No True Scotsman

Ideology and Verbal Hygiene in Scots Literacy Practices

Hamish Pottinger

Trinity College, University of Oxford



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‘Ye dinna ken, Jim?’

‘Mother, I know everything’

For my granddad who knew everything, even on the rare occasion he didn’t. Who certainly never put sugar in his porridge, and who would squeal with delight if he were alive to see this. I hope you are in a place free of eejits and malapropisms.

For Lydia. From helping me move into a flat in Cowley to driving me home from my viva, *and for every day in between, thank you.*

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Abstract

This thesis considers how a minority-language project must navigate a paradox which results from oppositions between the modernist conceptualisation of a legitimate 'language' and the ideologies of diversity and 'natural' authenticity. It investigates how this situation has come to be in the case of Scots – a modern code in close linguistic proximity to English – and how advocates for Scots respond in order to pursue their practical goals.

Over three case studies, linguistic and metalinguistic data are synthesised to show how written features and literacy itself relate to ideological tension. Historical orthographic and lexical features of a style termed *Lallans*, relatively unrelated to everyday Scots speech, fulfil important legitimating functions within Scots activism. Lallans provides a greater degree of linguistic differentiation from English and is more suited to the construction of an anonymous and convincingly prestigious language appropriate for use in the full range of linguistic registers. Since these ideas run counter to 'natural' language use, authenticity is also sometimes reimagined as a 'project' residing in a tradition of literacy which must be learned, despite a general reluctance to prescribe the Lallans norms therein. Additionally, in keeping with the broader expectation of some element of 'natural' language and contemporary liberal attitudes to linguistic authority, writers of Lallans generally permit a greater degree of innovative and phonetic written forms than has been acceptable in the past, notwithstanding a continued and covert hierarchy of 'good' and 'bad' writing styles.

Within this, there are some attempts to fuse or reimagine binaries of legitimacy (e.g., notions of literacy and orality or the universal and the contextualised). But often the model of a standard language emerges as a recognisable framework for understanding authority. The discursive regulation of written features counterposes 'stigma' and 'language'; therefore, received wisdom about what a language 'is' and ought to 'do' is operationalised with the intention of bringing about legitimacy and quashing the means by which it is withheld. To this effect, rhetorical strategies are sometimes deployed which mystify language and attempt to simplify a broader complexity of linguistic ideologies under a singular vision. Across these different responses to internal ideological conflict, all are regularly described as necessary steps towards an underlying goal, rooted in a principle of diversity: the validation of Scots speakers' identities.

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Preface: a note on terms and conventions

In this thesis, Scots is categorised as a *minority language*. As Susan Gal suggests, this relatively recent concept has become indispensable as "a term of international law to which language activists turn to make claims for resources and rights vis-à-vis states" (Gal 2017: 225). The very idea of Scots activism rests on the notion of a linguistic minority, within this idiom. *Minority* does not necessarily imply the numerical proportion of speakers in a given context, but rather that a social group defined by its language of use has been disempowered in a dynamic political process. Therefore, the idea of a *minoritised* language is incorporated within the use of *minority*: varieties such as Scots have been discouraged, mocked, and displaced by a majority language in many areas of language use. The term is arguably still problematic, yet asymmetrical sociolinguistic situations such as this one are inherently complex. Sociolinguistic power structures in Scotland (and, therefore, 'minority' status) are complicated by bilingualism, shared British nationality, and the entangled imperial histories of England and Scotland (cf. Giles [2018] on the "fantasy" of Scottish postcolonialism; Camps [2017] on the complex status of Limburgish speakers in The Netherlands).

Minority collocates with *language* in this mode of expression, and in this thesis. But to suggest that the varieties discussed are unequivocally bounded languages would be grossly misleading given the present analytical framework. Rather, *minority language* – a term admittedly born from the assumption of a single ontology of 'language' – is used simply as a recognisable means of addressing the topic at hand, whichever taxonomy one subscribes to. Relatedly, in this thesis glosses have been provided in square parentheses for all instances of Scots/nonstandard Scottish English. I note that to do so may be seen as a political matter – specifically, that it might indicate a position on whether or not Scots is a language in its own right. This thesis strives not to make such distinctions but, for the sake of semantic clarity, the Standard English equivalent is provided nonetheless.

1 Introductory Chapter: Language Ideology

This thesis explores how Scots – a modern code in relatively close linguistic proximity to English – is talked about in and around a minority-language movement, the difficulties this movement faces in doing so, and how the symbolism of written features is associated with these discourses. Language activists disassociate Scots from English via the discursive construction of *languageness;* the use of some historical orthographic and lexical features is believed to aid the campaign for having Scots qualify as a discrete 'language', rather than a mere 'dialect' of English. However, this type of disassociation sometimes negates the aims of the movement – the validation of speaker identity – since it involves a decontextualisation of and a distancing from the 'natural' vernacular. This investigation considers how this conflict comes to be, and the outcomes of it. The Scots-language movement relies variably upon modernist notions of 'language', rhetorical strategies used to 'sell' or repackage these notions, the conflicting value of 'natural' authenticity, and other configurations which attempt to fuse or reimagine specific binaries of legitimacy. As Scots is caught between differentiated ideologies, there is a struggle to establish an empowering discourse for speakers.

The primary contributions which this thesis makes is to identify the ideological reasons why support for Scots has become centred around literacy, to describe in detail the associated normative practices, and to analyse the difficulties this minority-language movement faces in constructing a coherent discourse of empowerment. Scots is presented as a new case study for an emerging body of research which describes how minority-language movements respond to the conflicts of diversity in the contemporary world. Ideology – sets of beliefs about language – is the thread which runs through the key themes that emerge: multilingualism, literacy, culture, identity, and standardisation. Therefore, I begin by offering an introductory description of the key concepts and uses of ideology in the context of minority-language research.

1.1 Minority Language Standards

A major product of modernism is standardisation. For a code with few established norms, if any, this may seem to be an unexpected framework for Scots. But, while I also draw from the broader concept of *verbal hygiene* (see section 1.2), standardisation remains a central force in Scots both due to its necessary relationship with Standard English and some activists' bid for the standardisation of Scots spelling. That this bid has historically been a failure – and current attempts at standardisation seem to be similarly fated – does not make standardisation irrelevant. Discourses of Scots are often pervaded by a standard language ideology, which is understood here as the "bias toward an abstracted, idealised, homogenous spoken language which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions" (Lippi-Green 2012: 67). This definition applies to written language also.

The Scots movement tends to avoid naming and prescribing this idealised language. But, while it is now almost *de rigueur* to celebrate the variability of Scots lexis and orthography in activist circles and beyond (and this in itself may be set within the history of standardisation), it is similarly orthodox to conceptualise Scots as a bounded, discrete 'language' – a view that is historically concurrent with notions of correctness. These are opposing forces that run through the heart of this thesis. In this relatively complex picture, *standardisation* refers broadly to any hierarchical organisation of linguistic norms for the purposes of producing an idealised form of Scots – to any notion of correctness and social difference found within attempts to distil a given 'language'.

The classic model of language standardisation developed by Einar Haugen (1966) describes an attractively clear (Deumert & Vandenbussche 2003: 9) and perhaps simple process, which continues to pervade scholarship on the matter, despite widespread awareness of its limitations (Ayres-Bennett 2021). In its simplest form, Haugen's model comprises of four stages which focus on the top-down transformation of dialects into fully-fledged languages: selection,

codification, elaboration (or, following Kloss [1967], *Ausbau*, in which the functions of the norm are maximised), and acceptance (or, latterly, 'implementation' primarily via educational channels).

Many subsequent standardisation theories are schematic complications of or expansions on these themes, which are of particular relevance to comparative standardisation studies (e.g., those in Deumert & Vandenbussche 2003). Haugen did not conceive of these steps as sequential – they may overlap or be recycled – but they inevitably prompt questions on how they relate to and lead on from one another. For instance, in Milroy & Milroy's (2012) now classic text, is it suggested that *maintenance* of the standard is an ongoing practice which begins rather early in the standardisation process. Diffusion of the standard is viewed as particularly complex and multi-layered. Hence, interdisciplinary contributions are beneficial: "for many languages", say Deumert & Vandenbussche (2003: 11), "only limited information is available on [...] the relationship between spoken and written language, the relative importance of literacy", and "the discourses and counter-discourses of standardization". This thesis posits that it is precisely in these areas that discussion of Scots is lacking. A relatively detailed list of modifications and revisions to Haugen's model for its present-day application has been proposed by Ayres-Bennett (2021: 52-5).

Crucially, Milroy & Milroy also remind us that standardisation is abstract: it is a concept around which usage converges to varying degrees. Actual usage, argues Auer (2005), suggests that standards and dialects often exist on continua, rather than as discrete entities; this view is particularly persuasive in European situations where the varieties in question are genetically related (i.e., Scots and English). Additionally, comparative work in an international context further suggests the contingency of concepts such as 'dialect', or 'standard', or even 'language' (e.g., Makoni & Pennycook 2007). Perspectives in this tradition are similar in their thinking to the approach adopted in this thesis, emerging as they do from postmodern trends in sociolinguistics towards human agency (Canagarajah 2002), ideology (Jaffe 1999; see also those in Hornberger

2006: 34-5), and identity (e.g., national identity in Millar [2005] or "standard language culture" in Milroy & Milroy [2012: 167]). The simple question of *why* the standardisation process occurs – i.e., investigation into the ideologies of standardisers – has greatly informed Haugen's model, contextualising it within language planning and policy, as many of the works cited in this paragraph do; standards and policy are, after all, two sides of the same coin. Building on the foundational anthropological school of language ideology, discussed in detail below, sociolinguistics has developed at the intersection of standardisation, policy, and history via language ideological debates (Beal et al. 2023; Blommaert 1999; Havinga & Langer 2015; Ricento 2000). As the case of Scots shows, it is crucial when adopting this approach not to assume that there is a one-to-one relationship between standards and ideological drivers, or that the goals of different standardisers – individuals, nation-states, language societies, or minority-language organisations – are the same.

Relatedly, attention has been drawn to the role of individual language users in converging around a norm and in accepting it. Emerging from this line of thinking is the interaction between the apparently universal sociolinguistic impulse to evaluate – to create 'language standards' – and the specific cultural concept of 'standard languages' belonging to Western tradition (Joseph 1987; Cameron 1995). Perspectives which complicate the modernist societal impulses underpinning Haugen's model are particularly relevant to present-day European ecologies. Coupland & Kristiansen (2011), following on from Joseph, suggest that increasingly democratic and individualistic ideologies may theoretically result in two distinct processes: *destandardisation* and *demotisation*, which represent a levelling of values in terms of either the function or status, relatively, of different varieties. The contestation of various forms of authority is now a major theme in minority language standardisation, even within very 'small' varieties such as Manx (Hifearnáin 2015). I return regularly to the issue of late modernity in this thesis and its relevance to the present situation of Scots is obvious throughout; hence, approaches to Scots standards –

both within Scots and relative to Standard English – require a granular approach which documents the everyday practices that make up standardisation (and which resist it).

Emerging from these debates within standardisation theory are a number of important contributions from minority language research (Darquennes & Vandenbussche 2015; Deumert & Vandenbussche 2003; Linn & McLelland 2002; McLelland 2009). While I draw on such works at various points throughout this thesis, I note briefly that they have had the collective effect of broadening and deepening the framework for minoritisation by taking a less essentialist view of minority cultures as homogeneous by-products of power. Rather, the processes of marginalisation are shown to differ in separate cases and Darqennes & Vandenbussche's (2015) volume on the standardisation of minority languages is designed specifically with the juxtaposition of context-dependent language situations in mind. In its approach, this case study complements this tradition. Hence, the rest of this section will be dedicated to detailing the present framework for approaching ideology and minority language standards/standardisation.

A school of linguistic anthropological scholarship around language ideology emerged in the late 1990s that framed standardisation as a site of political-economic process. A focus on macrosocial forces reveals how standardisation, but also language in general relates to "polities ([nation-]states and ethnic groups) and identities (national, ethnic, and professional)" (Kroskrity 2000: 33). Linguistic anthropologists were responding to the privileging of the linguist's expertise, most notably by theoretical giants such as de Saussure and Chomsky, over 'secondary' rationalisations of language community members, whose lack of metalinguistic knowledge was seen to devalue their explanations. This response to autonomous theories of language, which I explore in relation to literacy in chapter 2, builds on a longer theoretical tradition of investigating sociolinguistic inequality and social stratification (e.g., Labov 1966; Trudgill 1974), as well as poststructuralist models of discourse and power (e.g., Bourdieu 1991; Fairclough 1989). Language ideology is not viewed as merely flawed linguistic analysis, but is an expression of the

nonreferential functions that language possesses for its users, which relates to the context of use – that is, language can index specific settings, genres, institutions, social groups, national identity, and so on. The experience of such associations in social life can lead community members to alter their language use consciously or unconsciously. The distinguishing ethnographic outcome of this approach is in the foregrounding of speakers' own ideas about language for the purposes of theorising how these beliefs relate to (and are rationalisations of) wider social phenomena (Kroskrity 2000).

From this standpoint, language ideologies are defined in terms of their origins: "any sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use" (Silverstein 1979: 193), and in terms of their wider sociocultural nature: "the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests" (Irvine 1989: 255). In putting forward a framework for the process by which ideologies come about and subsequently dominate popular consciousness, some useful conceptual and analytical tools are set out by scholars within the anthropological school: Judith Irvine, Susan Gal, Paul Kroskrity, Michael Silverstein, and Kathryn Woolard.

First and foremost, ideologies are always *positioned* or *interested:*

> A member's notions of what is "true," "morally good," or "aesthetically pleasing" about language and discourse are grounded in social experience and often demonstrably tied to his or her political-economic interests. These notions often underlie attempts to use language as the site at which to promote, protect, and legitimate those interests.
>
> Kroskrity (2000: 8)

To state that beliefs are subjective and often self-serving may seem a straightforward observation, but some qualification is required here with regards to deeply-ingrained and highly authoritative standard language ideologies, which, in modern democratic societies, often frame the standard variety as neutral – in other words, not ideological at all. Kroskrity continues:

> Nationalist programs of standardization, for example, may appeal to a modern metric of communicative efficiency, but such language development efforts are pervasively underlain by political-economic considerations since the imposition of a state-supported hegemonic standard will always benefit some social groups over others.
>
> (Ibid.)

The perceived lack of subjectivity can lead social actors to uphold ideologies which do not serve themselves, but the dominant power. A hegemonic standard language such as English is spoken of as the collective property of an all-inclusive public, belonging to all (but no one in particular, and therefore not representative of a group within a given society, but "anonymous" [cf. Gal & Woolard 2001]). For as much as standard languages may be intended as purely functional varieties belonging to all sections of society, they remain class dialects that, tellingly, most often were drawn from the prestige variety. As products of European modernity's espousal of decontextualised knowledge (Costa, De Korne & Lane 2017), standard languages as conceived by intellectual elites were aligned with modernist epistemology – and it was in this spirit that the Scottish philosopher David Hume emphatically proscribed 'scotticisms' in favour of the intellectual standard as he perceived it. Historical practices such as these have made Scots economically disadvantageous in the present day (Unger 2013). Prominent voices in the study of language ideology reject the notion of 'a view from nowhere', showing that standard languages serve vested interests, while giving off an impression of objectivity, autonomy, neutrality, commonality, and so forth, which allows identifiable ideological positions to be normalised among a population via discursive strategies (such as a *one nation*, *one language* ideology).

Hegemonic standard language ideologies are only the most successful of many other systems of belief. Ideologies are also *multiple*, relating to the myriad possibilities of social experience according to group divisions based on gender, socioeconomic class, age, race, ethnicity, and so on. They are complex, disjointed, plural, and contested – and so are their corresponding interests. Even in the most taken-for-granted and dominant ideologies – that of English spelling, for instance – there are not only inevitable periods of adjustment, but ongoing

resistance. The advocacy of an alternative minority-language ideology can represent a major act of resistance. Unlike the superordinate variety, in bilingual situations the interests of minority language advocates rise to the surface of consciousness since, without the benefit of normalisation, the purpose of that advocacy must be repeatedly stated (it cannot, after all, exist for ease of communication). Within bilingual literacy specifically, it is the minority variety which is subjected to "rigorous evaluation" (Jaffe 2003: 42). Unlike the superordinate variety, too, purpose is most commonly and most fundamentally one of belonging, not one of so-called neutrality: minority languages pertain to a specific, disempowered social group.

