

# Lexical Peculiarities of Scottish English

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Preddiplomski studij engleskoga jezika i književnosti i mađarskoga jezika i  
književnosti

Dorijan Gudurić

**Lexical Peculiarities of Scottish English**  
**Leksičke osobitosti škotskog engleskog**

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## **0. Summary**

This paper deals with the Scottish language varieties, i.e. Scots (SC), Scottish English (SE) and Scottish Standard English (SSE). The focus of the paper is on the lexis of Scots and Scottish Standard English. The paper offers a large selection of SC (and SE, SSE as necessary) vocabulary. In order to clearly understand the formation of SC, SE and SSE vocabulary, the paper firstly and at some points thoroughly traces down the history and the development of languages and varieties that were or still are present in the Scottish region. After presenting the historical background and the development, the paper defines all three varieties, namely SC, SE and SSE. Each variety is also placed in the present-day context, hence showing today's characteristics and peculiarities of a variety in question. In the end, the paper is focused on the future of the most distinct variety of Old English origin – Scots.

Key words: Scots, Scottish English, Scottish Standard English, lexis, varieties

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## **1. Introduction**

A visitor to Scotland may be aware of a really different language present in the Scottish Highlands, a language not of Germanic branch of Indo-European languages, i.e. Scottish Gaelic. Nonetheless, anybody visiting Scottish lowlands would surely notice that the English language even there sounds at least quite different, if not clearly distinct from English heard in the southern parts of Britain. However, this may lead them to the conclusion that the language spoken there is nothing more but a dialect of the present-day English. In this they would be quite wrong (Kirkpatrick, 2006), as historically it can be proven false. It is true that “Scotland” speaks English; but “Scotland” also speaks Scots, counting about 1.5 million Scots speakers (results from a survey conducted in 2013). Scots originated from Old English (just as English-English varieties) and there were times in its lifespan when it was influenced, but there were also times when it was influential. Numerous Scots words can be found in today’s standard English (and even in some other *World Englishes*), but especially in Standard Scottish English, and of course Scottish English in general.

## **2.0 Historical Background and Development of Scottish Varieties**

### **2.1 Pre-Anglian Scotland**

Before the arrival of Angles to the present day Scottish-English border in the early sixth century and the foundation of the Kingdom of Bernicia, the area of Scotland had already been inhabited. At the beginning of fifth century Celtic speakers occupied all parts of Britain (Hogg, Denison, 2006). Language spoken throughout Scotland at that time was Scots Gaelic (Figure 2.1). Naturally, Anglian invaders brought their own, Germanic language with them. The conquest saw an overwhelmingly rapid replacement or absorption of the existing Celtic linguistic community by the newly arrived Germanic speakers (Hogg, Denison, 2006); the conquest also pushed the Celtic people to other parts of Britain. Scots, previously mentioned in the introduction, has its roots exactly in Anglo-Saxon just as English (sometimes *Anglo-Saxons* is simply referred to as *English* (Knowels, 1997), this however is not an entirely correct usage of the concepts). In linguistic terms, obvious Celtic influence on English was minimal (if perhaps slightly more influential on Scottish variety), except for place- and river-names (Hogg, Denison, 2006). However, recent work has revived the suggestion that Celtic may have had considerable effect on low-status, spoken varieties of Old English, effects

which only became evident in the morphology and syntax of written English after the Old English period (Hogg, Denison, 2006). Scottish Gaelic, which belongs to a Celtic branch, is still spoken in Scottish Highlands.



Figure 2.1 *The Indo-European Languages* (Hogg, Denison, 2006; p. 5)

## 2.2 Anglian Scotland

Later, the Kingdom of Bernicia (and Deira) was subsumed into the Kingdom of Northumbria (Higham, 1968; qtd. in Knowels, 1997). Northumbria stretched from southern Scotland to England (north of the Humber). It is good to keep in mind that there was no standard language in today's sense but rather a number of dialects, which in relation to their prestige and in accordance with the 'rule of homogeneity in speech' spread across the kingdom. The dialects of Anglo-Saxon are conventionally classified by kingdom: Northumbrian, Mercian, West Saxon and Kentish (Figure 2.2). The northern dialects, Northumbrian and Mercian, are usually grouped together under the name *Anglian* (Knowels, 1997). All four dialects belong to what we term as *Old English* (OE).



