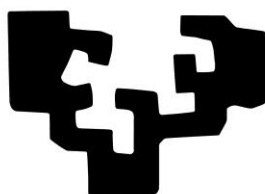


Mikele Arana Aboitiz

Degree in English Studies 2019-2020

**Languages of Scotland: Scots, English and Scottish
Gaelic**

eman ta zabal zazu



**Universidad
del País Vasco**

**Euskal Herriko
Unibertsitatea**

Supervisor: Alazne Landa

**Departamento de Filología Inglesa y Alemana y de Traducción e
Interpretación**

Área de Filología Inglesa

Abstract

The current linguistic landscape of Scotland is composed of three languages: Scottish Standard English, Scots, and Scottish Gaelic. Nonetheless, the knowledge of this fact does not appear to be particularly widespread, as various misconceptions regarding the languages arise in diverse situations.

Thus, this paper aims to clarify what the languages spoken in Scotland are, as well as to provide insight into them in order to promote a better understanding of the subject. Firstly, I go into detail about the linguistic history of Scotland, explaining the different stages that the region underwent until the present day, where the Celtic origins of Scottish Gaelic and the Germanic origins of Scottish English and Scots are substantiated. In this respect, I also describe the current state of affairs of each language by specifying the amount of speakers and the areas where they are based, amongst other matters. Secondly, I elaborate on the rather unique relationship between Scottish English and Scots, which is commonly referred to as Linguistic Continuum. In simplified terms, these two languages are located on the two opposite ends of a spectrum that contains a range of subsequent varieties, which additionally results in the existence of phenomena such as style-drifting. Thirdly, I shift the attention of the paper to Scots with the purpose of focusing on its perception as a language, for instance by defining terms such as “Good Scots” and “Bad Scots”, as well as examining a piece of research dealing with Scottish dialectal perceptions. Finally, maintaining the focus on Scots, I describe and exemplify a number of grammatical constructions which are characteristic of the language, with occasional references to other varieties of English that contain that very same particular property.

The paper concludes by highlighting its own relevance, as it serves multiple functions apart from clearing up misconceptions about the languages of Scotland. For instance, papers such as this one might promote additional research on Scottish English, Scots and/or Scottish Gaelic, or even underlying phenomena such as the aforementioned linguistic continuum, which is also found in other parts of the world.

Key words: Scottish English, Scots, Scottish Gaelic, Linguistic Continuum, languages of Scotland

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1. Introduction

The origin and evolution of languages is a topic that has been investigated for millennia. For all we know, and according to Ethnologue (2020), there are currently around 7,117 languages spoken throughout the world. A few languages possess millions and millions of speakers, while many others are close to becoming extinct. Furthermore, there are languages and linguistic areas that do not receive the same degree of attention and popular coverage as others, which can result in lack of information or even misconceptions about certain varieties. Thus, in some cases, certain dialects are perceived as deficient, ugly, or vulgar, or simply not very useful (or even detrimental to their users) when compared to more widespread varieties or to an ideal standard.

This paper focuses on the case of Scotland. As a non-independent country that is part of the United Kingdom, English is one of the *de facto* official languages of the region. However, it is certainly not the only language that exists in the area. Furthermore, the current linguistic state of Scotland seems to occasionally create confusion, particularly in non-Scottish contexts. For this reason, the goal of this paper is to contribute to the clarification of the different nature of the languages that are spoken in Scotland, and which, in principle, include Scots and Scottish Gaelic besides English.

In order to achieve this objective, I will try to provide an adequate answer to the following questions: How many languages are currently spoken in Scotland and which ones are they? How are these languages related and perceived by their speakers? Are the boundaries between them clear-cut? How different are Scots and English? What are the grammatical elements that characterise Scots grammar?

2. Language landscape in Scotland

Scotland has had quite a linguistically complex history, as languages that were once spoken in the region had to overcome diverse challenges and, consequently, considerable changes. Briefly worded, the numerous tongues that coexisted in the region resulted in a present-day linguistic landscape composed of Scottish Gaelic and Scots, as well as another more “formal” variety known as Scottish Standard English. The short version of the differences between these languages is that while Gaelic is a Celtic language, both Scottish English and Scots are Germanic; the evolutions of Scots

and English cross each other's path, but they are not different variants of the same language. The history of each of these linguistic systems determines, to a great extent, their present distribution and health conditions. Thus, in order to better understand the current linguistic situation of Scotland, it is crucial to comprehend the origin of the languages in use.

Nonetheless, in what follows I will focus on the origin of the Scots language, as I regard its development as the most relevant one –as well as the least known– in order to achieve an accurate comprehension of the distinctive languages nowadays found in Scotland.

2.1. Early stages

In the early stages of Scotland's linguistic landscape there was no language remotely similar to Scots in the area. As a matter of fact, at around AD 1, those who were inhabitants of Britain were known as Celts. The Romans had attacked the island in 55 BCE, although they did not succeed in their conquest until they finally gained control of the south around a century later. In spite of their attempts to impose their Latin language on the area, Celtic remained as the main language of the island, while Latin was spoken in certain towns and cities that had military bases nearby (King, 2006).

The Germanic influence began taking place in what would become England in 449 through the Germanic Conquest. These invaders were more successful than the Romans regarding the scale of their invasion as, for instance, many Celts who were against the Germanic imposition relocated in Cornwall and Wales, and some would move even further to what is known today as Brittany in the west of France.

As a consequence of these events, the era of the Anglo-Saxon England commenced. The tongue of their people was a somewhat hybrid language that resulted from a combination of Germanic invader-languages nowadays known as Old English (King, 2006). Old English was not a uniform variety; it is precisely that variation that would eventually give rise to Scots. This is explained in the next sections.

2.2. Scots

2.2.1. Arrival of Northumbrians and the Vikings

Early in the 7th century, the Northumbrian dialect of Old English made its way up to the Southern part of present-day Scotland through the Angles that lived in the Northumbrian Kingdom. The discovery of the Ruthwell Cross in south-west Scotland seems to confirm this, as this church cross from the 7th or 8th century was carved with runic inscriptions in Northumbrian (Starvik & Leech, 2016).

During the 8th century, the Vikings invaded the Northern islands of Scotland, Orkney and Shetland, and brought with them the Norse language. However, these isolated places were not the only ones to welcome this Germanic language, as these same Scandinavians decided to reside in midland England as well, resulting in the creation of a new linguistic variety known in the literature as Anglo-Scandinavian (Douglas, 2006).