In understanding this difference between minority- and majority-language standardisation, Gal (2017) offers a recent discussion of the *axis of modernity*, which reviews prior scholarship carried out by herself, Woolard, and Irvine. The construction of standard language ideology is inseparable from the creation of social difference, in which standard languages come to embody idealised qualities of modernity: universality, rationality, and progress, via the homogenisation/codification of language, the development of literacy, and metadiscourses of anonymity (the supposedly neutral 'voice from nowhere'). These ideas are upheld and reified by administrative and educational systems, or perhaps even language institutions (a process of language development, or *Ausbau* [Kloss 1967]). By contrast, this configuration places minority languages within the realm of the particular, the emotional, and the emplaced, via orality, linguistic heterogeneity, and discourses of authenticity (the notion that minority languages are the 'natural' and marked expression of a specific social group). Traditionally, this is a difference in the legitimacy of a language variety. In the following idealised model of differentiation, the concepts in the left-hand row lend credibility to the *languageness* of a variety:

Standard language	**Dialects, patois, minority and indigenous languages**
anonymity	authenticity
universal	particular/emplaced
reason/economy	emotion
progress	tradition/backward

literate/educated	oral
center	periphery
homogeneous/unified	various

Table 1: Modernist axis of contrasting values/properties (Gal 2017: 233)

Anonymity and *authenticity* will act here as supercategories of the various subcategories listed below them. The legitimacy of standard languages which I have been discussing in this introduction is achieved precisely because it is supposedly liberated from a socially specific perspective and can therefore represent the objectivity implied by 'correctness' (Woolard 2008). Authority resides in the superiority of the aperspectival: hence, the relationship between this view of language and the values of Enlightenment philosophy. I have suggested that this is, in reality, an interested ideology. And it is not only anthropologists who recognise this; it is sometimes visible to those on the sociolinguistic margins who are all too aware, for instance, that the standard forms of English are 'posh' in the U.K. or 'white' in the U.S. But this observation, erased as it often is, does little to change the fact that participation in public discourse generally requires that we renounce the impression of a historically specific perspective, using a language which is "idealized as a transparent window on a disinterested rational mind and thus on truth itself" (Ibid.: 306). In other words, whether dominant languages are misapprehended throughout society as anonymous, aperspectival, objective, and so on (something which Bourdieu called 'misrecognition', or *méconnaisance* [1991]), or are recognised as serving specific interests and 'belonging' to elite groups, they are nevertheless attributed anonymous roles (in writing, 'high' registers, education, and so on).

As a co-constitutive counterweight to anonymity, 'authentic' language indexes particular identities: people whose speech 'belongs' to specific landscapes or territories in a world where local communities are perceived to be moribund. This language is 'from somewhere', and it is this social indexicality which matters above all else. In fact, we may say that authenticity goes beyond merely indexing ('pointing to') identity with language – language *is* identity.[1] If the authority of

[1] This is what Irvine & Gal (2000) call *iconisation*, as discussed in section 1.2. While I have drawn a distinction here between iconisation and indexicality, they will generally be treated as similar phenomena in this thesis.

anonymity rests on the legacy of modernist philosophical values, then it is under this same value system that the nonreferential value of minority languages is trivialised. Capturing this essence of identity is typically found in the language which is 'natural' to the specific social group; it is by displaying the kind of language only acquired in the necessary social conditions that one may sound 'authentic', and therefore genuinely express the 'self'. This common understanding of authenticity as 'natural' makes the possibility of authoritative acquisition of a minority language for outsiders very difficult, if not impossible.

However, as Woolard (2016) has argued in the context of Catalan, authenticity and naturalism are not always linked, despite the fact that such a link carries "enormous clout around the world" (Ibid.: 33). It has carried clout, too, in sociolinguistics and anthropology. But, as Woolard puts it, "[a]lternative formulations [of authenticity] may value will, effort, or artifice rather than primordial and natural essence, including in matters of language" (Ibid.). Perspectives critical of naturalism within these fields have placed greater emphasis on speaker agency in the development of the coherent self; examples emerge in which authentic identity is perceived as a goal, rather than a pre-determined given. These include Siegel's (1986) study of an Indonesian community, which begins:

> To speak Javanese, indeed, to be Javanese, one must translate. Children first speak Low Javanese. They are not considered fully adult, fully Javanese, however, until they also use High Javanese, a code or speech level they learn as a second language.
>
> (Ibid.: 3).

This is not to say that the 'natural' ceases to be that which is most immediate. Rather, we may have cause to dispense with the idea that the authentic is essential; identity may sometimes be understood by speakers as a pursuit via the effort and will required to cultivate post-natural linguistic forms. This will prove a necessary consideration regarding the Scots minority language project, based as it is on the revival of literary forms in writing representing 'who you are', rather than a recognised form of 'natural' speech written down. Repeatedly, it will be shown that the

most immediate, unmediated expressions of the self are devalued, while the artificial and the reflexive are celebrated as 'true' – at least for one type of speaker, at one level of consciousness. These important concepts – anonymity and authenticity – will be further developed in relation to literacy and Scots in the next two chapters.

The 'axis of modernity' continues to provide a powerful framework for attributing legitimacy. Since standard languages relate to ideas of truth, knowledge, and power, it is unsurprising that advocates for minority languages – particularly those on a continuum with the majority language and without centralised standards, such as Occitan – should seek legitimacy in order "to create or bolster a claim to selfhood" (Hawkey & Mooney 2021: 855). In and of itself, many people do not consider minority-language activism to be threatening or parochial. Indeed, diversity has been seen as a popular cause for celebration in British liberalism since at least the 1980s – this celebration is itself a "maxim" of contemporary liberal attitudes (Neustupný 2006). Official declarations, recognitions, government policies, and NGOs in support of minority-language rights have proliferated. All the while, however, the economic facts of diverse societies, where workforces and communities are managed in the same language and under the same law, have eroded minority dialects, languages, and cultures, furthering the drive to support diversity in the face of a sense of loss.

Herein lie two ideologies that work against one another – what Neustupný (Ibid.) calls the 'humanist' desire for diversity typically taken up by those independent to centralised power (scholars, activists, NGOs, opposition parties, and so on) and the 'rationalist' maintenance of dominant standard languages to meet economic and social needs (by governments and similarly interested parties overseeing a highly mobile workforce). As Neustupný notes, this is an idealised picture, and the reality of language ideology often straddles these distinctions. Nevertheless, we may say that minority-language activists are fundamentally motivated by the humanist

preference for preserving the selfhood of linguistic identities, working against the greater power of rationalism as they do so.

As stated above, these attempts to legitimate a minority language serve to index membership to a historically specific group. However, these diversity-centred ends are often sought in conflicting means which are counterposed to authenticity and particularity. Take, for instance, the discourse of safeguarding minority cultures in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML), which has been signed by 23 states, for over 80 European language varieties. The most far-reaching part of the charter – under which all varieties, including Scots, are ratified – is part II, article 7, which requires states to assist in the teaching, "promotion" and "development" of each "language" in both written and spoken forms (Council of Europe 2023). While it does not make any further specification, the charter's requirements necessitate a tangible view of a discrete 'language' that can be "'had' – isolated, named, counted, and fetishised" (Woolard 1998: 16). Within an EU context (Robertson 2024), for Scots to progress as modern legal language there would be an obligation on institutions to produce language strategies and a singular, archetypal standard for translation.

While in spirit the ECRML fulfils the aims of postmodern diversity, the model of what a legitimate European language ought to 'look like' has been crafted by modernity and rationalism. Legitimation emerges in part from a code's perceived ability to fulfil its full range of functions in a Western society, and a written standard is one expected prerequisite. For many minority-language projects in search of protection, the prospect of their own erasure leads them to adopt this model of a standard language, which is understood to be irrefutable evidence of legitimacy (cf. Lane et al. 2017). Those seeking to adopt elements of standard language ideology in order to empower a minority language, such as Basque (Urla 2012b), Corsican (Jaffe 1999), or Catalan (Woolard 2016), must grapple with anonymity and authenticity at the same time.

Theoretically, there are alternative approaches: resistance to the regime of a dominant language can be either categorised as existing within Gal's model of differentiation, or as challenging the premises of that model in some way (cf. Jaffe 1999: 20). The former can be described as subscribing to a modernist form of language ideology, while 'postmodern' language ideologies refer, in this thesis, to any attempts at redefining the linkages made in the modernist model or redefining their valence. Sometimes, postmodern responses emerge from the anonymous-authentic tension within minority communities. The institutional and middle-class associations with Euskara Batua [Standard Basque; literally 'unified Basque'] have resulted in unsanctioned, somewhat postmodern expressions of identity in, for example, pirate radio stations which combine loud, subversive genres of music imported from Anglophone countries with familiar registers of speech mixed with Spanish (Urla 2012a). In the British context, the tendency for revivalist minority-language standardisation "to become concentrated among middle-class is a pervasive question for contemporary language policy" (Sayers & Renkó-Michelsén 2015: 34 on Cornish; cf. also Smith-Christmas & Ó hIfearnáin 2015 on Irish and Scottish Gaelic).

In 'postmodern' cases, the doctrines of differentiation and purity which run through the heart of so many minority-language movements are rejected. But it is only in rare cases that European minority-language practices have undermined the modernist model to a great extent, and establishing a discourse for this radical intent is difficult, since, in the West, "persuasive idiom[s] with which to make claims of linguistic and cultural identity" (Jaffe 1999: 30) outside of the oppositional dominant/vernacular model are typically lost in language planning efforts. Within a postmodern view of society, identity is reason enough for a code to qualify as a 'language'. However, the perceived need for such languageness is seemingly a modernist impulse, often creating a circularity in which features of anonymity are sought out nonetheless. Admittedly, Jaffe's view is a diglossic one and, as she herself notes (Jaffe 2021), binaries become more complicated where speakers take a polynomic or diaglossic view of their language. For

instance, there are identity-related idioms for regiolects such as *tussentaal* ('in-between language') in Flanders (Auer 2005: 23; De Caluwé 2012: 271). Indeed, there is widespread awareness of hybridity, plurality, and the pitfalls of homogeneity within Scots activist circles. Yet the discourse on this theme is undeniably awkward, especially in the context of literacy, ultimately provoking an anxious hesitancy to accept alternatives to the modernist model.

This brings us to a central challenge faced by the language activists in this thesis. Since standardisation is by definition a homogenisation of language and people (Milroy & Milroy 2012):

> Promoting language standards is thus both a way for validating groups and for limiting group-internal diversity. Considering that diversity is often the very *raison d'être* for minority language movements based on the claims that all ways of communicating are equally legitimate and that language diversity needs to be protected, this trade-off is at best contentious and at worst a Faustian bargain.
>
> (Costa et al. 2017: 1)

There is the inherent problem of creating linguistic hierarchy, embedded in a socioeconomic hierarchy, in diversity-focused movements that are wary of norm-enforcement. It is for this reason that prescriptivism is something of a taboo in Scots. On a more practical level, the difficult question of representing varied speech via orthography must also be addressed, and this representation accepted by speakers. But written norms do not have to be established or prescribed for this "trade-off" to create difficulty. More abstract discourses based on this same conflict of singularity and plurality arise around topics such as education, formal genres of writing, or how to define a language variety.

I suggested earlier that the interests of minority-language projects are exposed, while those of the majority language remain hidden; this is also true of the inevitable pitfalls of reasoning involved in navigating Costa's "trade-off" for the purposes of language-building. Elevation of any code or linguistic feature beyond its phonemes and graphemes to 'good' cultural symbols is arbitrary and will often involve contradiction, selectivity, or logical but unsound argumentation (I will expand on the machinations of language ideology in section 1.2). These

rationalisations become visible particularly at the moment of contestation and might need to be qualified, whereas normalised standards are not generally subjected to such contestation and (therefore) the contradictions latent within a successful standard language ideology (Gal 2006a) are obscured. There is a possibility – evident perhaps in the recent increase in support for minority languages – that standard languages are being subjected to increased scepticism. Nevertheless, standard languages have the significant advantage of having already been implemented in the economic system.

Consequently, it may be that the same relativistic challenge to authority from which minority language projects are born are more likely to be turned against standardising minority-language institutions which decontextualise and de-authenticate language varieties. In detailed language ideological research which employs a similar framework to this thesis, evidence of such resistance has been documented for the European minority varieties already mentioned: Occitan, Catalan, Corsican, and Basque. There are also unintended outcomes of adopting standard language ideologies, such as insecurity or alienation once the concept of correctness has been introduced in the speaker. Where singularity, homogeneity, and central authority are aligned, they will necessarily exist as a regime which runs counter to speakers' view of 'their' language as rooted in their local context, using their own everyday 'natural' language as a yardstick of authority. Therefore, there is significant overlap between the paradox of diversity, and that of anonymity and authenticity. A salient datum from Thiers's study of Corsican summarises the practices, landscapes, and experiences which may be lost in anonymisation: 'it's a nowhere Corsican' (Thiers 1993: 260), one informant said of the trend towards abstraction and standardisation.

Often, the matter of minority language rights is simplified under a common-sense belief that achieving such rights constitutes a direct and unambiguous subversion of power, notably in 'postcolonial' situations. This is an important component – and it is on this basis that Urla et al.

(2017) warn against stating simply that minority language movements reproduce hegemonic power via their own standard language ideologies: their objectives are often centred around a form of horizontal egalitarianism (or Neustupný's 'humanism') which can be persuasive to the speaker. In my experience observing Scots activism, the movement is rarely unsympathetic to speakers' resistance to standard language ideology; rather, this resistance is often viewed as ultimately upholding the subordination of Scots. Nevertheless, what is shown by the "trade-off" described by Costa et al. (or, as Fishman [2010] has described it in the context of European vernacular literacy, a 'chicken and egg' problem) is the difficulty of attempting to subvert dominant language ideologies without either succumbing to their structure and effects or transplanting them.

To investigate such situations, the researcher must resist any temptation to exaggerate the agency of minority-language projects or their capacity to subvert power. The researcher must ask if the dominant is somehow reproduced in the vernacular (in chapter 2 I elaborate on the notion of social actors' minority writing practices as situated in a tension between the dominant and the vernacular). Studies within this framework, and the associated issues of agency and self-determination, have typically been treated as dynamic, varying on a case-by-case basis (Schieffelin, Woolard, & Kroskrity 1998). In terms of ethnography, while redressing the omission of community members' beliefs in the scholarly tradition is essential, it is still considered inconsequential to do so without connecting them to broader political, social, and moral patterns (Kroskrity 2000). Their beliefs are not "cultural given[s]" (Ibid.: 7). From this position, identity and power are interconnected phenomena, but not synonymous.

It is by adopting this approach that I have made the following observations, which I offer here as a summative precursor to the rest of the thesis. The "trade-off" is made more difficult in Scots by the relatively large gap between written norms and their modern spoken 'equivalents'. Spoken Scots is, by comparison with many other case studies of minority languages, rather similar

to the dominant language. This contributes to a relatively large degree of ambiguity regarding the bounds of Scots. Idealised forms of written Scots are not intuitive, or even comprehensible, to most Scots speakers. In general, when taking a view of authenticity as 'naturally' residing in the 'voice', speakers do not recognise these idealised forms as a representation of their speech. Yet a degree of such difference between writing and speech implied by idealised forms is viewed as necessary by activists in order to construct a 'language'.

To navigate this situation, Scots activists describe 'language' and linguistic features in shifting and plural ways, at once identifying 'Scots' as a self-contained code whilst elsewhere denying possession and the possibility of clearly delimiting it. The Scots movement seeks to avoid the appearance of prescriptivism, even to the detriment of the standardisation process that it mostly seeks, but the question of Scots being a language is non-negotiable. In turn, qualification for its being a language emerges, in separate sites of metadiscourse, as instances of specifically linguistic normativity. In this way, language authorities seek to encourage an appropriately 'high' register or written standard, yet also forfeit their authority. Sometimes, this forfeit is essentially rhetorical – a form of plausible deniability by which the Scots activist seeks to disarm criticism.

Activists are sometimes aware of the problems posed by these practices, which are, nevertheless, something of a trend in the Scots movement – and one which some Scottish writers, who do not fit its mould, reject or resist with alternate visions of Scots. One of the outcomes of this is the need to navigate the binary thrown up by modernism; describing how the Scots movement sets out to construct a discourse of anonymity while also satisfying the need for authenticity is a primary challenge of this thesis. In contemporary Scotland, where the identities being indexed are taken to be granularly fragmented, language activists may seek legitimacy by attempting to fuse these differentiated concepts, or pay attention to them variably. To understand better how this occurs, it is first useful to take a closer look at the relationship between beliefs and language.

1.2 Mediation between language and ideology

Language ideologies held by social groups are products of ongoing discursive practices. Connections between linguistic form and value judgments are repeatedly made and reinforced via some degree of regulation which loads specific instances of language as 'right', 'wrong', 'good', 'bad', 'slang', 'appropriate' and so on. Many liberally-minded people in Britain today may bristle at the notion of cultural 'rules', as many in the Scots movement do, but the fact remains that the organisation of language into culturally meaningful units is upheld effectively by normativity.

Cameron (1995) argues that, when normative practices are mobilised – when we feel impelled to prescribe and proscribe – our non-linguistic desires and fears (for which linguistic normativity acts as a proxy) are also mobilised. Cameron describes this as *verbal hygiene*, which offers a means of engaging with language ideologies as multiple and vernacular: normativity is not limited to the forms of elitist hyperstandardisation implied by *prescriptivism*, but can appear in "innumerable forms, not all of which are conservative, authoritarian, or (arguably) deplorable" (Ibid.: 9).[2] For instance, verbal hygiene can also function as a shared project that builds a community around language. For minority-language groups, desires and fears are likely to relate to the empowerment of identity. Within language ideology research, the investigation of rule-making and rule-following – the debates which give rise to linguistic rules, and the debates which emerge from them – is a way of revealing exactly how social ideas are constructed and reinforced through specific instances of language.