Figure 2.2 *Old English dialects* (Knowels, 1997; p. 35)

### 2.3 The Arrival of Vikings

In the eighth century northern and western isles of Scotland became Viking targets (as well as England). Vikings are sometimes also called Norsemen (or ‘Northmen’), Danes or Scandinavians. The generic term for their language is *Old Norse* (ON) (Knowels, 1997), which belongs to Germanic branch of Indo-European, just as Anglo-Saxon. In fact, the languages of Anglo-Saxons and Vikings were cognate languages and were mutually comprehensible (Douglas; Kachru, Kachru, Nelson, 2006). Vikings eventually settled in Orkney and Shetland, bequeathing the variety of ON called *Norn* to the islands, where it was spoken until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, respectively (Douglas; Kachru, Kachru, Nelson, 2006). Orkney and Shetland remained under Norwegian control until they were pledged to Scotland in the 1460s, and the legal right of Norway was still recognized in 1667 (Geipel, 1971; qtd. in Knowels, 1997). The last document written in ON in Shetland dates



from 1607 and even during 1890s traces of ON were found in Shetland, and there were people who remembered that language being spoken there (Knowels 1997). ON had significant influence on English in general, but it had even stronger legacy in Scotland than in England, and many present day Scots words were originally ON loanwords and still have cognates in the Scandinavian languages (Douglas; Kachru, Kachru, Nelson, 2006). A new language was formed in this period, which we call *Anglo-Scandinavian*. Anglo-Scandinavian is often seen as a creole, as it was developed by mixing Anglian and Scandinavian.

## 2.4 Norman French Influence and Consequences

After Scandinavian influence, Norman French had a profound influence on English. In order to better understand events and the situation in Scotland it is good to view the situation in England. The first noteworthy influences of Norman French on English took place when Edward the Confessor, who was half Norman, came to the throne in 1042. As Denison and Hogg write, he was a harbinger of Norman French influence. He made Norman French influence possible through politics, placing Frenchmen on influential positions and important public functions, such as bishops for example. The second noteworthy event was The Norman Conquest in 1066 and the coming of William of Normandy to the throne. William unscrupulously began the redistribution of land to the Normans as well as appointing Norman bishops. Unlike the Scandinavians, the Norman French came as a superordinate power (Hogg, Denison, 2006). For some centuries, English ceased to be the language of government, and there was no such thing as a national, standard literary English; and when English did once again become a major literary language across the whole country it had changed a good deal under the influence of the conquerors (Barber, Beal, Shaw, 2009). It is good to note that Norman ancestors were Vikings, who occupied parts of northern France, but eventually their Scandinavian speech was replaced with French. Although in England the aristocracy spoke French, lower classes continued using English. This was recorded in the *Chronicle of Robert Gloucester* (Barber, Beal, Shaw, 2009):

Tus com, lo, Engelond in-to Normandies hond:  
And te Normans ne coute speke to bote hor owe speche,  
And speke French as hii dude atom, and hor children dude also  
teche,  
So tat heimen of tis lond, tat of hor blod come,

Holdet alle tulke speche tat hii of hom nom;

Vor bote a man conne Frenss me telt of him lute.

Ac lowe men holdet to Engliss, and to hor owe speche zute.

Ich wene ter ne bet in al te world contreyes none  
tat ne holdet to hor owe speche, bote Engelond one.

Ac wel me wote uor to conne bote wel it is,

Vor te more tat a mon can, te more wurte he is.

This can be translated as follows (Barber, Beal, Shaw, 2009):

Thus came, lo, England into Normandy's hand: and the Normans then knew how to speak only their own language, and spoke French as they did at home, and also had their children taught (it), so that noblemen of this land, that come of their stock, all keep to the same speech that they received from them; for unless a man knows French, people make little account of him. But low men keep to English, and to their own language still. I think that in the whole world there are no countries that do not keep to their own language, except England alone. But people know well that it is good to master both, because the more a man knows the more honoured he is.