2.2.2. Rise of Anglo-Scandinavian

The Gaelic language, which was most likely brought to Scotland by Irish immigrants (Lamb, 2003), was spoken all throughout the region. However, its use had become more limited by the 10th and 11th centuries. This decay was in direct correlation with the expansion of the Anglo-Scandinavian language across the country of Scotland following the Norman Conquest that took place in the year 1066. Anglo-Norman and Flemish landowners and monks migrated to Scotland, bringing their servants with them. The language spoken by these immigrants was the aforementioned Anglo-Scandinavian, which had a significant contribution to the development of the language later recognised as Scots (Aitken, 2015a).

Until the 14th century, the linguistic situation stayed relatively stagnant, with Gaelic speakers mainly located in the North of Scotland, and Anglo-Scandinavian speakers mostly residing in the South. However, the latter language, which Scots referred to as “Inglis”, ended up dominating the former as, for instance, Inglis became a written language as well (Douglas, 2006). Thereafter, around the late 15th century, the varieties spoken in the Northern part and Southern part of the border between England and Scotland began to be differentiated. Thus, Scots renamed their Inglis variety as

“Scottis”, which is nowadays referred to as Older Scots by linguists (Douglas, 2006), and became the literary language of the region (Aitken, 2015a).

2.2.3. Anglicisation

The next change that Scots underwent was its anglicisation. The beginning of this new linguistic phase began around the 15th and 16th centuries, when makars – Scottish national poets– started to orthographically alter their writings, occasionally replacing Scots spelling with its corresponding English form. For instance, according to Aitken (2015a), *quha* was replaced by *quho* “who” (*Dictionary of the Scots Language*, 2004), *maist* by *moste*, which meant “largest or biggest in physical size” (*Dictionary of the Scots Language*, 2004), and *fra* by *frome* “from” (*Dictionary of the Scots Language*, 2004). Moreover, as a result of the Reformation of 1560, the English *Geneva Bible* entered Scotland, and so did numerous English literature works, due to the introduction of printing. All these occurrences resulted in written Scots becoming progressively more anglicised, although spoken Scots remained mostly unchanged until the early years of the 17th century, when a significant event altered this linguistic state of affairs: the Union of Crowns in 1603. This unification resulted in the increase of gatherings and marriages between the Scottish and English nobility amidst the 17th century, causing the Scottish elite to begin replacing Scots with English, which predictably became a language associated with elegance and high-class. This change of events was further reinforced due to the Union of Parliaments in 1707, which obliquely affected the spoken expression of the middle class, especially of those striving for a higher social status, producing a decline in the use of Scotticisms. In fact, in mid-18th century, a list of words and expressions in Scots was distributed to make Scottish citizens avoid their use (Aitken, 2015a).

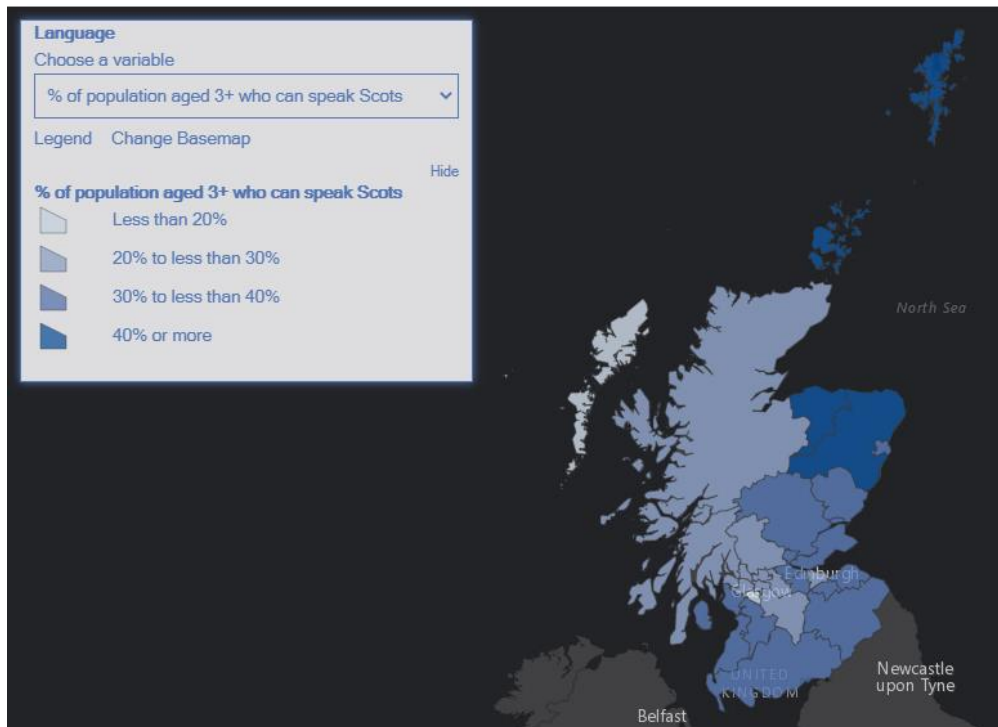
2.2.4. The revival

By the first decades of the 19th century, the trend of avoiding Scotticisms in speech and the preference for English appeared to have decreased. According to Aitken (2015a), there seem to be numerous reasons associated with this change. For instance, the contemporary surge of Scots Romantic writers, as well as the publication of the *Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language* in 1808. Furthermore, there was an

increase in interest regarding the study and collection of antique objects such as books, along with a strong patriotic sentiment of several prominent Scotsmen such as Lord Cockburn, a renowned judge.

2.2.5. Present distribution

Nowadays, the Scots language is spoken in the Lowlands of Scotland as well as the islands of Orkney and Shetland, and is comprised of a number of different dialects: Insular, Northern, Central and Southern (“The Main Dialects of Scots”, n.d.). Insular Scots is a dialect used throughout Orkney and Shetland, which is quite distinctive due to the fact that a notorious Norwegian accent can be appreciated from the speakers. The reason for this is that Norn, the language of the Vikings, was spoken in the Northern islands until the 18th century, when Scots replaced the language. On the other hand, Northern, Central and Southern Scots are, as their nomenclature suggests, spoken respectively in the northern, central and southern parts of mainland Scotland (“The Main Dialects of Scots”, n.d.). However, and although this paper solely focuses on the languages of Scotland, it is worth mentioning that the Scots language expanded to some areas of Northern Ireland during the 16th century as well. In the present day, this dialect is only spoken in certain rural areas, and is commonly recognised as Ulster Scots (Smith, 2012) and through emigration and/or resettlement of its speakers has been really influential in the development of English varieties that emerged in other parts of the English-speaking world (e.g. Appalachian English in the USA).