Verbal hygiene therefore engages with the concept of linguistic authority in all its manifestations, be it in the efforts of violent nation-states or minority language planners. Parallel

[2] Hence the original distinction between *verbal hygiene* and *prescriptivism*. However, as Cameron (2023) has noted, the two terms may be used interchangeably when they refer to any kind of linguistic normativity.

theories of normativity within language policy and planning variably draw on the related sociolinguistic concept of *purism* (McLelland 2009) and the obverse phenomena of *erasure* (Irvine & Gal 2000 on Macedonian) and *invisibilisation* of 'low' varieties (Havinga & Langer 2015), which are particularly heightened in written discourse. Indeed, the concept of verbal hygiene has been pivotal in broadening the scope and expanding the relevance of these normative concepts in sociolinguistics, not least in the context of minority language standardisation (Beal et al. 2023).

Terms such as *invisibilisation* often remind us of the power of taken-for-granted normative practices to suppress divergent language choices, and language diversity in general. In much the same way, neither must we overestimate one's capacity to intervene in regimes of language choice, even in the case of centralised institutional bodies. Spolsky's (2009) threefold division of language choice – into practices, beliefs, and management – offers useful perspective on the balance of forces confronting language policy and planning efforts. Choice, he argues, is affected most strongly by pre-existing *practices* (i.e., usage), which provide a model from which appropriately exposed learners may develop proficiency. In the case of Scots planning, the lack of attention to the actual features which speakers acquire as children is striking. The influence of *beliefs* (i.e., ideology) as they relate to whole varieties and specific linguistic features is explored thoroughly in these introductory chapters. Yet, again, it is often the case that Scots planning relies upon beliefs which it takes to be truth – or which it wishes were true – to meet its goals; without sufficient understanding of the texture of wider beliefs, planners are all but guaranteed to meet dead ends. As such, a multilevel analysis helps to explain the problems encountered at the more interventionist realms of *management* (i.e., policy and planning)[3] on the part of nameable authorities, or individuals and groups claiming authority, who must "overcome practices, beliefs, and management at the lower levels" (Ibid.: 7) in order to meet their goals.

[3] For all intents and purposes, these terms are treated synonymously. Nevertheless, a distinction in the implications of these terms is provided by Spolsky (2009: 4-5). Much like *verbal hygiene*, language *management*, also used by Neustupný (Cameron 1995: 27) is a broader term relating to normativity.

If linguistic debates and their corresponding ideas of cultural differentiation are not inherently connected, why do speakers seem to treat them as such? Why is language an "interpretive filter" (Woolard 1998: 16) for understanding the social world? By asking these questions, we also ask what differentiates the ideology of language from many other social beliefs and forms of normativity:

> Verbal hygiene is a double discourse that needs to be read in two frameworks simultaneously. To say that verbal hygiene debates just play out 'deeper' social conflicts in the arena of language is [...] to gloss over the crucial question why *language*, rather than something else, becomes the arena where certain social conflicts find symbolic expression. Conversely, to deny that ideas about language are recruited very often to non-linguistic concerns is to miss what gives meaning to any particular verbal hygiene debate.
>
> (Cameron 1995: 11)

One of the by-products of this thesis will be to address the *why language* question by looking at how norms are taken up. Provisionally, we may say that, for many minority languages, part of the answer is that, once linguistic evaluations have become established, their authority is (still) highly persuasive under the long shadow of the Enlightenment and modernism – more persuasive than the authority of the non-linguistic beliefs they represent.

The feeling, for example, that forms of speech and writing ought to be divided and re-divided into discrete 'languages', and that there is a prototypical model for each of those languages, is a powerful and doxic metaphor for the differentiation of social groups. Notions of a discrete and bounded identity, and any anxieties or desires related to the stability of that identity, are difficult to describe without a convincing totem. Language is one such totem: "linguistic conventions are routinely felt to be of a different order from many other social rules and norms. Their authority is not just an external imposition but is experienced as coming from deep inside" (Ibid. 14). The feeling of belonging to a social group precisely because of the language variety one uses comes "from deep inside" and, although a given linkage is constantly in a state of renegotiation, the ideology of authenticity, in which language use reflects in-group identity,

remains self-evident in popular belief. So, too, do the modernist traits of the anonymous standard language.

How these linkages are maintained has been a primary focus for scholars of language ideology (Woolard 1998: 16). In their paper on the ideological boundaries between language varieties, Irvine & Gal (2000) offer three conceptual tools for understanding how ideological practices uphold the 'axis of modernity'. The first is *iconisation*. What might be described as a profound indexicality, *iconisation* has been defined as the transformation of "the relationship between a linguistic feature (a sign) and the social image with which it is associated, so that the linguistic feature is seen as displaying a social group's essential characteristics" (Milroy & Milroy 2012: 164). For a minority language, ideal icons for the social group are likely to be the most salient features – these include nouns, phonological features above the level of awareness, and spelling, which are "more available for folk awareness and possible folk theorizing" (Kroskrity 2000: 20) than, say, many syntactical structures. (Hence, it is common for minority-language discourses to hinge on the referentiality of isolated idioms or a 'word of the day' – this is often the case in Scots). Iconisation can also apply to whole languages: Milroy & Milroy (2012) cite the alignment of the history of a language with the history of the nation and its people; if one is framed as 'proud', 'independent', 'glorious', and so on, so are the others. If the language variety is codified, standard and/or historical features may be appropriate icons for these concepts.

Secondly, *fractal recursivity* "involves the projection of an opposition, salient at some level of relationship, onto some other level" (Irvine & Gal 2000: 38). For example, in chapter 3 I show how modernist models of correctness in 20th-century Scotland recurred within the Scots activist movement at the time, which upheld hierarchical linguistic differences relating to specific Scots spellings (traditional versus 'slang' spellings). This difference is then projected onto urban class (middle/low), and again onto national identities (Scottish/Anglicised or Scottish/Americanised) and even the moral worth (reasonable/vulgar or clean/dirty) of language

users. Hence, iconised differences recur *fractally*. It is important to note here the projection of differences established at the level of dominant ideology (e.g., Standard English/nonstandard Scottish 'slang') onto the vernacular ideology whose very essence lies in the rejection of that difference: within the contemporary Scots movement, the stigmatisation of urban speech which Scots activists set out to redress recurs, arguably, in the continuation of negative attitudes towards phonetic urban writing.

Finally, since the first two of Irvine & Gal's processes simplify sociolinguistic realities, they inevitably involve some kind of *erasure*. This "renders some persons or activities (or sociolinguistic phenomena) invisible. Facts that are inconsistent with the ideological scheme either go unnoticed or get explained away [...] Because a linguistic ideology is a totalizing vision, elements that do not fit its interpretive structure – that cannot be seen to fit – must be either ignored or transformed." (Ibid.: 38). In the above example of 20th-century language advocacy, the Glasgow dialect was both ignored in idealised images of Scots and transformed into a materially inadequate entity. Phenomena are not always *actively* erased; they are often simply glossed over, consciously or unconsciously. "It is probably only when the "problematic" element is seen as fitting some alternative, threatening picture that the semiotic process involved in erasure might translate into some kind of practical action to remove the threat" (Ibid.: 38-9), such as a copy editor's imposition of orthographic edits. A classic example of a particularly "totalizing" minority-language ideology is that of Basque (notwithstanding outsiders' often hyperbolic representations of the uniformity and distinctiveness of Basque culture). The one-to-one iconisation of Basque language as Basque identity is felt by some to erase the complexity and hybridity of modern Basques (Urla 2012a), known collectively as *euskaldunak* [*the Basque speakers*].

These processes rely not only on arbitrary connections between social phenomena and language, but one which has recourse to an inconsistent, dynamic, and poorly understood practice: language use. Specific linguistic analysis and theorising are not always deemed necessary

within metadiscourse. But where they occur, the only way they can function for the purposes of justifying an ideology is by way of mystification and irrationality – a fact we must interrogate, not dismiss. In the above example of Basque, one of the means by which ideology has sought to reverse the trend towards Spanish is via questionable readings of theories of linguistic relativity that present themselves as tantalising scientific fact (Urla 2012a: 68-70). Despite raising difficult questions of identity for an almost entirely bilingual population, the idea that language choice has profound cognitive effects has been a powerful one.

We can identify the uptake of linguistic forms via commonplace linguistic narratives in such instances of talk about language – in metadiscourses. The function of metadiscourse "is to tidy up the messiness of linguistic phenomena and package them neatly in forms that make sense; *they do not have to be consistent with one another to fulfil this function*" (Cameron 1995: 214, emphasis mine). Cameron's observation also speaks the variable nature of ideologies, which appear inconsistently across sites of discourse; a given narrative may be applied selectively, being brought into consciousness when it serves interests, and banished when it does not. This is what I describe in this thesis as double consciousness.

It must be stressed that internal conflict and a degree of irrationality is something which all language ideologies manage, and discursive contradiction can even be viewed as ordered when understood as comprising independent realisations of consistent desires and fears. For a minority language, a broad definition of the forms of language that may be included within its bounds serves to evidence its vitality, thereby contributing to its legitimacy. Conversely, a narrow definition may serve the same function by emphasising its most distinctive and/or archetypal elements (often the 'standard'). Interrogating these inconsistencies will prove enlightening. For instance, when anonymous discourses are taken up in the Scots movement, this does not imply that the construction of a truly unmarked/neutral language is sought; language ideological anthropology is sceptical that such a thing exists. Rather, activists seek the legitimating power of

anonymity for aims relating to authenticity – i.e., the validation of a minority identity. Yet, this same goal may be sought out in conflicting ideologies of 'naturally' authentic language, which appear in separate sites of metadiscourse.

This thesis asks which linguistic norms (normally lexical and orthographical) are taken up alongside which 'stories' of Scots. The analytical tools summarised above will help to explain the findings. Narratives of Scots are particularly important in this case: in modern times, there has always been a relatively large amount of writing *about* Scots compared to writing *in* Scots. Many contradictions emerge among them: *Scots is a language*; *Scots is the language of Burns*, *of MacDiarmid*, or *of the countryside*; *Scots has been around for hundreds of years; Scots is the voice of the working class*; *Scots is spoken across Scotland today* and even *Scots is all of these things*.

The title of this thesis is taken from one of various strategies used to address the inherent conflicts of ideology which a minority language faces under the influence of dominant culture. The *no true Scotsman* fallacy takes its name from analogies provided by philosopher Antony Flew in which generalised notions of Scottishness are protected, *ad hoc*, from falsifying examples of more complex social behaviour:

> […] a brash generalization, such as *No Scotsmen put sugar on their porridge*, when faced with falsifying facts, is transformed while you wait into an impotent tautology: if ostensible Scotsmen put sugar on their porridge, then this is by itself sufficient to prove them not *true* Scotsmen.
>
> (Flew 1966: 104)

Flew's example draws on rather exaggerated stereotypes of Scottish masculinity. The Scots language movement is neither so obstinate nor interested in the purity of national identity and its relationship to extralinguistic cultural icons (i.e., salty porridge). Rather, Flew illustrates Irvine & Gal's description of the role of erasure: that which does not fit the "interpretive structure" of an ideology "must be either ignored or transformed" (2000: 38).

When made to confront the conflicts involved in advocating an antiquated, 'high' form of Scots in order to promote the diversity of present-day speakers under a project of language construction, many (but certainly not all) Scots advocates dismiss falsifying counterexamples to their assertions in a similar way:

A(i): Scots is a language

B: But many Scottish people, including Scots writers, do not think so

A(ii): That is only due to a form of internalised bias

Or:

A(i): 'Good' Scots is a positive validation of identity for all Scots speakers, of any type

B: But some Scots speakers feel alienated by it

A(ii): That is only because they haven't been taught it

The counterexamples (B) indicate a significant scepticism among Scots speakers, based on an ideology of 'natural' authenticity, towards discursive and linguistic models characterised by the Scots movement. But they are dismissed improperly (A[ii]), in a manner that serves the interests of an ideology based on the traditional model of a European 'language'. These two examples are the most common of several instances of this rhetorical strategy. This analytical approach has the benefit of portraying how and why Scots activism and everyday language users sometimes speak at cross purposes. But ideological discourse is rarely this organised and, since ideologies are sometimes doxic, direct counterexamples to ideological reasoning only occur occasionally. Often, counterarguments are pre-empted in pro-Scots discourses, and are sometimes constructed in a manner which facilitates their dismissal (known as *straw man* argumentation).

The scholarly aim in showing a group's inconsistencies and interests in nonevaluative; my aim is not to disparage Scots activists for whom the stigmatisation of their language, historically and presently, has been a hegemonic exercise of power. To criticise their ideological practices would be not only to misrepresent the very function of verbal hygiene, but also to risk reifying their disempowerment both in opposition to Standard English and myself, the linguist. What I

hope to show is, rather, the difficulties of constructing a 'legitimate language' – specifically, the clash between old and new ways of doing so, the awareness of the arbitrary and hierarchical elements of this construction, and the ambiguity of its given purpose – when operating in close linguistic, political, and historical proximity to a superordinate variety: English. Many in the Scots movement are all too aware of these difficulties and some make genuine attempts, with some success, at reformulating Scots as a diverse and decentralised language variety.

Elsewhere, however, inconveniences to the Scots movement's ideologies are managed in ways which are either contradictory or insincere. It is well documented that resistance to cultural hegemony is complex and sometimes contradictory in this way. Ultimately, due to anxieties related to stigma and language status, metadiscourses within the Scots movement mostly respond to the modernist axis of differentiation by viewing as necessary its prerequisites of anonymity, standardisation, and a persuasive model of literacy. In the debate over what Scots is and what it ought to look like, a variety of Scottish writers, in a variety of ways, internalise and regurgitate the pervasive model of standard language ideology, in which they are instructed from a young age. With an important degree of consistency, the conferral of *languageness* upon Scots coincides with instances of iconisation: that older, literary variants are 'better'.

Meanwhile, appeals to diversity in writing are mostly a means of softening the presentation of modernist concepts and mitigating against their undesirable consequences. Since the movement's ultimate aim – the validation of speaker identity – intends to serve an egalitarian purpose, we might view this as a goal-oriented strategy (Urla 2012b): a linguistically modern means to a socially postmodern end. As I will show, standard language ideology offers a digestible and recognisable framework for understanding 'stigma' and 'language', which can be 'sold' to speakers. Verbal hygiene serves to guide the discourse of these concepts in such a way that 'stigma' and 'language' are opposed; they can, therefore, be operationalised to bring about

validation and to quash the means by which it is withheld. Such an approach relies on the assumption that speakers share – or ought to share – the movement's beliefs about language.

1.3 Thesis outline

In the chapters that follow, I present the case of Scots in two parts. The first comprises of two background chapters. Chapter 2 offers a genealogy of theories of literacy which have influenced both folk understanding of the nature of reading and writing, as well as sociolinguistic approaches to written text. An analytical framework is provided which contextualises non-standard and minority-language orthography for the study of language ideology. Chapter 3 is a modern ideological and sociolinguistic history of Scots writing which describes the origins of current linguistic trends and attitudes towards them.

The second part presents new data. As various scholars of language ideology have suggested, overt ideological discourse often remains dormant until it is challenged. It is partly for this reason that I have chosen three case studies involving contestation. The first, in chapter 4, considers the less regulated arena of literary writing. Following the development of a postmodern literary tradition in Scotland, verbal hygiene is more likely to be met with contestation in this genre. Here, hierarchical ideologies based on modernist ideas must navigate a space which values the creative impulses of the individual, but which also presents an opportunity for the continuation and development of a more homogenised output of Scots writing. Writers of the more idealised form attempt to fuse or circumnavigate this dichotomy.

In chapter 5, contestation arrives at a moment in time when discussions around the authority of Scots writing were at a height. With an 'inauthentic' editor having 'faked' the majority of Scots Wikipedia, many Wikipedia editors and administrators turned to top-down and bottom-up guidance when attempting to meet the expectation of a form of Scots writing

appropriate for expository prose. This response contains a tension between authenticity and "legitimacy in anonymity" (Woolard 2016: 300), in which the linguistic rights of heterogeneous speakers can be afforded via the construction of a singular, unmarked 'language like any other'. Editors reading the language guides will find much discourse suggesting the need for such a form, but little commitment on behalf of central authorities to providing concrete advice – or little success in implementing singular spelling norms.

In chapter 6, user-generated social media fora provide internet users with a democratic platform to participate in ideological discussion. In these decentralised, deterritorialised sites of metadiscourse, a more complex picture arises both within and outside of Scots advocacy, showing that many reports of the usage of Scots online are over-simplified. The variety of responses to Scots writing online gives some indication as to why, due to erasure, neatly-packaged narratives of Scots are likely to misrepresent the broader ideological picture.

Although these sites of contestation reveal some overt ideologies, they also indicate which features and ideas are taken for granted, therefore going unchallenged in metadiscourse (cf. Kroskrity 1998); after all, ideologies which most thoroughly occupy consciousness are doxic (Bourdieu 1997). These can be found in what is *not* said in the data. The synthesis of implicit and explicit ideology shows Scots to be caught between ideas of language – between singularity and plurality, and anonymity and authenticity. This thesis looks at responses to these conflicts, including strategies to attempt to resolve them for the benefit of the Scots movement's ultimate goal of validating speaker identity. In what emerges, due to received wisdom about what languages 'are' and what they ought to 'do', a specific tradition and output of Scots writing is often used to achieve the desired qualities of distinctiveness (*Abstand*), language development (*Ausbau*, language standards, and anonymity), and the legitimating symbolism of historicity.

