly without correction of this). It is doubtful if many Scots today would share the belief of the committed few that there is any real point in having this in 'Scots' at all, rather than in the simple Standard English which underlies it.

Even if the Scots ever do achieve political devolution or Independence, it does not seem at all likely that the small group of New Scots enthusiasts will convert the mass of uncommitted and uninterested Scots to anything like a full New Scots revival, with all the drastic changes in linguistic and literary habits (and the consequences for education and publication) that this would entail. On the contrary, we can probably look forward to a continuation of the present slow drift of Scottish speech habits in an anglicising direction. Yet it might be that, if Independence did come, native Scottish habits of speech (and even writing?) might gain enhanced prestige, so that the drift might be decelerated or even arrested. Perhaps a new Standard English of Scotland might be stabilised, in which rather greater recourse to occasional Scottish elements in both speech and writing would become normal.

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