Map 1. Percentage of population ages 3+ who can speak Scots in Scotland (Source: 2011 Census. https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ods-web/datavis.jsp?theme=Language_September_2013)

Furthermore, as shown in Map 1, speakers of Scots are unevenly distributed throughout these different territories. As a matter of fact, as reported by the 2011 Census, the regions in which more than 40% of people can speak Scots are located in the North-East, as well as on the islands of Orkney and Shetland. Conversely, the populations who speak less Scots are found in the Highlands, especially in the Western Isles, where less than 20% of the citizens have the ability to speak Scots. Furthermore, the results from this same census revealed that, altogether, 30% of the Scottish population was able to speak Scots (2011 Census).

2.3. Standard Scottish English

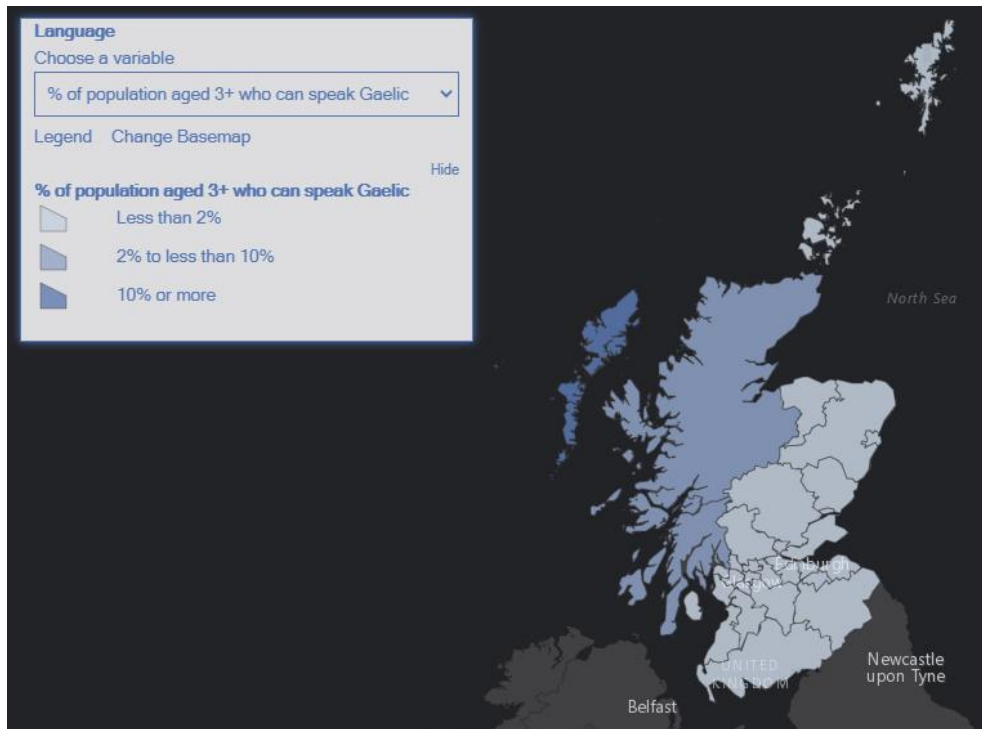
The history of how English got to be spoken in Britain is very well known and it has been summarised in previous sections of this paper, so here we will focus on its ensuing development in the territory currently known as Scotland. As previously mentioned, the Union of Parliaments was established in 1707 and caused Scotland's loss of independence. Subsequently, a significant shift occurred in regard to the language of the legal and governmental sectors, bringing about the replacement of Scots

by English. Thus, Scottish people who could afford an education, that is, those belonging to the upper class and, consequently, the middle-class who aimed for an elevated status, appropriated this new language. Eventually, attributable to the constant co-existence of English, a new variety nowadays referred to as Standard Scottish English (SSE) developed (McClure, 1994: 79).

A Scottish-flavoured variety of English is currently spoken in Scotland alongside Scots and Scottish Gaelic. However, the linguistic relationship between Scots and Standard Scottish English is fairly complex. Known as “Linguistic Continuum”, this phenomenon that particularly takes place in lowland Scotland seems to blur the lines between the two languages, creating a spectrum of different varieties. I explain this matter in greater depth in section 3.1.

2.4. Scottish Gaelic

As aforementioned, the Gaelic language had presumably been brought by Irish immigrants from Ireland (Lamb, 2003). The language was spoken throughout the totality of the country up until approximately the 11th century, when the linguistic prominence of Gaelic began to deteriorate. In accordance with Horsburgh (1994), one of the main reasons for this decline was the separation of Scotland’s civilisation into Highlanders and Lowlanders, or in other words, Gaels and Lowlanders (Nihtinen, 2008). During the following century, the use of Scots began to increase across the country, causing the Gaelic speakers to further recede to the North-West. The downturn of the language continued for several centuries, on account of emigration, oppression, and societal evolution (Nihtinen, 2008).



Map 2. Percentage of population ages 3+ who can speak Gaelic in Scotland (Source: 2011 Census, <https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ods-web/datavis.jsp?theme=Language> September 2013)

The consequences of the decline can be observed in Map 2 above. As specified by the 2011 Census, the Western Isles seem to hold the most amount of Gaelic speakers, with over 10% of the population claiming to have Gaelic language skills. However, in the rest of the Highlands, less than one in ten people on average can speak the language. The Lowlands, still dominated by Scots, visibly has the least amount speakers of the Celtic language. Overall, 57,600 citizens (who took part in the questionnaire) affirmed to be able to speak Gaelic (2011 Census).

Therefore, the areas that maintain the Gaelic culture alive and thus speak Scottish Gaelic are mainly the Highlands and the Western Isles. These areas are recognised as a region, called *Gàidhealtachd* (McCrone, 2017). However, zones belonging to *Gàidhealtachd*, that is, Gaelic speaking areas, are not only found in the British Isles, as, for instance, the Gaelic language is also spoken in Nova Scotia, Canada. In actuality, the Celtic language of Nova Scotia was brought by around 50,000 Highlanders and inhabitants of the Western Isles that emigrated from Scotland during the 18th and 19th centuries. Thereby, the language that Nova Scotia Gaels speak originated from Scottish Gaelic (“Gaelic Nova Scotia”, 2019).

Moreover, returning to Scotland, it should be mentioned that there is an English variety that is spoken in the Highlands as well as the Western Isles named Highland English. This variety derived from Standard English, and originated as a result of Gaelic influence on said language (Douglas, 2006).