Part 1: A Contemporary Approach to Scots Literacy

2 Literacy and Ideology

In this chapter I consider the medium of written language, of which an orthography of some kind is a necessary element. The focus of this thesis is to emphasise the role of language ideology in written practices in Scots. We do not always make choices in our use of written language because they are the easiest, most logical, or most transparent ones available, but sometimes because they fulfil a nonreferential function relating to our cultural beliefs (with diversity and equality being important factors in this case). This informs the understanding of Scots writers' linguistic choices, but also a current of thought that views writing as a social practice rather than an autonomous cognitive process.

When describing the relationship between writing and society, I consider modern debates and theories surrounding literacy, whose claims are grounded in models of language; theories must state what writing is and how it relates to spoken language. These debates influenced contemporary popular beliefs about language and literacy, and contemporary writers are sensitive to these beliefs; the data from this thesis shows writers moving towards speechlike forms or away from them on this basis, and also that writing rather than speech is targeted for specific ideological and linguistic reasons of legitimacy. In this chapter, I assess what can be taken from those debates and theories for the benefit of socially oriented linguistics, showing how writing came to be an informative yet often overlooked site of sociolinguistic study. Having done so, I will be able to approach the forms and functions of Scots writing with a specific framework suited to my aim: to show how a significant part of the ideological construction of Scots has occurred through different genres of writing, increasingly online, and notably via spelling.

The chapter is structured as follows. The section 2.1 considers the most influential modern debates in the linguistics of writing, beginning with dichotomous models of orality/literacy and their association with technological determinism and the values of modernism, before discussing a conscious reaction to these theories which introduced the idea of literacy as a social practice: the New Literacy Studies (NLS). The section 2.2 considers the 'digital revolution', arguing that the changes to how written language was used as a result of digitalisation lends itself to the NLS stance, but also that these changes did not constitute an overhauling of the received understanding of modern literacy. In light of the above, section 2.3 lays out my approach to written language in three stages. Firstly, I summarise my argument for the most convincing conceptual model for understanding writing in society – that of writing as a social practice, for which Scots provides useful evidence. Secondly, a corresponding analytical framework is provided for approaching the primary linguistic focus of this thesis: nonstandard orthography. Since Standard English is the hegemonic variety in question, and that in which Scots speakers are educated and mostly exploit in their writing, an overview of the relevant linguistic and ideological aspects of Standard English orthography and spelling[4] is included.

2.1 Literacy before the digital age

2.1.1 Writing and speech: differences?

Before proceeding to more contentious differences between writing and speech, it is useful to establish some distinctions that remain true for any general account of literacy. Writing is visual, occurring as letters and/or symbols representing words, while speech is aural, occurring as sound. The inherent difference between these two media means speech is processed in real time, as it is heard, while a written text can (except in rare, unconventional cases) be read at the speed and in the order of the reader's choosing. Reading and writing do not normally occur simultaneously;

[4] A distinction between orthography and spelling will be made in the description of the framework.

the text is usually composed, then sent, then read, which is beneficial for considered and careful language production. However, when speaking we can be interrupted by an interlocutor, talked over, or receive feedback mid-sentence. Feedback is often given with facial expressions, which are also a way of adding nuance of meaning to speech – as are paralinguistic and prosodic features (intonation, stress, pitch, and so forth) that are poorly represented in writing. Writing is a technology that must be learned, rather than an inherent human skill like speaking or signing. Finally, writing is comparatively slower than speaking.

Further differences may be found in specific languages: in English, writing makes distinctions that spoken language does not, for instance by using different spellings to distinguish homophones or punctuation to convey grammatical meaning. Throughout this chapter, interpretations of these more straightforward linguistic differences, other less stable ones, some similarities, as well as the cultural relationship between the two media will be shown to contribute to different understandings of what writing is, what is does, and what we do with it.

Differences, in particular the fact that spoken language predates writing in the development of societies and individuals (it exists without writing, but not vice versa), led many early 20th century linguists to theorise that speech was the 'natural' or 'true' form of language and, therefore, the more appropriate site of study. More recently, however, literacy has been conveyed as primary at the meta-cognitive level: as a partially successful model of speech, literacy comes to be a mental representation of a given language variety, enabling an understanding of it as something with structure (Olson 1994). In English, the act of writing appears to guide us to a meta-awareness of certain categories: specific phonemes, word units, and informational units defined by syntax.

But in earlier influential models of writing, the alleged primacy of speech was used to theorise that the acquisition of literacy and its unique aspects are cognitively beneficial. What Street (1984) later called 'autonomous' models portrayed written language as secondary,

linguistically speaking, but in such a way that presented literacy as an important invention with far-reaching consequences for human civilisation. Working with both general and absolute distinctions, autonomous models within psychology and social science attempted to isolate what unique 'effects' literacy had on the mind. This is the central aim of a classic text: *Orality and Literacy* (1982), in which Walter J. Ong lays out[5] in strong terms a case for why writing, more than any other invention, "heightens consciousness" to the extent that it allows us to "live and understand fully" (Ibid.: 82). This is *because* writing is an alienation from the 'natural'; its properties as an artificial technology detach language from context, apparently leading to an inevitable abstraction in the reading process, thereby allowing readers to engage in the kind of syllogism typical of Western intellectual thought. Ong's is the type of theory that reinforced the binaries implied by the 'Great Divide' by extrapolating to orality and literacy the purported differences between literate Western societies and preliterate ones, equating the latter with structuralist concepts like 'prelogical' or 'primitive'.

To say how writing operates independently of context – what it 'does' to us – requires identification of what makes it different from speech. But some of these differences have become more complicated since literacy expanded in form, function, and frequency in the 20th and 21st century, with writing becoming an increasingly social activity, as opposed to a solitary one. The following is not quite as convincing a description of the two media as it once might have been:

Spoken language	**Written language**
Interpersonal	Objective
A dialogue	A monologue
Ephemeral	Durable
Spontaneous	Planned
Loosely structured	Highly structured
Syntactically simple	Syntactically complex
Concerned with the present	Concerned with the past and future
Informal	Formal
Narrative	Expository
Event-oriented	Argument-oriented

[5] Ong's text is included here as an influential exemplar. However, he is not the originator of the ideas he popularised, relying heavily on the fieldwork of precursors – notably Jack Goody and Ian Watt.

Contextualised	Decontextualised
Concrete	Abstract

Table 2: Speech/writing differences: a dichotomous model (adapted from Baron, 2000: 21)

How much each of these divisions have held up in the modern day varies. Strictly speaking, all the characteristics of 'spoken language' listed here could be said to apply to daily internet 'chat'. Due to its core properties writing is easier to plan (and often is more planned), but the narrative/expository or formal/informal distinctions are not worth much to a rigorous theory of linguistics, and never were since these oppositions are based on prototypes for each mode: casual conversation and expository prose. What the descriptions in Table 2 all share is that they are generalisations rather than absolutes. More importantly for the present purposes, they reflect deeply-held beliefs and indexical links to tenets of modernity, such as truth or knowledge. The differentiation of some of the concepts above is well reflected in – or, as Irvine and Gal (2000) put it, recurs in – the idealised differentiation of minority languages from legitimate standard languages, in part precisely because the latter is the domain of literacy throughout Europe.

The difficulty in providing a scientific distinction between orality and literacy was not the only way in which autonomous models rested on shaky linguistic foundations. A popular assumption was that the ability of alphabets to segment spoken language into individual sounds constituted a more evolved and sophisticated writing system than any other. This misrepresentation of non-alphabetic systems generated little interest in the study of those systems, creating a circular form of ideological exclusion. Popular comparisons between English and Chinese often failed to recognise the substantial phonetic elements of Chinese orthography and the logographic elements of English (instances in which spelling cannot be predicted from pronunciation and instances of the inverse).[6] For similar reasons, some taxonomies of writing

[6] To elaborate, it is not always true that readers who speak English "can produce the correct phonetic forms, given the orthographic representation and the surface structure, by means of the rules that they employ in producing and interpreting speech" (Halle & Chomsky 1991: 49) since this assumes that all written words are known; literate adult English speakers cannot always deduce the pronunciation of some lower-frequency words with irregular spellings (Waters et al., 1984). Conversely, even some well-known words (e.g., *cemetery*, *liaison*, *millennium*, *diarrhoea*) often cause trouble when they need to be written down.

systems have since described all writing systems as phonological (DeFrancis 1989), and logography as a matter of degree (Sproat 2000). It seems to be an oversimplified representation of these systems that led Ong to the claim: “there can be no doubt that [Chinese] characters will be replaced by the roman [sic] alphabet” with the teaching of Mandarin across China, or that, consequently, “[t]he loss to literature will be enormous, but not so enormous as a Chinese typewriter using over 40,000 characters” (Ong 1982: 87).

As for cognitive effects, since there is no evidence that alphabets induce more sophisticated or more abstract cognition than any other system, this kind of assertion is generally met with suspicion of mystification rooted in ethnocentricity. Eurocentric models, argues Sebba (2007: 15), typically assumed a linear ‘evolution’ of a writing system (i.e., pictographic-logographic-syllabic-alphabetic) in which development of human thought could be conflated with increased phonemic representation. This assumption not only draws the same simplistic distinctions as above, but takes these changes to be ‘natural’, rather than emerging from specific social histories.

Poststructural theory later popularised an approach to social imbalances as a problem of power, and critics are keen to charge autonomous theories with bias. Reviewing previous literature on literacy, educational psychologist David Olson (1994) casts doubt on six key beliefs upon which influential autonomous theories relied, including the superiority of alphabets and the inherent benefits of literacy more broadly for social progress, scientific development, and cognitive functioning. Taking this into account, Olson nevertheless employs similar reasoning to Ong to argue that differences between speech and writing require us to ‘read between the lines’ since written texts are unresponsive and the absence of paralinguistic features must be compensated for with cognitive reflexivity. This leads Olson to conclude:

> [T]here seems little doubt that writing and reading played a critical role in producing the shift from thinking about things to thinking about representations of those things, that is,

> thinking about thought. Our modern conception of the world and our modern conception of ourselves are, we may say, by-products of the world on paper.
>
> (Ibid.: 282)

Despite the suggestion, Olson distances himself from previous theories by limiting his account to specific social contexts, based on specific types of texts produced therein; how far this may be extended to which literate cultures remains an open area of debate.

Among lay people, popular Western belief considers writing to be the superior form of language. When these favourable beliefs about writing are held as universals, they suggest the same kind of Western superiority over preliterate societies that critical perspectives on social theory, history, pedagogy, and anthropology sought to expose. Yet, the social prestige of literacy persists and is based, it seems, on the influence of autonomous theories; the link between the two is not generally a conscious one, but, rather, a doxic indexical link between prestige and literacy which, bypassing linguistic theory, does not require qualification. The ideological emphasis on literacy can be said to have neglected spoken language to the extent that its authority is diminished; *I'll take your word for it* is a risk, but *I'll need that in writing* is insurance.

This was not always the case, and, again, these values are socially contingent. Anglo-Saxon oaths were integral to local societies and their functioning, existing in written documents only as a record of the binding act of swearing. The transcripts of Anglo-Saxon wills were less important than the witnesses to the oral event, whose trustworthiness could be verified through interrogation (Cameron & Panović, 2014: 16). So, whereas the anonymity of writing was once a reason for mistrust, it now symbolises the autonomy associated with literacy as an instrument of cognitive, cultural, and scientific development, and a general indicator of 'modern' values such as universality, rationality, and social progress (albeit one which has never been distributed evenly within and across nations). Literacy is an essential skill which allows us to verify events and practices with all manner of documents necessary for modern life: written contracts, job applications, invites, marriage certificates, visas and passports, exams, and so forth.

Orality is differentiated from these legitimating values. Thus, reading and writing are central to minority-language education and a vehicle for achieving standardisation. Literacy also allows minority cultures to build a coherent history: "[i]n a world where the written word is paramount", writes Millar (2005: 40), languages that possess long written histories "are inevitably considered more important than those with only a patchy written history, or none at all, even if their oral testimony is considerable". For minority/minoritised codes such as Scots, Occitan, or Breton, a record of written history and the advocacy of etymological spellings have been particularly important in their legitimation in literature (Calin 2000). The more conservative ideologies surrounding these varieties have, via fractal recursivity, imagined the oral/literate distinction as one of legitimacy as a 'language'.

If the primacy we attribute to literacy is ideological in nature, it does not follow that literacy should be ignored in sociolinguistic research. For Michael Stubbs (1980), finding out exactly how literacy has become monolithic was an early motive for taking writing as an object of social investigation. Even if the purported universal importance of literacy is heavily influenced by Western mythology,[7] these "perceptions, attitudes and prejudices" are "crucial" to the study of language and society, "however false they may be on objective grounds" (Ibid.: 30). Noting how writing and speech fulfil different societal functions, and how these functions change over time, Stubbs suggests a basic model of literacy in society that takes *language* as the abstract, primary structure, and writing and speech as two media in which language is realised, in different ways. Of course, this is a scientifically incomplete model that consciously omits the relationship between sound and spelling, among other linkages between writing and speech, which are later reconciled by Stubbs. For instance, some written language attempts to fulfil the functions of paralanguage via aspects of graphology, 'reporting verbs' (e.g., *promise*, *urge*, *imply*), multimodality, and genre.

[7] A definition by Olson (1994: 2) of *mythology* as an ideological strategy is particularly insightful here: "a selective way of viewing the facts that not only justifies the advantages of the literate but also assigns the failings of the society, indeed of the world, to the illiterate."

Nevertheless, the purpose of the model is to convey the two media as separate cultural phenomena with distinct roles in society, while de-emphasising the debate on primacy.

2.1.2 The New Literacy Studies

Olson's and Stubbs's presentation of literacy as contingent was a central premise to major criticisms of autonomous models. By most accounts, Scribner & Cole's (1981, 2014) testing of literacy 'effects' was a turning point in this respect. Their fieldwork on Vai literacy, in which an indigenous syllabary used by the Vai of Liberia for letter-writing is acquired outside the school context, provided evidence that schooling rather than literacy itself teaches abstract reasoning. Although there were tasks in which some of those literate in Vai (but not schooled) outperformed those that had not been educated in school or in the Vai script, these were specific to local practices: readers could more easily comprehend speech produced syllable-by-syllable, but were no better at distinguishing word units, since these are not segmented in the script.

Literacy and its effects became more difficult to discuss in universal terms. Since the 'effects' of literacy could not be found, reimagining literacy as something people *do* that allows them to take part in societies, rather than as a mental process, was seen to be a more valid course of investigation into literacy's role in the world. On this basis, what has come to be known as NLS emerged in the 1980s from ethnographic work in a range of scholarly fields including history, cultural psychology, education, and anthropology, as well as linguistics.

Critical accounts were brought together in a now classic NLS text by Brian Street: *Literacy in Theory and Practice* (1984), which put forward a theoretical contrast between universal and context-specific understandings of literacy and its effects. Street's book argued for the contingency of literacy in order to question scholars' claims of "objectivity, neutrality and greater logic for what they have to say", and their appeals "to the 'technical' qualities of literacy, in which they are proficient, to legitimise assertions that might otherwise appear self-interested or

ethnocentric" (Ibid.: x). Street's 'ideological model' of literacy frames as socially constructed any claim that literacy universally affects cognitive processes and benefits societal development, and, instead, situates reading and writing in a process of socialisation that occurs through educational and other institutions. The 'universal' benefits of learning to read and write are challenged by asking who reaps them. Street argues that, institutionally, the social advantages of literacy are unequally distributed, even non-existent for some, reinforcing a 'myth' that falsely equates illiteracy with deprivation, while masking more urgent barriers to social mobility in the process. Gee describes this as a general pattern, stating that in many societies:

> literacy served as a socializing tool for the poor, was seen as a possible threat if misused by the poor (for an analysis of their oppression and to make demands for power), and served as a technology for the continued selection of members of one class for the best positions in the society.
>
> (Gee 2015: 44)

By conceiving of literacy as inherently embedded in ideological power struggles, NLS perspectives were keen to emphasise local acts of resistance to dominant forms of literacy, particularly in subversive practices like graffiti.

NLS case studies made inherent distinctions between oral and literate cultures difficult to defend. They demonstrated that, over the course of history and across different communities, written and spoken language are related in different ways. Compare, for instance, the impenetrable legalese of contemporary wills with the language of Anglo-Saxon texts mentioned earlier, which, as highly personal and context-dependent documents, were linguistically 'speech-like'. We can go further than this to say that in any given time and place the writing/speech relationship is not so clear. We do not need far-fetched examples to see that the properties of written and spoken language change according to the purpose of their production, and this is not simply due to a recent cultural change; of the descriptors listed earlier in Table 2, many are reversed in literary dialogue or a university lecture. Not all reading and writing is of the abstract, objective, impersonal kind that autonomous models often imagined. In a detailed study of

vernacular literacy practices in Lancaster (U.K.), actors are shown to use literacy quite ordinarily: for organising daily life, private leisure, socialising, and much more (Barton & Hamilton 1998). At the level of interpretation, we can also say that different texts vary (being read for religious, educational, or legal ends, or for entertainment), as does a single text by different readers – holy texts like the Quran are notable for the range of meanings extracted from them, for their legitimating power, and their perception as a cultural threat. The intention of a text far from determines how it is used, and this is rather clear in pupils' defacing of school textbooks. All this leads us to question if there is any worthwhile way of dividing the functions of writing and speech from which we can draw significant conclusions about culture, and, hence, NLS tends to take a 'non-dichotomous' approach.