As for Scotland, the Norman Conquest triggered an influx of Anglo-Norman and Flemish overlords to Scotland who were accompanied by a wave of immigrant servants and retainers, particularly from the north of England, which therefore caused an increase in the use of Anglo-Scandinavian throughout lowland Scotland (Douglas; Kachru, Kachru, Nelson, 2006). As for French influence in Scotland, even more important than the conquest was the Auld Alliance of 1295 (Knowels, 1997) (Scots 'auld' stands for 'old' in English), which lasted until 1560. The Alliance was a union formed between Scotland and France against England. Along with French, Latin was used in both England and Scotland. Latin (the language of learning and learned), however, remained to be widely in use until the sixteenth century.

## **2.5 From *Inglis* to *Middle Scots***

By the fourteenth century, there is a decline in the use of both Norman French and Scottish Gaelic (which was especially dominant in the northern parts of Scotland) (Douglas; Kachru, Kachru, Nelson, 2006), hence making space for the Anglo-Scandinavian variety, which

descended from a Northumbrian dialect of OE. That variety was beginning to be called *Inglis*. It was the language of the lowlands and of the royal court (at that time Scotland was an independent kingdom with its centre in Edinburgh; after Three Hundred Years' War against England and the Auld Alliance Scotland succeeded in accomplishing independence). *Inglis* is basically a variation of the name by which Anglo-Saxons knew their language – *englisc*, literally 'Angle-ish' – who had come originally from Angeln ('the corner') in Denmark. Later, form 'English' came to be preferred in the southern half of Britain. As for today, the form *Inglis*, when used in Scots, is now only used to refer to English. *Inglis* and *Englisc* started to develop separately and differently. And so *Inglis* became the most used in both speaking and writing mode among all classes and over all areas of Scotland. The earliest substantial record of *Inglis* is John Barbour's long narrative poem *Brus* of 1375. Another important year for *Inglis* was 1390 when Scottish Acts of Parliament began to be recorded in *Inglis* rather than Latin. As the northern and southern tongues developed, new names came into use to distinguish them, just as was happening elsewhere in Europe with closely-related languages. During the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Middle Scots (developed form of *Inglis*) was used in formal registers and in literature. Such were the Scottish writers and poets Robert Henryson and William Dunbar.

As an example of Middle Scots, we can take a look at an extract from Robert Henryson's 'Morall Fabillis of Esope the Phrygian' (a collection of thirteen fables in stanzas), which was written in the second half of the fifteenth century. What follows is a stanza from 'The Taill of Schir Chantecler and the Foxe':

This wylie tod, quhen that the lark couth sing,  
Full sair hungrie vnto the toun him drest,  
Quhair Chantecler, in to the gray dawing,  
Werie for nicht, wes flowen fra his nest.  
Lowrence this saw, and in his mynd he kest  
The ieperdies, the wayis, and the wyle,  
Be quhat menis he nicht this cok begyle.

Here 'couth' corresponds with 'could' and is used to form the past tense, meaning 'did sing', i.e. 'sang'. 'Fra' comes from ON and corresponds to OE 'fram', meaning 'from' (the southern word of 'fra' is 'fro' and it still survives in the expression 'to and fro').

## 2.6 Anglicization

From the mid-sixteenth century, Scots (SC) was increasingly influenced by the southern language. One reason for this was the prestige of the English poets, such as Chaucer, Gower and Lydgate (Barber, Beal, Shaw, 2009). Another reason was The Reformation in 1560 that brought with it The Geneva Bible of 1560, which was in English. It is general knowledge that at that time the Bible was usually the only book owned by many households. Soon after the introduction of printing, by the late sixteenth century, books in Scotland were being printed in southern language, i.e. English. And after The Union of the Crowns in 1603 and ergo James VI of Scotland becoming James I of England, southern influence increased, for London became the centre from which patronage radiated, for Englishmen and Scots alike (Barber, Beal, Shaw, 2009). The king showed himself to be something like an anglophile (Kirpatrick, 2006). And in that way many Scots writers were either deprived of their patronage or moved to the south with the king and Anglicized their verse for an English market (Douglas; Kachru, Kachru, Nelson, 2006), which consequently caused a significant decrease in the written usage and the status of SC. Moreover, English started to permeate Scots, gradually adopting the conventions of the English language; however, this does not mean that SC ceased to be used in spoken mode, which was often of informal nature. After The Union of the Crowns came the Treaty of Union in 1707 forming the United Kingdom of Great Britain, which seriously undermined Scots as language of politics in institutional settings, as Murison writes, Scots not only lost political but spiritual and social status as well. During the remainder of the eighteenth century the elite consciously shifted to speaking and debating in English in order to conform to the new political arrangements in which English culture, language, and identity predominated. They were trying to eradicate Scotticisms from their writing and speech (Douglas; Kachru, Kachru, Nelson, 2006), and even elocution classes were held; lists of Scotticisms to be avoided in a polite society were made; guides on spelling, grammar and pronunciation were written (Jones, 1995, 1997; qtd. in Douglas; Kachru, Kachru, Nelson, 2006). Such actions after a while gave birth to Standard Scottish English (SSE), which is still used today. However, there was some resurgent cultural backlash, with a revival of literary Scots (Douglas; Kachru, Kachru, Nelson, 2006), such as the father of the Scots dialect movement Allan Ramsay (1686—1758) and the movement's famous figure Robert Burns (1759—1796). This literary movement is still alive.