3. Scots and Standard Scottish English

As previously mentioned, there are two main languages that are spoken in the lowlands of Scotland: Scots and Standard Scottish English. These two tongues are historically and linguistically related and, for that reason, one might find them quite similar. For instance, Starvik & Leech (2016: 146-147) have collected an extract from the Scottish Parliament's website, written both in Scots and English, as shown below:

<p><i>Scots</i></p> <p>Walcome til the Scottish Pairlament wabsite</p> <p>The Scottish Pairlament is here for tae represent aw Scotland's folk. We want tae mak siccar that as mony folk as can is able to find out about whit the Scottish Pairlament does and whit wey it works. We hae productit information anent the Pairlament in a reenge o different leids tae help ye tae find oot mair.</p>
<p><i>English</i></p> <p>Welcome to the Scottish Parliament website</p> <p>The Scottish Parliament is here to represent all Scotland's people. We want to make sure hat as many people as possible are able to find out about what he Scottish Parliament does and in what way it works. We have produced information about the Parliament in a range of different languages to help you to find out more.</p>

The difference between both languages is easily appreciated, especially in words such as *anent*, which has the meaning of “concerning, about” (*Dictionary of the Scots Language*, 2004), or *siccar* (sometimes also written as *sicker*), which has the meaning of “safe, secure, free from danger, trouble or molestation” (*Dictionary of the Scots Language*, 2004). However, the majority of the words in these passages are identical (*want* - *want*, *find out* - *find out*, *different* – *different*) or vary slightly in their spelling (*Pairlament* – *Parliament*, *wabsite* – *website*, *money* – *many*) which, in most cases, probably correlates with a difference in pronunciation.

The similarities between both languages are evident and, to a great extent, due to a common ancestry. Consider the family tree in Figure 1 below:

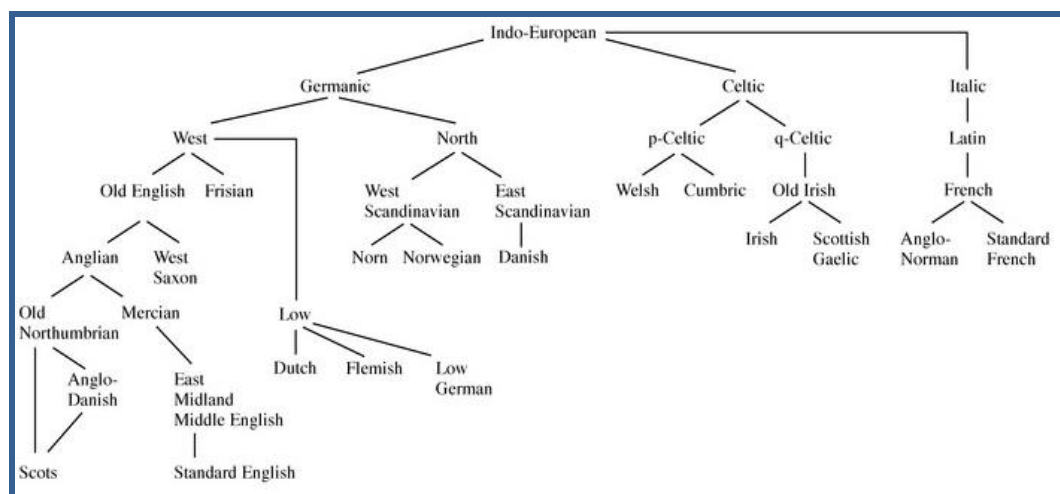


Figure 1. The family tree of Scots (Smith 2017). Retrieved from: <https://dsl.ac.uk/about-scots/an-outline-history-of-scots/origins/>

The above mentioned similarities seemingly exist due to the fact that both Scots and English are closely related West Germanic languages. Although it has already been pointed out, I should reiterate that it was with the development of Old English and its different dialects that English and Scots began to evolve as independent languages. As a matter of fact, Old English was composed of four different dialects standardly known as West Saxon, Kentish, Mercian and Northumbrian (Hogg, 2002). As illustrated above, Scots descends from Northumbrian, while English derives from Mercian. Thus, the presumable reason for the variations found in the previous passages is the linguistic divergence that occurred in the Old English language, and the forthcoming separate developments of each variety. At the same time, the reasons for the similarities between them are close genetic relatedness and language contact. I tackle the latter in the next sections.

3.1. Linguistic continuum and Aitken's model of modern Scottish Speech

Scots and Scottish Standard English, are more than two independent languages that coexist in particular areas of Scotland. Throughout the years, and primarily as a result of an ongoing economic, political and linguistic interaction with England (Starvik

& Leech, 2016: 147), a phenomenon known as Linguistic Continuum has developed, creating an unusually complex relationship between the two languages.

This continuum is described by Aitken (2015c: 13) as a “bi-polar stylistic continuum”, which means that the languages of Scots (also referred to as Broad Scots) and Scottish Standard English are placed at opposite ends of the spectrum, while diverse ranges of varieties are found in between. This means that sometimes it will be crystal-clear whether a speaker is using one or the other language (when their speech can be placed on one of the extremes of the continuum), but in other cases it will be impossible to determine whether the variety in use is an instantiation of English or Scots. Broad Scots is commonly spoken by Scottish individuals who belong to the working class, whereas Standard Scottish English is found in the speech of the middle class. Nonetheless, there are many factors that determinate which type of variety an individual is bound to speak: social class, birthplace, education, self-perception, age, situation, etc. (Douglas, 2006).

Furthermore, Douglas (2006) also states that *Scottish English* is a term that could be used to refer to both Scots and Scottish Standard English as well as all the varieties that exist in between them along the continuum. I believe that this could result in misunderstandings regarding those who are not informed on the matter, for example, causing somebody to assume that the term refers to one single language. Whereas one can hold that there are different varieties of English in that continuum between Scots and Scottish English, claiming that both extremes of the continuum are varieties of English is far from uncontroversial.

According to Aitken (2015c), similar cases of linguistic continua exist across the globe, with some as close as in Yorkshire English for instance. However, one of the factors that make Scots’ situation quite unique is the fact that the use of distinctively Scots features is remarkably widespread in diverse social classes, especially in speech.