In some ways, the non-dichotomous approach has allowed for written language to enter the sociolinguistic tradition. Lillis (2013: chapter 1) has argued that four key principles of sociolinguistics – the focus on language in use, 'everyday language', variation, and 'the social' – have, to the field's detriment, excluded writing through its own binary models of writing/speech and primary/secondary, against which the categories natural/unnatural, standard/everyday, formal/informal have sometimes been set. To dissolve linguistic boundaries where appropriate is, therefore, to dissolve evaluative ones, providing more reason to apply these same four principles to writing.

On these bases – a non-dichotomous model of speech and writing, the contextualisation of literacy, and a focus on ideology – a typical NLS approach does not convey literacy as a single *thing* but speaks of the *literacies* of different social contexts. The object of study in NLS is not *literacy* as an entity, but many *literacy practices* (Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanič 2000), with a central focus on the social actors engaged in those practices. The term *literacy event* – "any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants' interactions and their interpretative processes" (Heath 1983: 93) – is used to denote a specific instance of using literacy

(booking tickets, leaving a note, tweeting, etc.). In participating in (or *doing*) these events, people draw on broader cultural conventions – their more general literacy practices – to decide how to do them. Working within this framework, an NLS inventory of divergent practices and events provided evidence against a singular, causal understanding of literacy and further evidence for it as a means of organising of social life.

Since the emergence of NLS, two developments of note have extended the idea of multiple literacies. Firstly, the model has been expanded to include digital media in the understanding of 'technologies', which has allowed new literacy events and practices to be incorporated into the model (see section 2.2). Secondly, the NLS approach, originally a monolingual one, has benefited from a growing body of work (cf. case studies in Martin-Jones & Jones [2000]) which investigates how literacy is drawn upon by multilingual language users. Literacy is given the complexity of *multi*-lingualism: in conceptualising literacy we are discouraged from conflating a given culture with a single practice or means of acquisition, and we are asked to consider language users' full linguistic and cultural repertoire. There are also benefits for scholars of multilingualism in paying attention to writing as well as speech: communities can be understood as being held together by literacy practices (rather than by physical face-to-face communication). The fusing of the two scholarly approaches provides useful findings, showing that conflicts arising from asymmetrical power relations in multilingual settings can be played out through literacy, particularly in schools and workplaces. Importantly for this thesis, Sebba's (2000) study of "switching" between English and the unstandardised orthography of British Creole describes how authors have developed grassroots conventions for the interplay of the two codes according to the purpose of their writing.

It has been suggested that the new "orthodoxy" which treats literacy as a social practice has exaggerated the power of local contexts (Brandt & Clinton 2002). Key NLS texts have acknowledged the influence of powerful institutions on literacy, but they have, nevertheless,

perhaps romanticised the local without sufficiently explaining how it operates in the larger social structure. To understand literacy in society, critics argue, it is insufficient to build an inventory of local literacy events and practices without identifying patterns in how these practices interact with global contexts. *Global* here refers to outside influences (termed *literacy sponsors*) on a local literacy event or practice: "the institutions, policies, and people that make the acquisition and practice of literacy possible: the government, corporate scholarship foundations, religious groups, and so on" (Reder & Davila 2005: 174), which can still act in consequential ways on a given local context.

NLS researchers relying on a distinction of power – which might be called one of *vernacular* and *dominant* practices – would do well to consider if and how the latter acts on the former. "When we use literacy, we also get used. Things typically mediate this relationship" (Brandt & Clinton 2002: 350). "Things" can refer to distant/dominant/global contexts or literacy sponsors, but also to the use of literacy technologies which, particularly in the post-internet world, are effective mediators that can 'travel' and integrate themselves into social relations across the world. In this way, what is suggested by returning a *thing*-status to literacy is that there may be a "common core" to the way literacy acts on a range of local contexts. This is not to conceptualise literacy or its technologies as themselves deterministic and singular, but is useful for understanding why they may appear so under the influence of the powerful.

For instance, Collins & Blot (2003) also argue that problematising power structures (in their case, as imagined by the likes of Derrida, Bourdieu, or Foucault) can help to explain macro patterns, such as the tendency to equate correct spelling with education, intelligence, or truth. This is a necessary consideration for minority languages of liminal status which, as in some resistant ideologies of Corsican (Jaffe 1999), adopt the dominant metalinguistic discourse in order to attain legitimacy via grammars, dictionaries, and spelling contests. Since these codes have been delegitimised because they are not unequivocally 'languages', then it is by setting out to 'prove'

languageness that, within the modernist framework, unity, singularity, and legitimacy can be attained for the culture (with which language is assumed to be congruent).

These criticisms have been framed as something of a challenge to NLS, but it can more accurately be described as a difference of emphasis among scholars who adhere to the same general principles. In the common view of those who have contributed to this revision of NLS (Brandt & Clinton 2002; Collins & Blot 2003; Lillis 2013: chapter 5; Reder & Davila 2005; Street 2003a; 2003b), literacy remains ideologically embedded, but it is necessary to take a broader view of the social world in which it is *situated* (although there are different perspectives on how to problematise this, and on the extent to which dominant practices act on local ones). In theory, carefully balanced study of this kind can reconcile the divides between agency and social structure, micro and macro, and local and global by discussing how they are connected via powerful *things* (e.g., schooling, dictionaries, or social media platforms) across multiple contexts.

In this doctoral thesis, in which social actors set out to subvert dominant power in a way that is often informed by the hegemonic model of modernist literacy, this idea of situatedness is necessary for an accurate description of ideological literacy practices. In the following sections, I intend to show that, despite the changes brought to literacy by the digital revolution, the standard-language model which holds traditional literacy in high prestige persists alongside, and sometimes within, new practices. Far from a 'breakdown' in traditional literacy, as many have feared would come, many writers continue to reify and exploit the prestige of literacy in both monolingual and multilingual situations.

2.2 Onto the screen: digital literacies

Since the late 1990s, advances in digital communication technology have led to a significant expansion in the functions of writing. As Androutsopoulos (2016: 288) puts it, "more people

write, people write more, and unregimented writing goes public". The latest major technological development in writing – like pencils and pens, printing presses, and typewriters before it – came to subsume types of communication previously under the domain of a less efficient technology, as well as bringing about new ways of communicating and new types of text. It is difficult to think of an aspect of life that is not mediated by digital texts. For many people: news about friends, family, and the world is primarily received via apps; thoughts and feelings are shared via tweets or multimodal social media posts; and even the intimate practices of dating and sex are commonly mediated by internet chat. Literacy is more *everyday* than ever before, occurring parallel to a dramatic increase in the amount of reading and the number of readers, and an even greater increase in writing.

What can the form of this writing tell us about literacy and its relationship with speech? On the internet there is a large range of genres in which writers are doing a large range of things and any generalisations about language must apply to a variety of popular online situations and spaces. That said, there is general agreement that a 'speechlike' style of writing has become popular in some internet genres. What was initially conveyed as the language of 'e-mail' – seen as a radical new linguistic arena at the turn of the millennium – consisted of casual written styles that more closely mirrored spoken language. Today, we are more likely to think of written speech as epitomised by synchronous 'chat': the language of WhatsApp, WeChat, Facebook Messenger, and so on.

The ways in which the most 'speechlike' internet genres of computer-mediated communication (CMC) have crossed over from the realms of 'traditional writing' (as it was conceived post-Enlightenment) to that of everyday spoken English have been observed in influential books on the subject (D. Baron 2009; N. Baron 2000; Crystal 2006; McCulloch 2019). They include:

- Writing is less edited and much quicker to produce and publish

- Writing is less expository, and has rapidly expanded to fulfil more emotional/social/close/informal functions
- Writing is not always treated as durable. Text is easily 'lost' or forgotten about in chat threads and web pages, or treated as temporary.
- The roles of reader/writer more closely mirror those of speaker/listener
- Punctuation is more rhetorical (i.e., used more for recording pauses, dividing utterances, or conveying tone of voice) and less grammatical (i.e., used less for dividing sentences logically and for clarifying meaning)
- Written sentences are shorter
- Lexical items are shorter, and are often the same as those used in speech
- Speech-like syntax is used more (e.g., nonstandard constructions or the omission of modals, subjects, and articles)
- New and richer ways of conveying typographical tone of voice have emerged

Similar patterns have been observed in other languages, attributable to a general tendency towards faster and more efficient communication, as well as creative language play when socialising (Danet & Herring 2007: 12). Relatively unregulated internet spaces have become an outlet for 'writing as you speak' in varieties such as African American (Vernacular) English (AA[V]E) (Ilbury 2020; Jones 2015; 2016) or dialects of Arabic such as Egyptian, which were limited to more commercial or literary texts before the advent of Web 2.0 (the popularisation of websites that emphasise user-generated content). In these cases, an ideology of authenticity – the desire to inscribe the 'voice' of a social group – has replaced the impulse to conform to supraregional standards, which are poorer representations of local speech.

This led some commentators to recycle dichotomous models, theorising on the nature of CMC with reverse-engineered arguments which suggest that the loss of writing threatens the loss of some cognitive benefit. "As our notions of writing begin merging with informal speech, we find

ourselves getting into trouble" (N. Baron 2000: 268). "Trouble" seems to suggest the loss of meta-awareness, of the kind of reflexivity described by Olson,[8] resulting from the loss of traditional approaches to reading and writing. But to describe a loss of tradition relies on a singular view of literacy. In light of NLS, it is more accurate to portray literacy as having expanded in function and possessing a more complex relationship with speech and tradition as a result of digitalisation (cf. D. Baron's [2009] technological account), showing once more the multiplicity and contextual contingency that makes causal observations difficult. CMC has come to fulfil functions both old and new, formal and informal, and only some of them resemble an oral culture. I consider some examples below.

There are ways in which the traditional authority and authorship of a text are changed by collective, user-based projects such as Wikipedia. In some settings, notions of an author's property, identity, or singularity, for instance, are displaced, as are traditional sites of knowledge such as textbooks and teachers (Mills 2010). But these shifts exist alongside those traditional sites and are sometimes informed by them; Wikipedians focussed on providing accurate information generally write in the prestige standard and enforce a rigorous referencing system that favours traditionally authoritative sources. It is, after all, an encyclopaedia; its 'proper' use in the traditional sense is highly valued in the creation of a language for varieties of marginal status, as are digital dictionaries.

At the level of linguistics, Naomi Baron warns that unedited writing is an example of how "[s]peech that's written down [...] can produce texts that are verbose, sloppy, and even irresponsible" (2000: 268), and later diagnosed an attitude of "linguistic whateverism" (Baron 2008) to a purported decline of communicative nuance in writing. The increased speed of production and revision, one of the defining characteristics and great appeals of CMC even in the early, troublesome days of computer technology, makes the writing and editing processes much

[8] Baron (2000) discusses Ong, Olson, some of the lesser-cited data from Scribner & Cole's work in Liberia, as well as post-NLS cognitivist studies on literacy to suggest the possibility of a correlation between literacy and cognitive skills.

easier than under any previous technology. Yet features of 'internet language' in English serve specific, nuanced functions and some – particularly lowercasing, abbreviation, and acronyms – can require more effort (McCulloch 2019). Japanese internet users are reported to pay close attention to formality as a means of negotiating digitally mediated hierarchical power (Matsuda 2002).

Furthermore, some multilingual practices suggest that ideological factors call on writers to take more care than they otherwise would. Deumert & Lexander (2013) reported on various multilingual societies across Africa in which adhering to the prestigious orthographic norms of non-European languages in private SMS messages could take "twice as long" when writers wanted to "show off" their cultivation of those languages. This, say the researchers, is evidence of a broader "heightened attention to all aspects of written language" (Androutsopoulos 2012: 380) in CMC. One might go further and suggest that the notions of authenticity associated with the norms of non-European languages (instead of, say, French or English orthographic conventions) are achieved via a certain will and effort, rather than that which feels most 'natural' to the author; in this sense, authentic minority-language writing can be viewed as a project (Woolard 2016), rather than something 'essential'. In Heyd & Mair's (2014) study of Nigerian Pidgin, the features of an authentic literacy are catalogued and learned online – indeed, literacy itself emerges as a medium in which authenticity can be cultivated when writers doubt the authenticity of their own speech.

Instances of careful editing are also common in Scots CMC: one X[9] user said: "it is still a fact that writing is easier for me in English" but "if I really want to impress, I drop as many of the Scots forms as possible" (Pottinger 2020: 35). Unlike most minority-language writing, these Scots forms are not typically found in common Scots speech, and adhere to subtle notions of

[9] Formerly Twitter. The Scots data in this thesis was collected before the renaming of Twitter as X, and occasionally the social media platform will be referred to as 'Twitter'. Despite the renaming, the term persists in broader usage and in specific concepts such as 'Scottish Twitter' and 'tweet', which I continue to use here.

correctness that require effort to learn and produce. Knowledge of traditional Scots norms is also shared in metalinguistic debates and advice, which abound on fora unique to the internet, such as Facebook, X, and Scots Wikipedia. This form of verbal hygiene is rooted in notions of literacy's prestige, which are rooted in modernist theories of writing. Within a monolingual English culture, too, this can be observed. There are still everyday texts – cover letters, news articles, and emails to authoritative recipients – where painstaking digital editing of punctuation, spelling, and grammar is required, along with an impersonal tone. And perhaps we are more cautious than our fears suggest even when it comes to new digital genres: research on the metalinguistic discourse of teenagers has shown correctness to be an attractive quality on online dating sites (Bogetić 2016).

2.2.1 NLS and Web 2.0

While CMC cannot be said to be either a new language or a "fourth medium" (Crystal 2006: 51) of language, the possibilities of written language and of textual dissemination have been expanded and enriched. Consequently, the "digital turn" (Mills 2010) in NLS has had many new literacy practices to observe. This includes novel encounters between any two people or languages that exist online. Literacy continues to be treated in sociolinguistics as a situated practice, with local literacies both affecting and being affected by global forces, and now occurring in uniquely digital contexts, communities, and genres. These approaches continue to oppose technological determinism: "[t]here is no simple causality and rather than talk of 'effects' of technologies [literacy studies] discusses the affordances which technologies offer for action" (Barton & Lee 2013: 13).

A global outlook in NLS revisits the issue of transcontextuality: where is the *locus* of local contexts when it comes to deterritorialised communication? While each author has a physical identity (and sites such as Facebook tend to reflect 'real-world' relationships), the networks

created by, say, a popular tweet post can multiply in unknown ways through time and space. Transcontextuality can therefore refer to literacy's situatedness in both vernacular and dominant power, but also to the so-called 'globalised' contemporary writer who manages both global and local interactions. Taking 'globalisation' for granted as a homogenising centripetal force is now deemed insufficient; Coupland (2003b) and Blommaert (2010) have emphasised the complexity of globalised culture specifically in relation to sociolinguistics. A renewed emphasis in NLS on the local forces of Web 2.0 has occurred due to a technology that epitomises global trends: the faster flow of people, things, and language across borders. Studies of local practices generate "new knowledge about recent global shifts toward user-generated, collaborative, democratic, and interactive forms of online participation" (Mills 2010: 258). People seem to take part in the global while preserving their existing local identities, and minority-language writers are using global resources to develop literacies that 'belong' to the local language community, exhibiting local forms to speakers far beyond that group in the process. Like many other minority languages, Scots utilises the internet while flowing outward via its affordances.

For a while, these flows made the internet synonymous with English and many wondered whether English would come to dominate digital spaces. Taking part in the global world still tends to mean speaking English (or another major language) and this homogenising force is still significant. For instance, it is difficult to fund the development of high-quality software in languages that are not widely spoken. Yet "there is evidence that the web and its users are increasingly multilingual" (Barton & Lee 2013: 35). Crystal describes the internet as an "ideal medium for minority languages" (2006: 234), offering "a home to all languages" (Ibid.: 229). In a similar way to Martin-Jones & Jones's (2000) suggestions for analogue literacy, discussed earlier, Danet & Herring's *The Multilingual Internet* (2007) urges linguists to balance monolingual CMC research (of English in particular) with multilingual case studies. These themes – globalisation and multilingualism online – are discussed in more detail in chapter 6.

2.3 An ideological approach to orthography

To summarise we may say that, notwithstanding some of the core differences of spoken and written language, the arguments in favour of viewing literacy as socially contingent far outweigh the evidence supporting dichotomous or autonomous models of literacy. The complexity of CMC and of multilingual literacies – the ways in which they fulfil functions both traditional and innovative and in which, according to dichotomous models, they move across the speech/writing continuum – is revealed by and lends itself to the social practice model, which looks at what people *do* with language. At each turn of the debate literacy is shown to play a highly ideological role in society.

Yet, the dominant western ideology of literacy – the 'traditional' beliefs about it, emerging from modernist autonomous theories – does persist. It is a normalised ideology which has filtered into public and private life; schools educate in linguistic standards and literacy exercises such as composition or silent reading, while publishers regulate authorship and access, as well as linguistic standards. In the U.K., the near uniformity of spelling in most genres of writing (as well as supra-regional lexis and syntax) retains, in ideological terms, hegemonic anonymity. To a large degree the correctness of spelling is doxic: equated not just with intelligence, but with care, integrity, moral worth, and truth (this is not a cross-linguistic universal, but more common in languages where correct spelling is more difficult to learn and to produce consistently). For example, in a campaign to combat the spread of misinformation online, the UK government advertised a fact-checking infomercial on TV, radio, and social media in 2022 in which the British public were urged to "[l]ook out for bad grammar and spelling. Typos and other errors are clues

that information could be false. Official guidance will always have been carefully checked."[10] This only lends further cultural meaning to local practices that set out to defy the dominant norms of language, genre, and regulation, as the case studies of this thesis will show.