## **2.7 Scots from the Beginning of the Revival and Onward**

The rise of the popular printing press gave the language a new chance by the mid 1800s when regional journalists, and letter writers, contributed hundreds of thousands of articles in the various regional forms of Scots (Scots Language Centre Online (SLC), accessed 2014). SC was again being considered as the national language by the intelligentsia, albeit use of SC for any other purpose other than literary was somewhat frowned upon (Eagle, Andy; 2002). There are many writers who write in Scots during this period, such as Galt, Macdonald, Stevenson, Barrie and Crockett.

Another important new factor was the gradual extension of the voting franchise from 1832 onwards. This meant more and more of the middle and working classes – precisely the people who spoke Scots – were admitted to the political process and they took it for granted that they should debate politics in their mother tongue. Once again Scots developed its range and register as speakers expressed themselves in the tongue they knew best. This continued to be the case until the early twentieth century when anti-Scots education programmes, the takeover of Scottish newspapers by outside companies and the rise of the English language broadcast media (1920s) turned the social and political climate against the language (SLC, 2014).

However, in this period the Scots revival was also living, several new dictionaries of SC and its dialects were published and many writers, of both prose and poetry, wrote in SC after an extensive study of SC from dictionaries and older literary works, such were the writers MacDiarmid, Young, Garioch and McLellan (Eagle, Andy; 2002).

Only as recently as the 1990s, with the reversal of discriminatory policies in education, the re-establishment of the Scottish parliament, and recognition of the language within the European Union, has the climate begun to improve for Scots as a language of political expression (SLC, 2014).

## **2.8 The Influences of Scots from the Seventeenth Century Onwards**

SC and SSE were exported around the world from the seventeenth century onward, having significant influences on the language of Ulster (Northern Ireland), the USA, Canada, and Australasia (Montgomery, 2003; qtd. in Douglas; Kachru, Kachru, Nelson, 2006). In spite of Anglicization, Scots also influenced standard English vocabulary, due in part to the popularity of Sir Walter Scott's novels, from where words such as awesome, blackmail, brownie, cosy,

glamour, glint, guffaw, kith, raid, winsome made it into standard English (Hogg, Denison, 2006). Furthermore, with the flow of northerners, and especially the Scots, to London SC words made into standard English: bard, bonny, bracken, cairn, canny, eerie, glen, kipper, rowan, scone and tarn (some of these are loans from Scandinavian (like rowan and tarn) or from Gaelic (like bard and glen)) (Barber, Beal, Shaw, 2009). Globally used word *feu* ‘land duty’ comes from SC.

### 3.0 Other Present-day Scottish Varieties

#### 3.1 Scottish English

Previous chapters explained terms SC (which shall be again more carefully analysed in chapter 4.0) and SSE, as well as their historical background; however, we often encounter with the concept *Scottish English* (SE), and what exactly does that term/concept stands for? We should always distinguish between Scots and Scottish English. Scots refers to the language which is descended from Northumbrian Old English. Scottish English refers to that anglicized version of Scots (but is not exactly Standard Scottish English). Also, SE can be used as a blanket term to cover all varieties (regional and social) along a linguistic continuum ranging from SC at one end to SSE at the other (Aitken, 1979; McArthur, 1979; qtd. Douglas; Kachru, Kachru, Nelson, 2006) (Figure 3.1).