Taking into account the complexity of the linguistic circumstances, Aitken (2015c) created a model displaying the current situation of Scottish speech, which is illustrated in Table 1 below:

'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
gim	auld	young	old	whine
mind	coo	row /rɔu/	cow	remember
sort	hoose	London	house	mend
	loose	winter	louse	
	louse /lɔu/	feckless	loose	
ay /ɔi/	pay /pɔi/	bite /bɔit/	pay	always
gey /gɔi/	way /wɔi/	tide /tɔid/	way	very
kye /kɛe/		tie /tɛe/		cows
een	deed /did/	feed	dead	eyes
shuin	dee /di:/	see	die	shoes
deave /dirv/	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		
	/ɹ/ (= I)	I		
	/ɔ/ (= of)	of /ɔv/		
		'Obligatory covert Scotticisms'		
		Most of word-order Morphology Syntax Phonology (system and rules of realisation)		

Table 1. A model of modern Scottish speech (Aitken, 2015c).

Columns 4 and 5 in Table 1 contain English forms of the Scots lexicon found in the first two columns. Column 3, on the other hand, is composed of “common core” elements that both Scots and English have used throughout history.

Subsequently, Aitken distributes speakers into four different groups depending on their linguistic choices as systematised in his own model. Group 1 speakers make use of the columns found on the right side of Table 1 while, on the contrary, group 4 operates on elements belonging to the left side. Groups 2 and 3 are placed between the former groups.

Speakers predominantly utilising English forms generally belong to the middle class, while those who lean more towards the Scots lexicon are mainly elderly people belonging to the working class and typically living in and close to rural areas.

3.2. Style-drifting

In connection to Aitken's model of Scottish speech, it seems like there are various speakers who do not always adhere to the same type of speech style. Aitken (2015c: 9) himself refers to this speech adjustment or alteration as "style drifting".

This point is closely associated with the claim already stated in section 3.1., that the type of variety along the linguistic continuum that one speaks is determined by several factors. Aitken's claim particularly correlates to the notion that a number of these elements are dynamic, which means that speakers are able to slide through the continuum, to alter their style of speech and relocate themselves somewhere else in the spectrum. For instance, Scottish Standard English is often used by those belonging to the working class in formal situations (Douglas, 2006). Similarly, a survey conducted on a 1,020 sample of the Scottish population, which was conducted by the TNS-BMRB (2010), revealed that only 25% of the participants used the Scots language at work, while around 69% of them spoke Scots when interacting with friends. This points to the existence of a diglossic situation that is typically found in contexts of bilingualism in which the speaker and societal attitudes towards each language varies considerably. I tackle the issue of attitudes and perceptions in the next section.

4. Social perception of Scots

Attitudes and perceptions towards languages undoubtedly differ from place to place as well as from situation to situation. Moreover, attributable to the relatively unique circumstances in which Scots currently prevails, it can be said with confidence that varying beliefs regarding the language exist in the Scottish nation. As a matter of fact, the aforementioned report published by the TNS-BMRB (2010) revealed a number of remarkable data regarding the viewpoint of Scottish citizens concerning the perception, attitudes and use of Scots.

For instance, although almost two thirds of the respondents in the survey regarded the use of Scots in Scotland as important, 26% of the participants believed otherwise. However, as claimed by Aitken (2015a), the Scots language has an incredibly rich literature as well as popular folk songs, which are elements that one would consider culturally relevant. As a matter of fact, 86% of the respondents agreed

that Scots has a significant role in the Scottish nation, and 82% believed that it constitutes a great part of the local identity (TNS-BMRB, 2010). This suggests that even though part of the Scottish population does not deem the language as important, a number of them do recognise its cultural relevance.

Nonetheless, taking into consideration the vast amount of varieties that exist in the Scottish linguistic continuum, it may well be argued that individuals might have varying opinions regarding some dialects or speech styles. Thus, I will elaborate on this matter in the next sections.

4.1. Good Scots and Bad Scots

I have thus far referred to the Scots-English model of speech found in Scotland as a dualistic one. However, a distinction has been made between two concepts known as Good Scots and Bad Scots that became known to the public when in 1952 the Scottish Education Department (SED) published a brochure that divided Scots speech into three different categories. Aitken (2015b) refers to these three divisions as (i) Scots Standard English or Scots-English (Aitken, 2015c), which is “an exemplar of English generally acceptable to educated Scots” (Aitken, 2015b); (ii) Good Scots or, in other words, a “genuine dialect whether of the Borders or of Buchan” (Aitken, 2015b) which tends to be associated with varieties found in rural areas and that are regarded as archaic (Aitken, 2015c) or conservative; and (iii) Bad Scots, described as “slovenly perversions of dialect” (Aitken, 2015b). It is to be noted that the SED does not hold these views upon the Scots language anymore and does not utilise labels such as “Bad Scots” to refer to certain Scots dialects.

Nonetheless, “slovenly perversions of dialect” is a fairly vague description, thus one might encounter complications when attempting to classify a type of speech as Bad Scots. Fortunately, Aitken (2015b) elaborated on this matter, expressing that Bad Scots is believed to be “a confusion of imperfect English and corrupted Scots”, with certain phonological features as well as a few non-standard grammatical characteristics that are frowned upon by the speakers.

Although the SED does not utilise this type of nomenclature anymore, multiple articles as well as books, including some that have been employed as sources in the

writing of this paper, maintain their usage to this day (see Kingston, 2015; Douglas, 2006; Aitken, 2015a, among others). Thus, I believe that its existence is bound to affect the perception of a dialect that is regarded as “good” or “bad”, in particular, on individuals whose knowledge of the matter is limited.

4.2. Extralinguistic factors in dialectal perception

Once the notions of Good and Bad Scots have been clarified, I believe that it would be interesting to examine a piece of research on attitudes to Scottish dialects (Kingstone, 2015) in order to observe potential changes in regional perception among Scots people. This particular investigation was carried out in a village known by the name of Buckie, in which currently 8,000 residents live. The reason why Kingstone (2015) conducted the study in this town is fairly relevant, since the dialect of Buckie is conservative to a certain extent and, thus, has been able to preserve certain characteristics –that have been lost in other dialects— because of its remote geographical location and economic independence.

The respondents had to rate multiple areas of Scotland in respect to these factors: degree of difference, correctness, pleasantness, broadness and Scottish-sounding. Although a variety of different data were obtained by virtue of the survey, I will focus on the ones I regard most compelling.