In the introduction to this thesis, I discussed why language ideology is a useful lens for studying minority languages: they are not used for their communicative powers, but to express and affirm identity, build a community, subvert dominant culture, emphasise heritage and tradition, support the growth of the language, or simply as a hobby. In the following chapter, I will explain why ideologies of Scots must be understood within the context of writing: the functions mentioned above have not always found an outlet in Scots speech, but are better suited to the medium of writing, whose specific features have been shaped by ideological practices. In this chapter, the discussion has led me to conclude that language ideology is also crucial for the sociolinguistic study of literacy and vice versa: a study of ideology asks us to consider the ways in which written symbols represent not only letters and words, but worldviews – including the popular view of literacy as something necessary to a language, and which allows its users to function fully in the modern world.

When literacy is approached as a situated practice, two important possibilities emerge. At the level of theory, the interplay between social power and individual agency can be explored through the large amount of writing occurring today. At the level of empirical research, a rich opportunity presents itself to discover how people are using language to negotiate relationships and identities. In both senses, NLS has so far been a fruitful approach. In what follows, I lay out a framework for applying the social practice model to the primary linguistic focus of this thesis: orthography.

As sets of conventions that themselves emerged from social practices, orthographies are also tied up in social structures; society shapes orthography and vice versa. It is more than the

[10] https://sharechecklist.gov.uk/
Accessed 11.04.2022

mere mechanics of writing – more than simply a means to social practice. One illustration of this is the relationship between societies and their writing systems as a whole. The Azeri language in Azerbaijan underwent no fewer than three script changes in the 20th century, each one rooted in assertions of national identity:

> After the Soviet Union incorporated Azerbaijan as a republic in 1920, the Soviets initiated a script shift from Arabic to Latin to divide the nation from Iran and its Muslim roots. A decade later, the Soviets forced another shift from the Latin to the Cyrillic script to alienate Azerbaijan and the Turkic republics from Turkey and from each other. Today, after independence in 1991, the pendulum has swung back in favor of the Latin script.
>
> Hatcher (2008: 106)

In the immediate post-Soviet era there was a power struggle between Iran, Russia, and Turkey – and the Arabic, Cyrillic, and adapted Latin scripts, respectively. The decision to retain the Latin script was largely motivated by a desire to break free from Soviet colonialism and forge a closer political relationship with the Turkish Republic. Turkish itself had undergone radical reform, shedding the Perso-Arabic script of Ottoman times in favour of a highly transparent phonemic system that used an adapted Latin alphabet. Despite some practical benefits, the overhauling of script and of language more generally was highly ideological; a successful campaign of national literacy unified a fragmented, fallen empire with the promise of a modern, thriving state represented by the aesthetically secular Latin alphabet, and the replacement of specific Arabic and Persian (but not French) loanwords with their 'purer', 'Turkish' equivalents. Turkish became the so-called 'language of the people'[11] by essentialising, as dominant standard languages do, a language and its users in drawing simplified linguistic and social boundaries (*iconisation* and *erasure*, as discussed in the introduction to the thesis) to promote Western notions of correctness.

But if radical script changes are ideological, so are some inert orthographies where prevailing social practices and identity investments stifle attempts to change a writing system for something manifestly more efficient or learnable. That the newfound Turkish republic managed

[11] Cf. Lewis (1999) on this issue and on whether lexical reform "impoverished" the Turkish language.

to impose such a change is a rare success; a long series of much more modest attempts at reforming English spelling have failed, even though the English system delays the development of decoding skills compared to more transparent systems like Welsh (Hanley 2010). It is the importance of social practices and investments that Ong did not presage regarding Chinese (cf. p.35), a yet more complicated system with greater educational and administrative difficulties. These examples illustrate how relationships and values relate to orthography, as does awareness of literacy and orthography. Awareness is an important factor in orthographic variation since, where there is a written standard, "variation is nearly always too obvious, too much the result of a *conscious* choice, to be regarded as below the level of awareness" (Sebba 2012: 4).

The field of sociolinguistics is centred on linguistic variation – the choices of language users – from which it attempts to extract social meaning, and this meaning seems to be particularly salient in nonstandard orthography. Despite the rapid expansion of writing in the 20th and 21st centuries, variation in spelling has been neglected until relatively recently, as it has typically been associated with the suppression of variation (standardisation). Fortunately, a canon of (historical) sociolinguistics of spelling has now developed which takes account of variation, standardisation, ideology, and identity (Jaffe et al. 2012; Lillis 2013; Sebba 2007; Villa & Vosters 2015). Rutkowska and Rössler (2012) make a particularly strong case for the independent sociolinguistic history of spelling and its relationship to extralinguistic factors. Within Scots, writing in the Middle period has received attention (Kopaczyk 2013), a description of spelling choices has been provided (Bann & Corbett 2015), and historical overviews of failed standardisation have been written (e.g., Dossena 2003). Nevertheless, this study fills a significant lacuna by offering an investigation of the drivers of orthographic normativity in Scots, the related history of activism and standardisation beyond lexicography, and a contextualisation of these themes within identity; I return to these matters in chapter 3.

The fact that writers choose to deviate from a standard in the first place points us towards an ideological model of orthography when error, slips, or some technological factor can be ruled out. On this basis, Mark Sebba (2007) has provided a framework for revealing the social meanings of nonstandard orthographic variation within an NLS model, from which the theoretical and analytical concepts and tools below are drawn.

In the first instance, we must identify variants that are socially meaningful. In the present case of Scots, this must be understood within the context of minority varieties which have been dialectalised – normalised as a dialect of a hegemonic standard. In English, there is perhaps not much to be said of the option to spell the past participle of *learn* as *learned* or *learnt*, since its variability is permissible, or *licensed*. Some licensed variation, such as *whisk(e)y*, may have an ideological element, but, for the most part, spellings which 'break the rules' with *unlicensed variation* are a much more expressive resource. For a writer to be understood, in the absence of a distinct set of complete sound-spelling conventions, this must still be done in a linguistically recognisable way (we cannot, as George Bernard Shaw once famously and perhaps ironically suggested, spell *fish* as *ghoti*, because it would be read as something like /goʊtaɪ/).[12]

We can identify which Scots spellings are cognates with Standard English ones – *aboot* [about], *haund* [hand], *yer* [your], *teachin* [teaching], and so on – because they sufficiently resemble the phonetic-graphemic conventions of English: the system in which Scots speakers are educated. This point invites an obvious counterargument: that these spellings may be categorised

[12] It is on this point that there is so much mystification of English orthography. English is not 'nonsensical' or "catastrophic" (Carney 1998), as it is sometimes portrayed to be. Scragg (1974) has suggested that the non-phonological elements of a morphophonemic orthography are advantageous, and his contemporaries were beginning to take the view "that traditional orthography is the optimal writing system for English" (Ibid.: 116), useful for a variety of dialects across space and time. Halle & Chomsky (1991) make a similar claim based on some examples of the phonological accuracy of English orthography, such as the word-final <e> in VCV endings, as well as cases where it is deemed unnecessary to indicate predictable phonetic variables like word stress, or past tense and plural endings, since Standard English is designed for those who already speak English. These facts, along with speakers' reluctance to overhaul English orthography having made the effort to learn it, are overlooked by reformers. However, linguists themselves must not overlook research showing English orthography to be more difficult to learn than other European languages (Hanley 2010) and more difficult still for speakers of dialects which have different vowel systems to the spoken standard (Brown et al., 2015).

as belonging to a separate language to the hegemonic standard, and therefore exist in reference only to themselves. Nevertheless, I am not suggesting here that 'standard' and 'nonstandard' spellings belong to the same 'language': an ideological analysis must operate beyond such nomenclature. Whether or not language varieties such as Corsican, Bavarian, Egyptian, and Scots are considered discrete entities, the construction of their differentiation points to their relationship with a dominant standard of the same or very similar orthography.

In fact, a primary force which maintains the liminal status of Scots is the inescapable influence of British English and the pervasiveness of the English orthography and spelling in which speakers are educated. The mechanics and social history of English strongly influence modern Scots writers; English has been the language of their literacy 'sponsorship' and, as such, it is worth establishing some key points about this system and the beliefs that surround it. English has a particularly 'deep' orthography (Katz & Frost 1992), meaning that there is a many-to-many, rather than one-to-one relationship between graphemes and phonemes. The English system is complex, but it is mostly organised, well-understood, and phonemic (cf. footnote 12). It incorporates sound-spelling conventions from two forms of French (11th century Norman and 14th century Central), Norse, Anglo-Saxon, Greek, Latin, as well as other languages like Dutch in minor cases. This has given English orthography its 'depth', in which digraphs like <ea> can represent up to five sounds, each one of which can also be represented by alternative conventions. There are only a few unique cases that fall outside the system and, once the position of graphemes and digraphs are considered, they mostly fulfil a phonetic function. They can also fulfil a morphemic one, for instance as a plural marker (<s> for /s/, /z/, or /ɪz/) or past tense marker (<ed> for /d/, /t/, or /ɪd/).

This makes scope for creative nonstandard writing larger than in many other alphabets, syllabaries, or consonantal systems, and more innovations are possible. This 'depth' also points to a distinction between orthography and spelling. *Orthography* can be described as the conventions

for constructing words in a language (e.g., doubling vowel graphemes or adding a word-final *-e* to indicate long vowel sounds), while *spelling* is how they are used in reality (*soon* and *serene* are 'correct', whereas *sune* and *sereen* are not, even though all four spellings adhere to Standard English orthography). It is English *spelling* that Scots writers often deviate from, but English *orthography*, or something similar to it, that they draw from (and are seen to be). Therefore, the possibilities for creating culturally meaningful written forms in Scots are comparatively many.

Spellings which deviate from the expected standard can be categorised in many ways. Here I have only included those of immediate relevance to this thesis,[13] for which the following typology is provided:

- *Homophone spellings*: "using sound-symbol correspondences which are conventional for the language, but are the 'wrong' ones for a particular word" (Sebba 2007: 36). More common examples in English include *wuz* [was] or *lite* [light], and *mune* [moon] in Scots. Included here are spellings for purely visual effect.
- *Pronunciation spellings* for the representation of nonstandard pronunciations using sound-symbol correspondences in a nonstandard way. Representing colloquial, local, or regional speech, Androutsopoulos (2000: 521) details two relevant concepts. Firstly, *colloquial spellings* are "the representation of reduction phenomena typical of colloquial speech, including so-called weak forms"), such as *mon* [come on], *jiwanni* [do you want to] or *-in* (*-ing*) endings in Scots. Secondly, *regiolectal spellings* represent features typical of a regional variety, as in the Doric replacement of <wh> with <f> to represent /f/, rather than /w/ or /ʍ/ in words like *fit* [what].
- *Archaic* or *pseudo-archaic spellings:* what might seem like a peripheral issue in English – the largely commercial exploitation of pre-standardisation spellings like *Ye Olde Shoppe*

[13] For instance, there are also *prosodic spellings* (e.g., *hiiiiii* or *YES*) and the representation of letter sequences via non-alphabetic symbols (e.g., *m8* [mate] or *no1* [no one]) or single letters (e.g. *where r u* [where are you]). Cutler (2016) reports on the reinforcement of social images like bravery through prosodic orthography online which parodies specific features of Scottish accents.

[The Old Shop] – is central to the present case. While in English the main purpose of such spellings is to provide, as Sebba (2007: 39) puts it, "antiquarian value", this does not aptly describe the important role of older spellings in the construction of the Scots language. In this case it is more useful to extend to Scots Sebba's (Ibid.) comment on prestigious archaic spellings in surnames in England: that "'a link with history' provides a rationale for the fact". In Scots, archaic spellings, which can fall within or outside the contemporary sound-spelling conventions of Standard English, are justified by this link.

- *Language-external conventions*: this is related to what has been called *language-external symbolism* – the symbolic exploitation of spelling conventions from other languages and writing systems. This can evoke the associations that come with these systems, such as the sense of ceremony and gravitas that Roman numerals lend to highly anticipated sports events. Again, some elaboration is required here. When diacritics occasionally appear in written Scots, they tend to fulfil an intended phonetic function, rather than represent the cultural associations of another orthographic system. However, in an area of language in which ideology is so salient, language-external conventions are unlikely to be received neutrally, and they are also exploited to distance Scots from Standard English and/or to develop an independent Scots standard. The frequent use of <ö> in Insular Scots provides both a phonemic function and a historical link to Norse.

How are these conventions used? Minority-language speakers often intend for their 'voices' to be heard in writing, and pronunciation spellings provide a means of achieving authenticity. However, since authenticity is differentiated from the desirable elements of a standard language – universality, a tradition of literacy, and overall legitimacy – the 'voice' and other forms of orthographic innovation can be seen as anathema to the minority-language project; hence, the 'paradox of diversity' discussed in the introduction to this thesis is played out in orthography. Writers also recognise that their writing must be readable, which, for varieties

related to the standard, means approximating that standard to a sufficient degree while leaving room for creativity, archaism, and distinctiveness.

In their deviations, Scots writers draw on the depth of English orthography for a comparatively large number of variants of ambiguous or unchanged sound. In the literature of the hegemonic standard, these spellings play a role as 'eye dialect' (Krapp 1925) with intended humour or mockery (in e.g., Bermudian English [Hall 2018]) which, in combination with pronunciation respellings, indicate that a character's speech is uneducated, nonstandard, or foreign. But nonstandard spellings that indicate no phonetic change from the standard can also, in appropriate contexts, become a device for constructing subcultural identities: a <z> in English to replace the plural marking <s> when realised as /z/ is a (possibly now outdated) indicator of street credibility, while <k> in Spanish to replace <c> or <qu> when realised as /k/ is a well-established and salient feature associated with a host of countercultural groups, available as one of only few alternatives in a very 'shallow' orthography. In English the respelling *Afrika*, adopted by numerous political writers and groups (e.g., the New Afrikan Black Panther Party), exists as an intended subversion of colonial cultural subordination that is more closely aligned with spellings used on the African continent in native languages that use Latin script. These spellings – "purely graphemic modifications" (Androutsopoulos 2000: 514) that work well as icons due to the scarcity of <k> and <z> in these orthographies – are particularly noteworthy as it seems they could only have been selected for symbolic reasons. Hence, these are referred to in this thesis as *purely symbolic* spellings.

As in the case of *Afrika* [Africa], authors often wish to subvert the dominant culture represented by a hegemonic standard, as Androutsopoulos (Ibid.) has reported of German fanzines. Sebba (1998) suggests a similar desire to create an "anti-standard" in the orthography of British Creole writers. Gender ideology is now a well-known driver of language change, and this can be a predominantly orthographic and logographic issue; Spanish gender-neutral spellings

such as *latinxs* [Latin Americans] or *tod@s* [everyone] have grown in popularity despite their currently ambiguous phonetic status. As in the examples of orthographic reform in Azerbaijan and Turkey, national or regional identity often drives change, sometimes at the level of individual words or features. The aforementioned <k> in Spanish is also an indicator of Basqueness and the *whisky/whiskey* distinction separates the product of Scotland from that of Ireland. Where two language varieties are very similar, orthography may play a role in delineating them: the Dutch of The Netherlands and Belgium are separated by spellings like *cultuur* and *kultuur* [culture], while in Lithuanian <cz> and <sz> were replaced by <c> and <s> to distance the language from Polish, and similarly Czech was distanced from German by replacing <w> and <au> with <v> and <ou>.



Figure 1: Bilingual bins with gender-neutral language, designed by Bizkaia council in The Basque Country (Spain).[14]

The ideological dimension of spelling extends to beliefs about texts themselves. Different types of writing exist on a continuum of regulation in which they are subjected to higher or lower degrees of control. The degree of variability allowed in a published book will depend greatly on its

[14] The bins read: *the beach is everyone's: both the pleasure of enjoying it and the duty to care for it.*

genre – nonfiction, dialogue, or poetry – and different media can have vastly different sets of permitted norms. Compare, as Sebba (2007) does, highly deviant spellings in graffiti, itself a transgressive act, with the near-complete uniformity of edited prose in newspapers. Institutional ideological change can allow spellings to move across these; the gender-neutral <@> in Spain has moved with increasing legitimacy from fringe political publications and internet chat to institutional spaces which celebrate diversity (see fig.1 above, in which the innovative Spanish gender-neutral pronoun *tod@s* [everyone] matches the standard gender-neutral Basque adjective *guztiona* [everyone's]).

Understanding the effects of and motives for certain spellings requires a consideration of the institutions and audiences that may or may not bear down on a given written context. The relative lack of institutional support for Scots contributes to the fact that, like many other minority-language orthographies, it is poorly taught, has no standard written form, and its use in formal or expository genres is often deemed illegitimate or inappropriate by both the superordinate culture as well as much of the vernacular culture. As such, Scots is generally restricted to less regulated genres like dialect novels, poetry, or various digital spaces, although advocacy for its place in more legitimate domains is central to Scots activism.