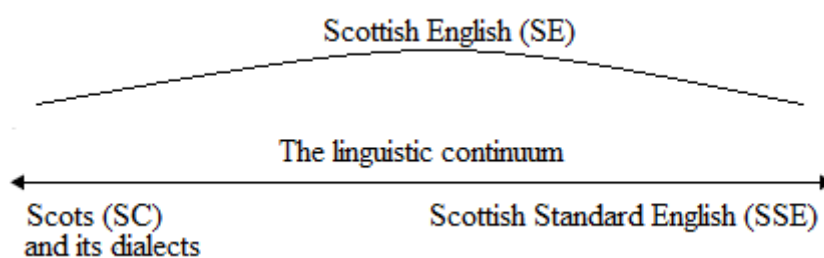


Figure 3.1 The Scottish English linguistic continuum

## 4.0 Concerning Scots

### 4.1 Scots

Scots simply means ‘Scottish’. It was first applied as a name for the Germanic language of Lowland Scotland by Adam Loutfut in the year 1494 when he translated a book “out of fraynche in ‘Scottis.” Thereafter the name Scots came into increasing use as a better way of distinguishing the Lowland language from its sister language in England (SLC, 2014).

Scots is not a homogeneous variety. It includes numerous regional dialects, both urban and rural. Some dialects that belong to Scots are more similar to each other while some are less.

The main dialect groups of Scots are (Eagle, Andy; 2002) (Figure 4.1):

- Southern Scots (S)
- Central Scots (CS):
  - North East Central (NEC)
  - South East Central (SEC)
  - West Central (WC)
  - South West Central (SWC)
- Ulster Scots (UL)
- Northern Scots (NS):
  - South Northern (SN)
  - Mid Northern (MN)
  - North Northern (NN)
- Insular Scots (IS)
- Urban Scots (U) (spoken in the city areas of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow)





Nelson, 2006); however, there are facts which can prove them wrong. The history of Scots was traced down in the previous chapters (Figure 4.2), clearly showing the roots of both languages, so Scots is being rather a cousin of English than an offshoot (Kirkpatrick, 2009). Also Scots has strong literary legacy reaching back at least six hundred years (Eagle, Andy; 2002). Furthermore, there are noticeable lexical differences between English-English and Scots, which are set out in chapter 5.0. Other important arguments are that Scots has a number of dialects; then, majority of people consider Scotland a nation; moreover, Scots was also recognised by the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (by applying Part II of the Charter to Scots the Government recognises the distinctive nature and cultural value of the language) and by the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages (EBLUL).

## **5.0 Lexis**

The Scottish varieties share many lexemes with English-English, which is not particularly surprising as they descended from Old English and were under influence of Old Norse, (Norman) French and Latin; however, as noted before, the influence was not equally spread on all areas of Great Britain. ON had greater impact on Scottish varieties, French influenced Scottish varieties differently from English, etc. There are several traits of Scots lexis that must be mentioned; one is that Scottish lexis is regionalized, e.g. the little finger *crannie* in the northern dialect is *pinkie* elsewhere; another trait is that Scots lacks a standard spelling scheme (though many attempts were made to change this). The same word may have several variant forms, depending on a range of factors such as the date of text, its regional origins, or simply the writer's preference (Douglas; Kachru, Kachru, Neslon, 2006). One huge problem has been the lack of Scots vocabulary for technical and learned registers. Thus, in many cases, SC had to resort to usage of SSE. However, some urban varieties of SC such as Glaswegian are lexically innovative; albeit at this point the conflict arises as some purists believe that urban SC is not a "good" form of SC (Douglas; Kachru, Kachru, Nelson, 2006).

## 5.1 Scots Lexis

What follows is a selection of Scots vocabulary sorted by various criteria.

### A. By origin

(Many words listed under this section were taken from Jilka's proseminar 'Dialectology'; Hogg, Denison, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2006; Barber, Beal, Shaw, 2009.)