As stated by Kingstone (2015), the respondents’ answers were influenced by extralinguistic factors. For instance, when evaluating the Scottishness of a dialect, the participants expressed a rather odd opinion, seeing that their inclinations were the opposite of what one would expect. In point of fact, the ratings decreased as one went further south; a logic that seems to be in contrast with the percentages released in the most recent census, which regard these regions as fairly Scots-prominent (2011 Census). In actuality, regions such as the Western Isles, which is presumably the most Gaelic-speaking area (2011 Census), were thought of as more Scottish than Southern Scotland. By the same token, a low rating for the factor of broadness was recorded concerning these southern territories. Seemingly, Scottishness and broadness are two criteria that are in close association, and the distance between the location of the participants and a Scottish region appears to be a determining factor in the participants’ perception of Scots dialects (Kingstone, 2015).

Moreover, the respondents' opinions regarding the correctness and pleasantness were highly similar. For instance, Highland and Lothian speech were perceived as the most correct and pleasant, while Strathclyde scored lowest in both aspects. The latter region, as well as those which had a low rating for pleasantness (Fife and Tayside), are areas whose speech is considered urban and industrial. In actuality, the fact that "[r]espondents rated Bad Scots regions consistently as incorrect and unpleasant" (Kingstone, 2015) reinforces the idea that speech labelled as Bad Scots is perceived negatively.

5. A look at the linguistic features of Scots

Scots, as indicated previously, represents one side of the Scottish Linguistic Continuum (Douglas, 2006) in which speakers have the ability to alter their speech and consequently shift their position on the spectrum (Aitken, 2015c). However, the next section's focal point will be reserved for the Broad Scots end, and thus, I will mention a number of morphosyntactic structures characteristic of Scots that I consider most significant. Additionally, and where relevant, I will make reference to what is attested in English varieties and other languages in regard to the feature under discussion. For further reading, Miller (2004) is recommended, in addition to other works referenced throughout the section where necessary.

5.1. Morphology

5.1.1. Irregular verbs and nouns

In Scots, the past tense or past participles of regular verbs are formed by adding *-it*, *-d* or *-t* to the root (*sellt* "sold", *tellt* "told") (Douglas, 2006). However, Scots, as many other languages, has several verbs that are irregular in the past tense (*taen* "took", *driv* "drove", *brung* "brought") as well as past participles (*feart* "frightened", *gave* "given", *beat* "beaten").

The plural marking on nouns, on the other hand, is usually expressed by adding *-s* or *-es* at the ending of words ("Nouns", n.d.), although there are some irregular plurals in the nominal system. These irregular plurals include *een* "eyes", *kye* "cows", *caur* "calves", *hors* "horses" (Aitken, 2015a).

5.1.2. Pronouns

Standard British English is one of the few varieties in which there is no number distinction in the second person pronoun, thus, in this standard, *you* may be used to refer to either a singular interlocutor or a group of people. In most English varieties, including those spoken in England (Britain, 2007), there are different forms to refer to the second person plural.¹ Scots too does make the distinction, and both *yous* and *yous yins* are forms that can be used in this linguistic system to refer to a plural second person. However, and in contrast with what is found in a number of varieties throughout the English-speaking world, these forms are considered as informal (Miller, 2004), and the same can be said about the use of *us* rather than *me*, notably after verbs similar to *give*, *show*, and *lend* (as in *Give us a hand* “Give me a hand”).

Broad Scots’ deictic system should also be mentioned, as it is composed of three different demonstratives, which are *this*, *that*, *thon/yon* (Douglas, 2006), in comparable fashion to languages such as Spanish or Japanese, which include one more level of distance from the speaker in points of view than current Standard English.

5.2. Syntax

5.2.1. Syntactic linkage

In Scots, the use of *is* and *was* with plural subject nominals is very frequent. This is illustrated in (1) from Miller (2004):

- (1) *The windies wiz aw broken.*
The windows were all broken.

This is reminiscent of a rule of subject-verb agreement that is found in the northern varieties of English in England and in the varieties of English that have developed under the influence of emigrants and settlers from Scotland and the northern Midlands. The rule has been known in the literature as the Northern Subject Rule (Siemund 2013: 2-3) and it states that in these varieties all persons regardless of

¹ Here is a non-exhaustive list of plural number second person pronouns in some varieties of English: *ye*, *yee*, *yees*, *yiz*, *yous(e)*, *you lot*, *you mob*, *you guys*, *y’all*, *yous(e) guys*, *you’uns*, *yinz*, *yuns*, *you-all*, *all-you*, *a(ll)-yo-dis*, *among(st)-you*, *wunna*, *yinna*, *unu/oona..* (see Miller (2004), and Svartvik & Leech (2016), among many others).

grammatical number take the verbal morpheme *-s* in the present tense except when immediately preceded by a pronoun:

- (2) a. *The girl comes every day.*
- b. *The girls comes every day.*
- c. *They come every day.*
- d. *They never comes.*
- e. **They comes every day.*

Interestingly, this rule that I have illustrated with my own examples in (2) above can be found in different forms of Appalachian English and Smoky Mountain English which developed with a strong input from Irish-Scots (Montgomery (2004), Mallison et al. (2006)).

Coming back to Scots in Scotland, there are other features that are related to agreement and that are worth mentioning in this linguistic overview. For instance, regarding measure phrases, the presence of the zero plural with nouns of measurement should be mentioned. In other words, structures such as *five mile long* or *two foot high*, in which nouns stay singular with numerals over 1 are prevalent in Scots; particularly with the nouns *minute*, *day*, *week*, *shilling*, *inch* and *yard*. Seemingly, this phenomenon comes directly from Old English (Freeborn, 1995: 41) and is found in numerous non-standard dialects of English (Hughes & Trudgill, 1979: 19), both regional and ethnic as well as in new Englishes.

Additionally, the measure nouns *bit* and *drop* are not followed by a preposition when combined with a noun, resulting in phrases such as *a bit paper* or *a drop water*.

5.2.2. Negation

The expression of negation is one of the most distinctive features of Scots grammar when compared to that of Standard English. In Broad Scots, there are two ways in which negation can be formed: by adding the words *no* or *not*, as in (3), or by attaching either *-ane* or *-n't* to the end of auxiliary verbs, as in (4):

- (3) a. *She's no leaving.*
- b. *She's not leaving.*
- (4) a. *She isnae leaving.*
- b. *She isn't leaving.*

Additionally, *never* and *so* are used as pro-verbs, as in (5), which means that *never* does not fulfil an emphatic function. Instead, for emphatic purposes in negative constructions, *nane* “none”, as in (6), can be used.