This points again to the recursion of modernist standard language ideologies within minority languages. One aspect of this is historicity. There is a desire for a greater output of Scots in expository prose (e.g., chapter 5), in which 'higher', etymological spellings and lexical choices are made. This is common: language ideological research has revealed etymologising orthographic and lexical choices related to "dominant, historically situated, popular ideologies" (Auleear Owodally & Unjore 2013: 228) in Mauritian Kreol religious textbooks. A reason for this points to other aspects of the traditional ideology's authority. Etymological spellings constitute one of the more difficult elements of abstracting language from speech, a process which must be learned with, it is assumed, a great degree of consistency. For minority languages, this provides a

conscious and visual symbol of discipline and systematicity, which can then be displayed, regulated, and institutionalised in order to "[confer] cultural and political power" (Jaffe 1999: 217).

While spelling is a major focus of this thesis, a robust account of ideology ought to take account of the context of broader language use, including the content (discourses) of that language. This approach incorporates elements of the broader language ideology framework (see chapter 1):

> Expressions of subcultural identity in media discourse seem to be essentially multi-layered, in the sense that particular sociocultural stances are symbolically expressed in choices affecting more than one semiotic code or level of description [...] As a consequence, the sociosymbolic value of spelling choices must be assessed in their interplay with other linguistic choices on the one hand, and with the overall design and discourse of the media in which they appear on the other.
>
> (Androutsopoulos 2000: 528)

Since ideological processes create multi-layered regimes of language based on differentiation (Kroskrity 2000), for a given minority language specific orthographic, lexical, syntactic, discursive, and extra-linguistic features may be indexically added or subtracted (via *fractal recursivity*) to counterposed, idealised entities such as 'English' and 'Scots', or 'language' and 'dialect', eventually becoming icons of those categories.

This thesis will explore precisely this process and the difficulties involved in constructing such differences. For Costa (2017), it seems to also matter *who* uses a given Scots spelling. Although some otherwise prestigious Scots spellings appear in Irvine Welsh's books, for some commentators who subscribe to a standard language ideology this text is overshadowed by lexical choices (urban 'slang'), the postmodern literary status of *Trainspotting*, or the criminal lifestyle of the idle urban working-class characters who 'speak' in the novel. Conversely, for another kind of writer, a pro-Scots discourse and the appropriate use of traditional lexis could positively frame spelling choices that are elsewhere discouraged. In the following chapter I will expand on these and other examples, in which density of lexis and spelling, nationalist and

‘apolitical’ discourse, and complex matters of socioeconomic class bear upon legitimacy and lend meaning to the concepts ‘Scots’ and ‘language’.

3 Ideologies of Scots Literacy: A History

3.1 What is Scots?

Linguists tend to imagine Scots as a language continuum (e.g., Corbett, McClure & Stuart-Smith 2003; Douglas 2019; Romaine 1978) ranging from 'Broad' Scots (typified by the working-class Orcadian, Shetlandic, or Doric [North-eastern] dialects) to the prestige variety: Scottish Standard English (SSE).[15] This description is useful in showing that there are numerous regional and social varieties of Scots which overlap. Individual speakers move along the continuum according to "context of situation, education, and social class [...] but some people will inevitably have a stronger attraction to one pole than the other" (Douglas 2019: 21; see also fig.2). Variation at the Broad Scots end of the continuum can be unintelligible not only to people from outside Scotland, but also to people from other areas of the territory.

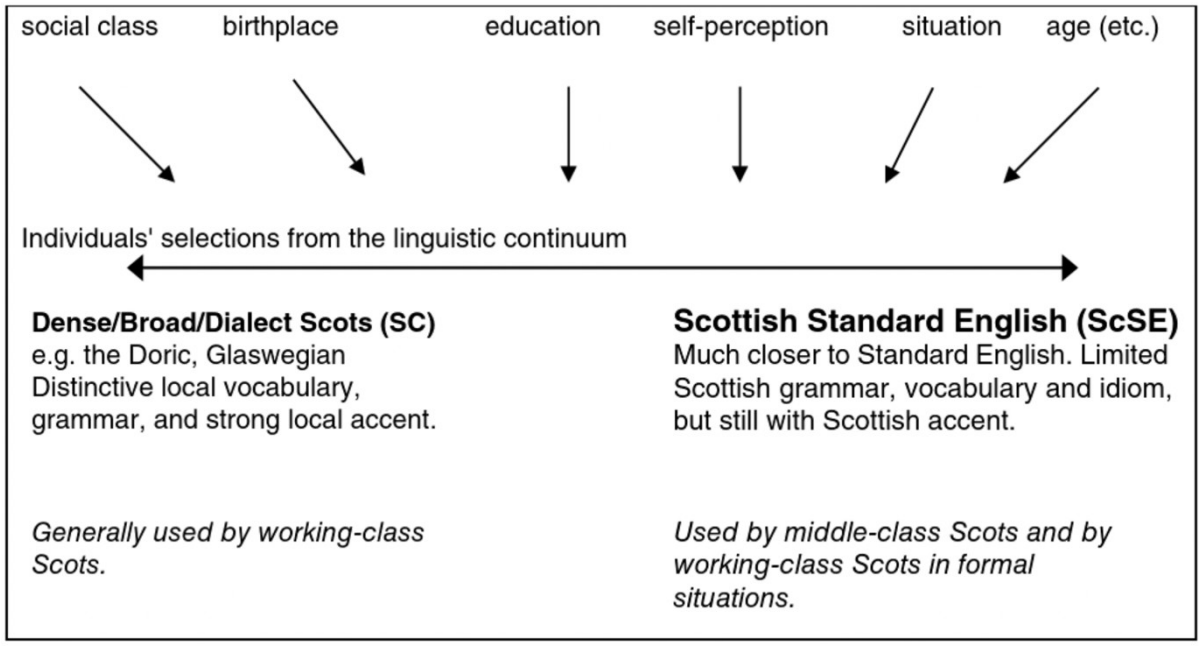

Figure 2: The Scots-SSE continuum (from Douglas 2019: 22)

[15] It is mostly accepted – and suggested by authoritative organisations such as OorVyce, the SLC, and Aye Can – that Ulster Scots is something of a separate entity to the general understanding of Scots dialects. Varieties used among Scottish immigrant communities in Canada, New Zealand, the US are not included in any lay or scholarly definitions of Scots that I have come across.

Scots is closely related to English, the former having developed as a koine from both Bernician dialects of Old English and Northumbrian in the Medieval period, and the latter from Mercian. Due to Viking settlement, Norse has also had influence on Scots, with loanwords in common use today including *kirk* [church] and *lassie* [girl].[16] Interactive digital descriptions have been produced based on contemporary surveys (Smith et al. 2022; 2019), while corpora are available via government-funded Scots dictionaries and the SCOTS corpus,[17] which totals 4.5 million words. As a distinct Germanic 'language', Scots has been ratified by the UK government under Part II of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages: a section which imposes no obligation on the Scottish government in terms of language policy, but which recognises Scots as an independent minority language.

The relationship with English is one of several discursive themes that are subject to double consciousness. Ideological solidarity with Celtic minority languages may be perfectly reasonable, but to ignore their typological differences to Scots under the umbrella of 'minority languages in Britain and Ireland' is to oversimplify the respective forces acting on the revivalist language planning efforts of the varieties in question, including Manx (Hifearnáin 2015) and Cornish (Sayers & Renkó-Michelsén 2015). If the literature on Scots has suffered from insufficient ideological detail, liberal lay discourses on the matter regularly ignore the linguistic facts. The importance of both the constructedness of 'language' as well as *Abstand* have been overlooked in this respect, and this thesis regularly returns to the linguistic relationship between English and Scots to better distinguish various facets of the latter's current status and usage.

While historical Scots features have, since around 1700, been a defining element of rural speech, they are now undeniably in decline across Scotland: "a number of studies, of varying size and sophistication, have suggested that the recent rate of lexical erosion may be very rapid"

[16] Cf. Macafee & Aitken (2002) for a thorough treatment of the pre-1700 linguistic and social history of Scots.
[17] The Scottish Corpus of Texts and Speech. Project by STELLA and the Department of English Language at Glasgow University. Available at: www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk.

(Macafee 2003). Despite a general feeling of loyalty to their local dialect, speakers suffer from the attitudinal (Löw-Wiebach 2005) and economic (Unger 2013) pressure of anglicisation. With SSE acting overwhelmingly as the spoken standard, explanations of sociolinguistic levelling in Scotland have been offered by contextualising the modern Scots speech continuum within Auer's (2011) diaglossic model (e.g., Maguire 2012: 1-2). In this way, contemporary Scots varieties have been compared to the Limburgish *tussentaal* (Hinskens 1996) and other regiolects that, having closely approximated the standard, are distinguished from it mostly by pronunciation (Millar 2016) – yet they are neither dialects nor standard varieties. Like everyday forms of spoken Scots, *tussentaal* is comprehensible to speakers of both the standard and 'denser' dialects; it incorporates features of both, while preserving its connection to the region (Millar 2023: 79-80). Following Auer's (2011) model: (1) Scots regiolects are spatially organised as well as domain-based, with the speech of metropolitan elites being very similar (or identical) to SSE, and (2) represent "[n]ew structures" (Ibid.: 491) on the path from dialect to standard, best exemplified by the innovative post-industrial developments of the Glasgow dialect.

While there is no clear boundary between Scots and English, there is a general desire to establish one, which results in ambiguous definitions of 'Scots' appearing in policy documents, Scots campaign documents (Niven 2017; Unger 2013), and in education (Lowing 2017; Costa 2015). Lay definitions of Scots are multiple and nebulous, themselves often indicative of language ideologies and subject to broader political debates. Various examples of ideologically-motivated conceptualisations will emerge in this chapter. When we consider these ambiguities, along with the range of dialects in use, and the fact that Scots has no (widely accepted) standardised written form, categorisation of writing styles is complex in the first instance. Nevertheless, there are relatively unambiguous examples of what is broadly expected of an archetypal written Scots, for instance in this translation funded by the Scottish Government:

> The twa horses had jist laid doon when a clatch o babbie deuks that had lost their mither filed intae the barn, wheetlin peelie-wallie and govin frae side tae side tae airt oot some place whaur they'd no get treadit on.
>
> [The two horses had just laid down when a brood of ducklings, which had lost their mother, filed into the barn, cheeping feebly and wandering from side to side to find some place where they would not be trodden on.]
>
> From *Animal Fairm* (Clark 2022: 16)

Importantly for this thesis, the written and spoken varieties of Scots bear significant differences. It is for this reason that we can speak of an 'ideal' writing style rooted in a tradition which represents rural and historical forms. This form of writing bears little resemblance in any part of Scotland to what I will call 'everyday spoken Scots'. Furthermore, the demographic elements of the sociolinguistic continuum (fig. 2) have typically been reversed in writing; that is, Scots writers have typically been members of the educated middle class – those least likely to speak Scots.

That said, there are several identifiable styles of Scots that are represented in writing, some of which relate more closely to speech. In my attempt to provide a clear and complete case study of the most important verbal hygiene debates among Scots writers, I have opted to concentrate on the 'highest' and 'lowest' forms of Scots writing. 'Lallans' is the term I will use throughout this thesis for 'high' Scots writing that employs older, traditional, prestigious spellings and lexis. This includes current Scots writing that draws on the conventions of literary Central Scots. Although there may be objection to this nomenclature, perhaps due to cultural and linguistic fragmentation, no label is expected to be without dispute. I have opted for 'Lallans' as a well-known generalisation, but also to draw upon the continuation of the eponymous 20th-century movement's ideal norms, and for the continuing association with activism and authenticity (e.g., in the Scots Language Society's flagship journal *Lallans*). I will refer to the 'lower' style as the urban 'phonetic' form of writing. Although it is, by comparison with Lallans, more phonetic, it is also sometimes pseudo-phonetic, experimenting with sound-spelling conventions and sometimes employing visually striking spellings not motivated by pronunciation.

There are two main reasons for focusing on these two styles and the tension between them. Firstly, they are the primary site of contested debates around authenticity. I will explain how, compared with the likes of Glesga (the working-class Glasgow dialect, represented by the urban phonetic style), rural fringe dialects[18] are more likely to evoke well-established legitimating associations, no matter how undesirably *couthy*, twee, or nationalistic to some. Unlike Glesga, they are also more likely to suffer from erosion than the stigma of being called 'slang', and therefore much more likely to be the object of language activists' angst regarding language 'death'[19] when they speak of 'Scots'. Secondly, roughly 3m of over 5m Scottish residents live in the Central Belt, 1.5m of whom reside in the Clydeside conurbation around Glasgow (Millar 2023: 17). Urban phonetic writing and Lallans are the most popular styles and those with which the greatest number of Scottish people identify.

This background chapter on written Scots will begin with its ideological history up to the 1990s. Although Scots was used in vernacular literacy practices throughout, its lasting influence has been overwhelmingly in literary genres, around which metadiscourse and identifiable norms are centred. I then discuss sociolinguistic features, providing detail of 'high' and 'low' written forms available to the Scots writer and how they relate to speech at the end of the 20th century, when the terms of the current verbal hygiene debates were lain. In light of this, I then continue Scots's history of writing to the present day, finishing with a discussion of verbal hygiene practices which attempt to define and describe 'Scots'.

3.2 Pre-1700 history

[18] Rural dialects are nevertheless regulated by Scots-language ideologies that favour Lallans as a pseudo-standard (cf. Giles 2019 in relation to Orkney Scots)

[19] Language 'death' was one of the reasons that the journal *Eemis Stane* was established: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LoDe03fjJI8&t=1522s
Accessed 01.03.2023

Having rapidly gained social and economic currency over Gaelic in the fertile Scottish Lowlands, Scots (known as *Inglis* at the time [Millar 2017a: 235]) enjoyed prestige in spoken and written forms as the national language, particularly in the Early period (1375-1450). A highly successful period of literary output took place around this time, when Scottish Makars (poets) wrote not in Latin, but in the somewhat standardised language of state: Middle Scots. But prior to the Makars, "[r]oyal proclamations, laws, burgh records, and personal correspondence (such as survives) was written in the language, strikingly in different registers, depending on the topic and the level of formality" (Millar 2023: 43). Only recently has scholarship attention towards written *Inglis* been based upon usage beyond poetry. Notably, Kopaczyk (2013) has illustrated that the displacement of Latin by Scots in expository registers was instrumental in raising the status of the vernacular.

Scots was therefore accessible to nobles and landowners and its use in poetry helped to foster national pride among them. This poetry came with an agenda of nation-building, often exploring themes of bravery and independence through its heroes, famously in John Barbour's (c.1320-95) epic *The Bruce* (c.1370), which describes the feats of Robert I against the English. A recognisable tradition began in the mid-15th century as Scots poetry showed creativity, energy, and confidence in the form of William Dunbar's (c.1460-c.1513) court poetry, Robert Henryson's (c.1450-c.1505) long works, and Gavin Douglas's (1476-1522) translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*, all written at a time of prosperity for a Scottish King – James IV (1473-1513). Dunbar is considered by many the only rival to Burns for the accolade of the greatest Scots-language writer. Some non-standard spelling conventions from Old and Middle Scots (in bold, below) are common today partly due to the success of his poems, such as *The Goldin Terge*:

> D**ou**n **throu** the r**y**ce a ry**ui**r ran w**y**th stremys,
> So lustily agayn th**ai** l**y**kand lemys
> That all the lake as lamp did l**e**m**e** of li**ch**t,
> Quhilk schadov**it** all about w**y**th tw**y**nkling glemis.
>
> [Down through the bushes ran a river with streams,
> So delightfully against the pleasing flashes of light
> That all the water, like a lamp, did flash with light,

Which flitted in shadows all round about with twinkling gleams.]

Gloss given in Fox 1959: 320

The scholarly consensus portrays Middle Scots as a language which, to borrow from Joseph's (1987) model, was developing alongside English as an 'emerging standard' that permitted some innovation and experimentation (cf. Millar 2023: chapter 3). However, after the success of the Makars came a "series of political and economic disasters" (Millar 2017a: 238) for Scottish rule that typically mark the beginning of a long decline in written Scots. There was the defeat and death of James IV in 1513 at the Battle of Flodden, followed by another crippling defeat to the English at Solway Moss (1542). The independent Scottish aristocracy was all but destroyed. At the same time, the introduction of printing to Scotland in the 16th century often required Scots texts to adopt English orthographic and syntactic norms of the time (Bald 1926). The loss of power continued over the next two centuries: the Union of Crowns (1603), Calvinism, the dissemination of the King James Bible in English, and the Union of Parliaments (1707). Important commentators and writers to come would mark these losses as the end of authentic Scots literature, with everything that followed as something of a failure that reflected the national circumstances (e.g., Muir 1936).

Hence, most of the popular surges in Scots literature that followed were championed by revivalists whose heads were turned towards the Medieval period. Perhaps the most salient of "disasters" was the Union of Parliaments, after which power was increasingly centred around Westminster. In print, the English-language Bible was used as a vernacular text by literate Scots speakers, most of whom read and wrote exclusively in English by the mid-17th century, though they continued to speak Scots. Since printing technology was not yet widely available, writers depended on increasingly rare aristocratic patrons to produce Scots-language texts. These events heavily stifled the output of Scots writing, but the fact of its continuation in everyday 17th-century

speech (for this same reason of poor access to literacy beyond elite circles), in some literacy practices such as letter-writing, and in occasional serious literature is often overlooked in narratives of decline.