#### • Scandinavian words:

- *big* 'to build'
- *hoast* 'cough'
- *laik* 'to play'
- *lait* 'to search'
- *lathe* 'barn'
- *lie* 'scythe'
- *blae* 'blue'
- *gate* 'road'
- *kirk* 'church'
- *lug* 'ear'
- *brig* 'bridge'
- *dike* 'ditch'
- *skirl* 'shrill'
- *skreich* 'shriek'

#### • obscure origins:

- *argybargy* 'dispute'
- *camshauchle* 'disorted'
- *donnert* 'dazed, stupid'
- *bogle* 'ghost'
- *glaik* 'trick, deceit'

#### • French origin: *tassie* 'cup', *vennel* 'alley'

#### • Germanic words not shared with any English variety:

- *but and ben* 'two-room cottage'
- *haffet* 'cheek'
- *swick* 'to cheat'
- *skeich* 'apt to shy/rear (horse)'

#### • shared northern words:

- *bairn* 'child'
- *dicht* 'to clean'
- *spear* 'to ask'
- *thole* 'endure'
- *snell* 'severe (weather)'
- *hauch* 'meadow'

### B. Prepositions, conjunctions

(Eagle, 2002)

#### • prepositions:

- *ablo* 'below'
- *about* 'around'
- *abuin* 'above'
- *afore* 'before'

- ahint ‘behind’
- aneath  
‘beneath’
- atween  
‘between’
- ben ‘into’
- doun ‘down’
- fr(a)e ‘from’
- efter ‘after’
- ootwith  
‘outside’
- tae ‘to’
- yont ‘beyond’
- without
- without’

• conjunctions:

- whan ‘when’
- whaur ‘where’
- hou ‘how’
- acause  
‘because’
- an ‘and’
- baith ‘both’
- binna ‘except’
- ere ‘before’
- gin ‘if/whether’
- tho ‘although’
- without ‘unless’
- sin/syne ‘since’

### C. Phrases, idioms and proverbs

(Eagle, 2002)

- Hou’s aw wi ye? ‘How is everything with you?’
- Whit wey are ye? ‘How are you?’
- Brawly, thank ye. ‘Nicely, thank you.’
- A canna compleen. ‘I can’t complain.’
- A hae been waur. ‘I’ve been worse.’
- Sae faw ye. ‘May the same befall you.’
- Come intil the body o the kirk. ‘Join the company.’ (this is a common invitation to join a group of people, e.g. in pubs or other places)
- Haste ye back. ‘Return soon.’ (this is used when parting)
- Lang mey yer lum reek. ‘Live long and happily.’
- Dame ‘Lady’ (when addressing)
- Maister ‘Mister’
- Aefauldly ‘Sincerely’ (formal)
- Yours aye ‘faithfully, yours truly’ (formal)
- Fare ye weel ‘farewell’ (formal)
- Fair faw ‘best wishes’ (informal)
- cheery-bye ‘goodbye for now’ (informal)
- see ye efter ‘see you later’ (informal)
- Monanday (Monday), Tysday (Tuesday), Wadensday (Wednesday), Fuirsdays (Thursday)
- Jennewarie / Januar, Februar, Mairch, Apryle, Mey, Juin, Julie

- Ne'er's day 'New Year's day'
- Hogmanay 'New Year's eve'
- Burns nicht 'Burns night'
- Pace 'Easter'
- Ess Wadensday 'Ash Wednesday'
- Hunt the gowk / huntgowk 'April fools day'
- Sowans nicht 'Christmas eve'
- Christenmas 'Christmas'
- A kent face. 'An acquaintance'
- Aff the gleg. 'Off the mark'
- Aw ae oo. 'All the same / birds of feather'
- Bou yer hoch. 'Sit down'
- Caw the crack. 'To chat'
- Dance yer lane. 'Jump for joy'
- Gang the messages. 'Do the shopping'
- Gang til the gate. 'Be ruined'
- Get laldie. 'Get a beating'
- Haud yer wheesht. 'Be silent'
- Haud tryst. 'Keep one's word'
- Lief is me on... 'I am fond of'
- On the heid o. 'Occupied with'
- There's a drap in the hoose. 'Walls have ears'
- Win awa. 'Die/leave'
- Win ower. 'Fall asleep'
- Ilk blad o girse keeps its ain dew. 'Mind your own business'
- Mony a puckle maks a muckle. 'Every little helps'
- Thay gang faur that disna meet ae day. 'It's a small world'

#### **D. Random words and phrases**

(Kirkpatrick, 2006)