(5) *I added water and it fizzed I done it again and it never (“didn’t”).*

(6) *Rab can sing nane.*

The use of *never* as a negator in the past with a non-emphatic meaning is also prevalent in all types of English varieties throughout the Anglophone world, including regional varieties in England (Britain 2007), Ireland (Hickey 2007), the American South, the Caribbean, and regions in which new Englishes have developed.²

5.2.3. Modal verbs

The use of modal verbs varies depending on the medium as, for instance, *shall*, *may* and *ought* tend to appear in written Scots, while the spoken form expresses the future tense through *will*. Permission, on the other hand, is conveyed via *can*, *get* + a gerund, or *get* + *to*-infinitive as in (7) from Miller (2004):

(7) *The pupils get to come inside in rainy weather.*

The pupils can come inside in rainy weather.

Concerning modal verbs that express obligation, as shown in (8), constructions such as *have to*, *need to*, *supposed to* and *meant to* are all valid options. However, *have to* (as well as its stronger variant *have got to*) can also express conclusion, along with *must* and *musn’t*, as in (9), from Miller (2004).

(8) a. *You’re meant to fill in the form first.*

b. *You’re supposed to leave your coat in the cloakroom.*

(9) a. *You must be exhausted.*

b. *That has to be their worst display ever.*

Moreover, it should also be noted that, as in sentences such as *I’d like to could*, modal verbs can appear right after *to*, which functions as an infinitive marker. I return to this construction at the end of this subsection.

² This use of *never* is frequently referred to in the literature on English varieties as “punctual *never*” (Kirk & Kallen, 2010).

A further aspect that is common in Scots is the utilisation of double modals. As a matter of fact, *might + should* or *would* is a frequently heard construction. For this reason, sentences as those in (10) might sound odd to the speakers of standard varieties of English who would have a preference for the use of the word *maybe* instead of *might*; yet they are easily comprehensible and natural sounding for some speakers of Scots.

- (10) a. *You might would like to come with us.*
b. *You might should claim your expenses.*

However, Scots is not the only language that makes use of this syntactic property. According to Huang (2011), the use of more than one modal in a sentence seems to be spread in varieties of Southern American English as well as in South Midland in England. Nonetheless, inconsistencies are found between different speakers. Di Paolo (1989) claims that this construction is widespread in American English (i.e. not restricted to the South).

Although a syntactic characterisation of the restrictions operating on this construction goes beyond the scope of this paper, I would like to establish a correlation between the occurrence of double modals in Scots and the construction *I'd like to could* presented above. Although it is true that the first modal in (10ab) could be translated as an adverbial *maybe*, the truth of the matter is that modals are typically considered inflections, just like infinitival *to*. So I believe we either have two different sets of inflectional features one after the other (*to could, might should*) or maybe what is not inflection is not the first modal but the second.

5.2.4. Tense and aspect

5.2.4.1. Progressive

In Broad Scots, stative verbs such as *like* or *want* can appear in the progressive, as in (11). However, *know* is recognised as one of the exceptions of this pattern, as shown in the ungrammatical sentence (12).

- (11) *He's not understanding a single thing you say.*
(12) **Kirsty is knowing the answer.*

Predictably, when the phenomenon of the progressive use of stative verbs first began to be analysed, it was considered as bad grammar. Nevertheless, as the number of studies regarding the issue started to increase and descriptive analyses began to be published, the viewpoint shifted (Rooy, 2014). Due to continuing research on the topic, and studies such as Rooy (2014), it is currently known that a certain amount of varieties belonging to the Outer Circle³ such as Indian English, Kenyan English and Black South African English also share this characteristic with Scots.

5.2.4.2. Past and Perfect

Scots possesses diverse structures through which to express past actions. On the one hand, the Past Progressive + *there* as well as the *just* + Simple Past construction convey the completion of a recent event, with the latter having an emphasis on recency. These are shown in (13) and (14), respectively. Although in order to make a reference to an occurrence pertaining to some time in the past, the Simple Past accompanied by *ever* is used, as in (15).

(13) *I was speaking to John on Friday there.*

(14) *The electrician just phoned.*

(15) *You said you enjoyed fishing – were you ever interested in football?*

Alternatively, the Perfect has a resultative connotation, which can be observed in (16) below:

(16) *There's something fallen down the sink.*

5.2.5. Interrogatives

Speakers of Scots frequently use *how* with the meaning of “why”, as in (17). By the same token, *whereabout* is commonly used instead of *where*, as in (18), as well as *what time at...?* rather than *when?*, which is shown in (19).

(17) *How did you not apply?*

(18) *Whereabout did you see him?*

(19) *What time does it finish at?*

³ See Kachru's (1985) Model of English Varieties.

In Scots, embedded questions can be formed via subject-auxiliary inversion, like main clause questions in Standard English. The Scots feature is illustrated in the indirect question in (20) below:

(20) *What happens in the last fifteen minutes depends on how keen are Rumania to win.*

However, this characteristic is not specific to Broad Scots, as it can be found in numerous English varieties such as Indian English, Chicano English, Irish English, Appalachian English and African American English (Barrett, 2014), as well as a number of the so-called New Englishes (Schneider, 2003).

Tag-questions are often heard in spoken Scots, and one of the most particular ones is the invariant tag *e* –invariant in the sense that it can be used for all persons, numbers, and tenses— which can appear in declarative sentences, as in (21), as well as imperative sentences, as in (22). In the latter types, sentences turn into requests.

(21) *... we know him quite well by now e?*

(22) *Put it down e!*

The use of this final *e*, nevertheless, appears to be very widespread in Canada. In fact, the phenomenon is sometimes referred to as “Canadian eh”, although Avis (1972: 95) claims that its origin is not found in Canada, and that “*eh?* appears to be in general use wherever English speakers hang their hats”. He particularly found instances of *eh?* in Australian, British and South African English, as well as in a few areas of the United States.

However, tag-questions in Scots are not limited to *e*, as shown in the example sentences in (23). As a matter of fact, these type of questions which include *no* or *not* are fairly common, as seen in (23a).

(23) a. *That’s miles away is it no?*

b. *You’ve mentioned this to him, yes?*

c. *They’re not intending opening the bottle tonight surely?*

Notice that these Scots tags are also of the invariant type, that is, the same form is used in all cases regardless of person and number of the subject and the grammatical tense of the main clause.

5.2.6. Definite article *the*

A noticeable property of Scots syntax is the use of the definite article *the* with nouns referring to institutions, particular illnesses (*the cold*) as well as particular periods of time (*the day* “today”) among other examples (Douglas, 2006).