- a', aw 'all'
- ain 'own'
- ava 'at all', e.g. nae luck ava (=no luck at all)

- aye ‘yes’
- awfy, awfae ‘awful’
- ba, baw ‘ball’; fitba (=football)
- boak, boke ‘to vomit’
- bogle ‘scary ghost’
- brak ‘to break’
- brig ‘a bridge’
- bucket ‘a dustbin’
- caller ‘fresh’
- cauld ‘cold’
- chiel ‘a young fellow’
- chap ‘to knock, a knock’
- claes ‘clothes’
- clap ‘to give an animal a friendly pat’
- cludgie (informal) ‘a toilet’
- close ‘a passageway or lane leading off a main street’, e.g. Mary King’s Close (in Edinburgh / SC: Embra)
- dae ‘do’
- doon ‘down’
- doot ‘doubt’
- dug ‘dog’
- export (= a kind of strong beer which is slightly darker in colour)
- fair ‘very’; e.g. I wis fair exhausted.
- faither ‘father’; n.b. the phrase *I kent his faither*, is often used as a kind of put-down to cut someone down to size, the implication being that, if you knew his father, he cannot be all that important
- faut ‘fault’; e.g. It wis yer faut
- fecht ‘fight’
- flooer ‘flower’
- gang / gae ‘go’
- gie ‘give’; e.g. Will you gie me a lift?
- ginger (= a fizzy soft drink of any flavour)
- greet ‘to weep, to cry’

- haar, a cold sea mist which drifts in from the North Sea along the east coast; e.g. Embra wis covered in a haar.
- hae 'have'
- hoose 'house'
- ilka 'every'; e.g. ilka child knows
- jannie (informal) 'a school janitor'
- jessie, an insulting term for an effeminate man
- jotter, a school exercise book; e.g. Write your essay in your English jotter.
- keeker 'a black eye'; e.g. Tom's been in a fight, so he's got a right keeker.
- laddie 'a boy'
- lassie 'a young woman'
- loch 'lake'
- lug 'ear'; e.g. She whispered something in his lug.
- lum 'chimney'
- ma 'my'; e.g. That's ma wife.
- mak 'make'; e.g. He'll mak trouble.
- mighty me! (an exclamation of surprise)
- mind 'to remember'
- nae 'no'
- ned 'hooligan'
- nebbly, nebbie 'nosey'; e.g. nebbly neeboors (=neighbours)
- offie (informal) 'an off-licence'; e.g. We'll get some beer from the offie.
- oose 'dust'
- pit 'put'; e.g. We pit it there.
- plook 'a pimple'
- queer 'great/substantial/considerable'; e.g. There's been a queer difference between house prices here and in the city.
- ra 'the'; e.g. Whaur's ra dug (=dog)?
- rax 'to stretch'; e.g. He raxed out his hand and shook mine.
- rector, a university official elected by students to represent their interests or a headteacher in some secondary schools
- redd 'to clean'; e.g. redd the table after tea.
- reek 'smoke'; e.g. the reek from the wood fire
- richt 'right'; e.g. He had nae (=no) richt sayin' that.

- shoon ‘shoes’
- shot ‘a turn’; e.g. You’ve been playing pool for ages, it’s our shot now; Can I have a shot on your new computer?
- steamie, a public wash-house
- tak ‘take’; e.g. Tak care.
- tattie ‘potato’; e.g. tattie soup.
- toon ‘town’; e.g. the high shops in the toon.
- uplift ‘to collect / pick up’; e.g. You can uplift the goods directly from our warehouse.
- ur ‘are’; e.g. We ur fed up.
- urnae ‘are not’; e.g. We urnae sure.
- vennel ‘lane / alley’; e.g. King’s Vennel.
- wa ‘wall’; e.g. a brick wa
- wabbit, completely exhausted; e.g. I’m fair wabbit oot after coming up that hill.
- wan ‘one’; e.g. He’s only got wan leg.
- watter ‘water’; e.g. a cup o’ watter.
- wauchle, to walk with great difficulty and often in an ungainly, stumbling manner; Jean’s pregnant wi’ (=with) twins and she can hardly wauchle doon (=down) the road.
- waur ‘worse’; e.g. Things’ll get waur before they get better.
- wean (also, bairn) ‘child’; e.g. She’s only got wan (=one) wean,
- wee ‘small’; e.g. I’m looking for a wee flat.
- weel ‘well’; e.g. She’s no (=not) weel.
- wumman, wummin ‘a woman’
- yin ‘one’; e.g. Ah’ll (=I’ll) have that yin.