5.2.7. Comparatives

In Scots, *what* is inserted in comparative sentences that include *more than* or *as much*, as in (24):

- (24) a. *More than what you think actually.*
b. *You’ve as much on your coat as what you have in your mouth.*

Moreover, the use of the superlative form is predominant even when qualifying the units of two-member sets, which produces sentences such as (25) below. In addition, speakers of Scots tend to the comparative only when the conjunction *than* is used, as observed in (26).

- (25) *Who is biggest, Sue or Jane?*
(26) *Sue is bigger than Jane.*

5.2.8. Prepositions and adverbs

Although research regarding these word classes has not been as thorough in Scots, there are a few elements that have been identified (Miller, 2004). For instance, as observed in (27), passive sentences frequently make use of the prepositions *from*, *frae/fae*, *off* and *with* in contexts in which the preposition *by* is typically found in English. However, as seen in (28), *off* is also used to refer a source.

- (27) *We were all petrified frae him.*
(28) *I got the book off Alec.*

Furthermore, the insertion and extraction of certain prepositions are present in particular environments. For example, verbs that denote movement which are followed by *in* or *out*, as well as *down* and *up* do not require the preposition *to*, as observed in (29) and (30), respectively. On the other hand, *outside* needs to be followed by *of*, as in (31).

(29) *She ran in the living room.*

(30) *Go down the shops.*

(31) *Outside of school.*

The example in (32) suggests that although *outside* may be either a preposition or an adverb in English depending on the syntactic context, the Scots word *outside* has the syntactic distribution of just an adverb. Thus, apparent similarities are really hiding very complex differences between these two languages, which, in my opinion, is what makes this overview really interesting.

5.3. Clause constructions

5.3.1. Relative clauses

According to Miller (2004), restrictive relative clauses typically initiate with relative pronouns *that* or *where*, as in (32), while event relative clauses have a preference for *which*, as in (33). In fact, event relative clauses do not utilise the relative pronoun *that*. Moreover, as shown in (34), *whose* is often “replaced” by the structure *that* + possessive pronoun, a construction that is frequently referred to in the literature as resumptive pronouns:

(32) *Just about that other place where I started.*

(33) *My Dad came to an Elton John concert with us which at the time we thought was great.*

(34) *The girl that her eighteenth birthday was on that day was stoned, couldnae stand up.*

This structure of resumptive pronouns, also known as shadow pronouns, is also found in various varieties of English around the world such as East African Englishes (Schmied, 2006), Irish, English (Filppula, 1999), and Fiji English (Mugler & Tent, 2004).

A further characteristic regarding relative clauses in Scots is that prepositions are either always placed after the clause as observed in (35), or the preposition solely disappears as in (36) below:

(35) *The shop I bought it in.*

(36) *I haven't been to a party yet that I haven't got home the same night (from).*

Furthermore, existential sentences with relative clauses, which are generally introduced by *that* or *whom*, as the example seen in (37) below, do not need relative pronouns/conjunctions.

(37) *My friend's got a brother used to be in the school.*

This last property is often referred to as subject contact relatives, and as stated in McCoy (2016) it is found in various varieties of English spoken in North America, such as Appalachian English (Wolfram & Christian, 1976), African American English (Green, 2002), Ozark English (Elgin & Haden, 1991) and Newfoundland English (Clarke, 2004), as well as Ireland, in the varieties of Irish English (Doherty, 1993) and Belfast English (Henry, 1995). Nevertheless, it appears that speakers of Standard American English, for instance, do sometimes also implement this characteristic into their speech, which can be seen in one of the example sentences (38) extracted from Lambrecht (1988). Thus, it seems that like subject contact relatives are in higher use than one would possibly expect.

(38) a. *There was a ball of fire shot up through the seats in front of me.*
b. *I have a friend in the Bay Area is a painter.*

In my opinion, it would be interesting to carry out an investigation to determine whether subject contact relatives are spreading in the English-speaking world or whether these constructions will die out due to pressure from standard varieties with which they are in contact.

Although I have included this last phenomenon in the section of relative clauses, it should be pointed out that opinions among experts regarding whether subject contact relatives should be treated as relative clauses varies. In fact, while some support this notion, a few others do not, and instead recognise them as independent clauses or believe that they insert and report a new topic (McCoy, 2016).

5.3.2. Complement clauses

The historically common use of *for to* infinitives in English (Kaplan et al., 2017), still prevails in the speech of Scots people, albeit its use appears to be declining (Miller, 2004). In (39), examples of its use can be observed:

- (39) a. *We had the clear road for to play on.*
b. *But my own brothers was all too old for to go.*

Nevertheless, it appears that this structure has also survived elsewhere, as in some conservative dialects in Canada. Specifically in the varieties of English spoken in the Ottawa Valley (Carrol, 1983) and in Newfoundland (Clarke, 2010) the infinitive can be introduced by *for to* as well. The phenomenon seems to also be present in Smoky Mountain English (Montgomery & Hall, 2004) and Ozark English (Elgin & Haden, 1991).

Lastly, a further characteristic of Scots complement clauses is that the structure of *and* + verb phrase is allowed after some verbs, as in (40):

- (40) *Remember and bring her back by 12 o'clock.*

As a matter of fact, the combination of *and* + non-finite clause indicates intense emotions, which can be observed in the example (41), which contains a small clause (i.e. a clause with no inflection, or no verb as in this example):

- (41) *He wouldn't help and him a minister too!*

There are also discourse organisation strategies that are distinct from those typically employed in most varieties of English. Interesting though they may be, space restrictions unfortunately make me leave them out of the present paper.

6. Conclusion

By analysing the present-day languages of Scotland, this paper has offered a clarification on the status of the three distinct languages spoken in the region, which are Scots, Scottish Standard English, and Scottish Gaelic, with the primary purpose of minimising associated misinterpretations. The history of these languages corroborates the fact that Scottish English and Scots have Germanic origins, while Gaelic is a Celtic language. In this regard, an explanation concerning the linguistic continuum between the two Germanic languages has been provided in this paper in order to highlight possible complications when attempting to establish boundaries between them. The focus was then somewhat shifted to Scots, granting attention to its perception as a

language due to its particular linguistic circumstances, as well as offering a description of the most relevant morphosyntactic features of the language.

The better understanding of the linguistic reality of Scotland may not only benefit the general knowledge of the existing languages of the area, but might also promote further research on the languages, as well as correlating themes. For instance, phenomena such as the language-continuum between Scots and Standard Scottish English is a fairly unique occurrence in contexts in which English is widely spoken as a mother tongue. Thus, shedding more light on the matter, as well as similar cases, could be beneficial for scholars as well as the public awareness.

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