## **E. Political terms**

(from ‘Document 13, Political Terms in Scots’, Scots Language Centre, 2014)

- Airt an pairt (adj); implicated in, party to a project or scheme
- Airticles (n); Legislation in preparation or under debate
- Assemblie (n); Assembly
- Breetish (adj); British
- Ceeitizen (n); citizen
- Chakkar (hoose) (n); Exchequer (department)
- Ceevil richts (n); Ceevil servant (n); Civil rights; Civil servant

- Demit (v); Demission (n); Resign; Resignation
- Depairtment (n); Department
- Depute (n); Deputy, Vice
- Dooble (n); Copy
- Expone (v); Expound or explain
- Gaithering (n); meeting
- Fremmit (adj); foreign
- omologate (v); ratify
- Mairch (n); public demonstration
- Lunnon (n); London
- Pairt-takar (n); supporter
- Pairty (n); party
- Pairty ploy (n); political manifesto
- Peacify (v); pacify
- Politeecian (n); politician
- Public-speir (n); public inquiry
- Scots (adj); Scottish
- Steerar (n); activist
- Uphaud (v); support, maintain
- Stravaig the wab; surf the Internet

## 5.2 Scottish Standard English Lexis

There is no doubt that SSE is coloured by some Scottish features, so one can come across SC expressions, especially in speech. What follows is a selection of characteristic SSE vocabulary and idioms.

- words from SC:

- |                        |                 |                 |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| ◦ <i>clan</i>          | ◦ <i>haggis</i> | ◦ <i>wee</i>    |
| ◦ <i>dreich</i> 'dull' | ◦ <i>kilt</i>   | ◦ <i>whisky</i> |

- 'will' usually replaces 'shall' (e.g. 'Will I open the window?')

- idioms:



- ‘How are you keeping?’, i.e. ‘How are you?’
- ‘That’s me away’, i.e. ‘I’m going now’
- ‘The back of nine o’clock’, i.e. ‘Soon after nine o’clock’

## **6.0 Scots -- Today & Tomorrow**

Recent years have seen a strong revival of interest in Scots by people of different social status; the interest is being encouraged by the Scottish Parliament as well. The report of a large online survey “Voices” (conducted in 2005) showed that the Scots are significantly more proud of their accent than are all other groups; besides accent pride, the survey showed a notable disapproval of the *Queen’s English*.

Some Scottish writers are again popular (who write in urban Scots), such as James Kelman and Irvine Welsh who is recognised for his novel *Trainspotting*, which was later made into a film. In 2002 the Itchy Coo imprint was founded, which publishes the best selling books in Scots for children and young people. It is also an education project which works with pupils and teachers to develop their Scots reading and writing skills. The Scottish Corpora project has created large electronic corpora of written and spoken texts for the languages of Scotland – The Scottish Corpus of Texts and Speech (SCOTS), which has been online since 2004.

Dictionary of the Scots Language (or *Dictionar o the Scots Leid*) was made online.

2014 is the year which shall determine the course of both Scotland and Scots in the following years as the referendum on independence is nearing. The “Edinburgh Agreement” (agreement between Scottish Government and the UK Government about Scottish Independence Referendum of 2014) is also fully available as “The Embra Greement” (in Scots). Nowadays, there is a significant increase in the usage of Scots on Social Networks; people are composing and singing songs in Scots; radio programmes which celebrate Scots language (!) are broadcast; projects concerning Scots in schools are emerging (projects which do not just include reading and writing Scots, but also include Scots in the expressive/creative arts; teacher training projects are also present); web pages are being presented that are dedicated to learning Scots, like ‘Scuilwab’ and ‘Scots hoose’; documents covering political terms are being published online and guides to Scots dialects, such as ‘Doric Dictionary, A Guide to the Dialect of the North East of Scotland’.

There is enough evidence that SC in the future might (again) become the next dominant variety in Scotland, thus pigeon-holing SSE and gradually SE as undesired; however, whether the ‘golden age’ of SC is coming, time and politics will tell.

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