A popular framework for interpreting variation within the language continuum conceives of a somewhat coherent distinction, born from anglicisation, between Scots lexis and syntax that was used unselfconsciously – *covert Scotticisms* – and that which was employed deliberately and performatively in writing from the 17th century onwards (Aitken 1979) – *overt Scotticisms* (Aitken 1984a: 105-108). It is the overt variants which have occupied the popular imagination, and which giants of Scottish intelligentsia such as David Hume and Adam Smith went on to proscribe. Taking account of the covert/overt distinction will inform understanding of the 'health' of Scots as well as its cultural significance in a given period: present-day spoken data from Smith et al. (2022; 2019) suggests that covert Scotticisms (e.g., *my car* ***needs washed*** or *mind* [remember]) are not only relatively popular, but much more evenly distributed across Scotland than otherwise believed, both in scholarly and popular interpretations.

3.3 A Golden Age?

Nevertheless, there is relative agreement that the 'story' of Scots decline does in fact coincide with a major process of anglicisation (or alternatively, asymmetrical convergence between English and Scots) which, well documented in the 17th century (Devitt 1989), accelerated in the 18th:

> The process [of language change] is generally slow, complex and encompasses a period of time, the borders of which are hardly definable. However, in this case the historical incidence of these dates did have inevitable consequences on linguistic issues and the way in which commentators have approached them since then.
>
> (Dossena 2003: 384)

It becomes rather clear that, as 'propriety' and linguistic 'improvement' became something of an obsession in the middle of the 18th century, the emergence of dictionaries and guides to grammar

or elocution intensified notions of correctness, for which southern English had essentially become the model in official usage. These attitudes extended to private domains: Robert Burns was frequently told in the letters he received to write in standard English (Dossena 1997).

Increasingly replaced by English, Scots was approaching disuse (in non-literary writing, then in speech) by the end of 17th century and early 18th century, precisely the same period in which it enjoyed what is generally thought to be its literary prime. Resistance to anglicisation came in the form of an "aggrieved national sentiment", which motivated the publication of written texts in Scots as "an explicitly Scottish means of expressing cultural identity" (Bann & Corbett 2015: 62). The same sense of loss – that Scottish literature was losing its authenticity, natural expression, and connection to national identity – motivated poets to reclaim tradition with great success. Bann & Corbett (2015) have described how orthographic mimicry of this period of rich output, whose writers drew on some spellings (e.g., <ui>, <ch>, or <uCe>) from Old Scots, have resulted in the use of less phonetic spellings in the present day.

Robert Burns (1759-1796), born into a rural farming family in Ayrshire, is Scotland's national poet and an internationally recognised, genre-defining Romantic. Despite his radicalism, it is Burns's sentimental, rural themes that account for his fame (Leask 2012), often looking backwards to Scotland's former, pre-Union glory. Of his poetry, the appropriation of, for instance, *Is There Honest Poverty* as a radical rallying cry for egalitarianism, has been much less common than the advocacy of his emotive work in Burns Clubs, whose "besotted" members "advocated piety, sobriety, and political caution (three counts upon which Burns himself was of shaky reputation)" (Carruthers 2009: 58). To understand the development of Scots in this period, it is important to consider Burns's audience. Despite his latter fame, it was initially "confined to a relatively small population of members of the urban (or urbanized) elite, many of whom, we can assume, had at least taken an interest in the Anglicization efforts so prevalent during the same period" (Millar 2023: 61). It was not at all the case that impetus for the vernacular revival (and, by

extension, the relationship between national identity and Scots) was a unilateral expression of resistance to anglicisation. McClure's (1995) notion of *Pinkerton Syndrome*, a term used to describe a conflicted linguistic ideology in which an antiquated, literary vision of Scots is adored while the spoken language and its speakers are deplored, is named after an 18th-century critic[20] who epitomised this contradiction in a period when the middle classes were expanding and literacy levels were rising. In this landscape, Burns's work was rationalised within the linguistic-ideological split between the past and present, between Scots and English.

Hence, given the framework of this thesis, the manner in which these attitudes to both Scots and English were expressed – with the Enlightenment in full swing – is entirely predictable. The attribution of innocuous rural imagery to Burns's poetry is an example of the contingency of ideologies of Scots, and one which shows the beginnings of what is perceived as a damaging conceptualisation set firmly within Gal's (2017) 'axis of modernism'. Burns's language was firmly associated with concepts on the 'dialect' side of that axis: traditional values, orality, authenticity, and emotion, all of them tied to specific social and geographical contexts. Contrastingly, the contemporaneous anglicisation efforts were explicitly aligned with rationality, progress, education, and literacy (cf. commentary on David Hume, p.8). While Burns has done more than any other writer to popularise Scots, and this fact bears significantly on the conceptualisation of Scots outside Scots-language circles, writers within those circles are generally wary of perpetuating associations that frame Scots as archaic, inappropriate for contemporary themes and contexts, and therefore de-legitimising when used in that way.

De-legitimisation began before Burns. Two of the most prominent Scots poets of the 18th-century 'vernacular revival' before him were Allan Ramsay (1713-1784) and Robert Fergusson (1750-74). Writing in both Scots and English, both emerged from the "motor force" (Ibid.: 52) of an anti-Unionist form of Jacobitism. Both were anti-Presbyterian Tories. But whatever the subtleties of his aristocratic "ideological impetus", Ramsay became "a pioneer of 'folk' culture"

[20] John Pinkerton (1758-1826).

(Ibid.). Ramsay and Fergusson's inconvenient allegiances were 'written out' of their legacies in a 19th-century mentality that was eager to celebrate fruitful Scots poetry, but in the terms of the humble, pastoral Presbyterianism of Burns. The different functions of nostalgia in the works of these three poets were levelled to form a single narrative: that, in an increasingly anglicised Scotland, poetry represented a sanctioned arena for the backward-looking linguistic expression of a proud and glorious past in the age of the Makars, whose works predated the introduction of English culture.

This trend gave birth to a new genre which followed the 'golden age'. The 18th and 19th centuries were periods of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation, and consequent middle-class fears sought solace in what has come to be disparagingly called the Kailyard[21] tradition, with its nostalgic pre-industrial vision of a "rural, conservative utopia where everyone knew their place but where relations between the classes were friendly" (Millar 2017a: 240). Scots poetry after Burns was perhaps at its most contextualised. For this reason, despite the emergence of two literary greats, Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) and Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894), and the Romantic poetry of James Hogg (1770-1835), the quality of Scots literature after Burns is often depicted as lacking in integrity once again, even though Kailyard literature was popular. More serious 19th-century Scottish literature is characterised by Scott and Stevenson's English-language work with dialogue or interpolated narrative in Scots, reflecting again a modernist positioning of Scots as 'dialect'. Otherwise, Scots-language output is described by contemporary and 20th-century commentators as an artistic embarrassment.

Growing literacy in these periods caused general writing practices to further approximate Standard English and Englishness. A fatalistic view of Scotland's future is present in Scott's own work, in which Scotland is said to have failed to forge a 19th-century cultural identity. For Scott, "Scotland as an entity was doomed, and was possessed only of a past and not a future" (Pittock

[21] Meaning 'cabbage patch'. Coined as a sneer by critic J. H. Millar in 1895, who lifted the term from a selection of target texts.

1991: 88). Scottishness, constructed in opposition to Britishness, existed only in a nostalgia that rapidly reconceived of Scots-language poetry as no longer the domain of the "heroic primitive poet", but the "rustic" modern Romantic who invoked those same poets (Craig 2018: 43). In response to this, in the 20th century "Scotland redefined itself as a nation whose cultural tradition was primarily that of the Scots language" (Ibid.), the achievements of which would form the foundation of Scotland's cultural capital among the middle- and upper-class literary societies and clubs of Edinburgh.

3.4 Literary Modernism and MacDiarmid

By the interwar period, the persistence of the Kailyard genre and the commonplace sanitising of Burns and his contemporaries' sociopolitical themes had exasperated the literati. Thomas Henderson, author and editor of several volumes of Scots verse, writes in the introduction to *A Scots Garland: An Anthology of Scottish Vernacular Verse:*

> [H]ow sorry is the aspect of Scots verse in the nineteenth[22] century! […] they go on *ad infinitum*, telling their bored listeners of the wee hoose in the wee glen […] the collie-dog and the warlike thistle.
>
> (Henderson 1931: 5-6)

This is "all pleasant enough" for "a Burns Club Dinner" but is "exasperating to Scots who have grown up and who realise that their native land is no longer Arcadia, if ever it was." He goes on to say of Burns, on whom he was an expert, that "[i]t is easy to understand and to sympathise" with those who, "sickened by the sloppy sentiment […] emphasise their natural and proper revulsion by speaking disrespectfully of Burns" (Ibid.).

Henderson's despair relates to a major pressure that Scots was facing: as a code suited to pre-industrial communicative needs, the global power of English was spreading through "a largely

[22] Henderson died in 1923. This posthumous volume appears to have printed a passage written by him in the late 19th century.

urban population whose knowledge of the world was increasingly mediated by print and electronic communications in English" (Corbett et al. 2003: 15). Immigration and increasing mobility intensified the pressure on Scots speakers to accommodate the superordinate language. All the while, the erstwhile literary representations of Scots were sanctioned and consumed by the elites in London and Edinburgh as regional oddities; contemporaneous and comparable literature emerging from the strikingly similar history of Occitan literature also failed to provide a threat to the dominant culture in Paris (Calin 2000).

In a similar way to the Occitan Modernists, it was partly "revulsion" on the behalf of authors and critics which drove another linguistically defiant literary movement in the early-mid 20th century: the 'Scottish Renaissance', whose poets and novelists sought the meaningful expression of a primarily industrial nation with serious and complex social issues. This movement was by no means dismissive of Scots – far from it for its standout figure C.M. Grieve (alias Hugh MacDiarmid),[23] who, in his dialect poems of the 1920s and 30s, famously contrived a literary form of Scots that came to be known as Synthetic Scots. For some, this linguistically nostalgic means of expressing forward-looking nationalist politics is neither consistent nor, given the work of his contemporaries and precursors, original; before giving birth to MacDiarmid, Grieve had:

> [W]ritten savagely about the 'infantilism' of Scottish vernacular poetry, pouring scorn on writers so distanced from their own cultural roots that they had to glean their vocabularies from dictionaries. Yet his first action as MacDiarmid was to do just that, plundering glossaries, works on the Scots language and the six volumes of Jamieson's *Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language* more ruthlessly than any of his predecessors. Wrenching words indiscriminately from their local sources and historical periods, sometimes even inventing plausible-sounding new ones, he developed a synthetic Scots that no one had ever spoken but which had a persuasive ring of authenticity.
>
> Goldie (2002: 24)

[23] (Female) precursors to MacDiarmid – Marion Angus, Violet Jacob, Helen Cruickshank – were applauded in the Renaissance and by MacDiarmid himself, though a popular conception of 20th-century Modernist Scots seems begin with and consist mostly of his work.

If Goldie's use of 'authenticity' here matches the language ideology taxonomy, which I think it can, for those who were persuaded by the authenticity of MacDiarmid's Synthetic Scots – by most accounts, members of the middle-class literati who did not speak broad Scots – this represents a rather stark example of the authentic not residing in the 'natural' spoken language of a social group, where it is normally sought by speakers and sociolinguistics, but rather as a "post-natural, goal-oriented sense of authenticity as a project" (Woolard 2016: 300). Any implication of falsity in this type of project – in MacDiarmid's case, the project is a nationalist one, in which the truest Scottish 'self' requires cultivation – points not towards a true distinction in which usages and metadiscourses are 'real', but rather towards the assumption that authenticity ought to relate to the 'natural'. This assumption is hardly surprising and continues to complicate Scots activism today. But for MacDiarmid and other 20th-century activists, who are characterised by middle-class urbanites who spoke SSE, the naturalist view of authenticity is inverted, with the 'betrayal' of the self occurring in the anglicisation of their own primary language.

MacDiarmid, who issued the rallying cry *Back to Dunbar!*, shared with the 18th- and 19th-century poets a reverence for the Makars, "highly conscious of the fact that a form of Scots formerly was (in the sixteenth century) the full 'standard' or 'official language' of the then separate Scottish nation" (Aitken 1984b: 529). Yet he was indeed dismissive of Burns the icon, as well as regional movements and especially popular culture, which he considered synonymous with anglicisation. MacDiarmid's reconstitution of Scots had a purpose beyond artistic innovation; there was an effort to claim some of the attributes of standard languages. Emplaced, sentimental values and imagery were rejected, and the intention was for Scots to displace English as the language of serious, complex, cutting-edge culture and of universal national expression. For these purposes, Scots was abstracted from rural life or any recognisable context of language use. Instead, MacDiarmid and writer Edwin Muir led an attempt at a form of pre-1707 national memory oriented towards the universal present and future in its dedication to nation-building. Consciously writing for the consumption of a narrow audience, MacDiarmid and his later

followers were attempting to elevate Scots literature to high culture, where it could take its place as an independent national icon (McClure 2000).

In doing so, MacDiarmid diminished (nearly) all other Scots-language literature since the Makars. Some present-day criticism views this as a damaging, ungrateful, or even hypocritical approach that invented or exaggerated the dangers of a supposedly "impure" culture. The interwar period was one of cultural abundance in Scotland, but it wasn't the quantity of Scottish culture or even its vitality that these revivalists were concerned with, but the quality. The output of the Collins and Macmillan publishing houses, of filmmaker John Grierson, or Scottish influence in the BBC did not seem to matter to them, even though they were significant expressions of Scottish national identity elsewhere. Nearly all contemporary culture was deemed inauthentic to the extent that it engaged with Britain and England more broadly and denied Scotland its distinctiveness, partly as an "inevitable result of progressive anglicization" that made Scottish people "more English than the English" (Gibbon & MacDiarmid 1934: 57), and partly through individuals' own supposed lack of integrity. MacDiarmid wrote that "apart from the "Scottish Renaissance Group", the rest of the Scottish people today in Scotland are not really Scottish in any sense of the term" (MacDiarmid & Riach 1996: 6). It was the self-appointed duty of himself and his acolytes to restore distinctiveness, and to do so specifically via Scots.

Although MacDiarmid was a known antagonist, the quality of his poetry dominates 20th-century traditional Scots literature and Synthetic Scots was heralded by many as a major achievement. Lexis, idiom, and orthography are all revived, sometimes extracted from Middle Scots, in MacDiarmid's major 2,685-line poem *A Drunk Man Looks at a Thistle* of 1926. The result is an impressive work accessible only to the learned student of Scots.

> The wan leafs shak' atour us
> Like the snaw.
> Here is the cavaburd in which
> Earth's tint.
> There's naebody but Oblivion

And us,
Puir gangrel buddies,
Waunderin' hameless in't.

[The wan leaves shake above us
Like the snow.
Here is the snowdrift in which
Earth's lost.
There's nobody but Oblivion
And us,
Real vagrants,
Wandering homeless in it.]

(MacDiarmid 1972: 88)

Etymological lexis appears regularly throughout. Readers are required to know, for instance, that *atour* is not a French cognate meaning *all around*, but a Middle Scots three-syllable combination of *at* and *over*, here meaning *above*. The Old Norse *cavaburd* [*snowdrift*] and Old English past participle of *tyne* [*lose*], *tint*, are similarly esoteric. Core orthographic features in the original *Drunk Man* are considered pan-dialectal graphemes suitable for all Scottish accents: *-a* (e.g., *cann**a***, rather than *cann**ae***), <ui> (*guid*), <ei> (*deid*). Although inconsistent, MacDiarmid's spellings frequently draw upon older orthography. In addition to <ui> and <ei>, notable spellings include *owre*, <ch> (*nicht*), <uCe> (*mune*), <y> (*mynd; vyce*) and core lexis (*ilka* [*each*], *syne* [*since*], *gar* [*make*], *gin* [*if*], *een* [*eyes*]) which remain iconic features of present-day Lallans, although features which did not outlast Middle Scots (e.g., *quh-* for *wh-*) have not been taken up.

Despite taking little interest in the minutiae of Scots spelling, MacDiarmid later requested that any printing of his original works be re-spelt according to the more rigid Makar's *Style Sheet* (reprinted in Purves 2002: 118-120).[24] This was itself the product of the 'Lallans' movement that he mostly inspired – a form of language advocacy rooted in an indexical link between cultural nationalism and idealistic literary Scots. Drawn up in 1947, the proposed set of Lallans spelling norms within was put forward by Scots writers of the Makar's Club, intended as a means of 'settling' the spelling debate for 'serious' Scots writers. The document now represents one of the most effective orthographic guides in Scots. As loyal followers of MacDiarmid, the spellings

[24] Scots Style Sheet also available online, accessed 03.03.2023: https://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/purves/Grammer_Style.pdf

prescribed by the authors of Style Sheet coincide with those of *A Drunk Man*, and the predominant changes to MacDiarmid's spellings are for consistency, as well as the now *de rigueur* omission of 'apologetic apostrophes' (see discussion in section 3.6). A Scots mainstream continues to write using similar spellings: "in something like a standard variety of literary Scots. This is based loosely on an idealised conservative form of spoken Central Scots" (Aitken 1984b: 528). This might be called a written form of 'Good Scots', of which a more complete linguistic description will be provided later in this chapter.

Beyond MacDiarmid, Carruthers identifies in the 20th century a more general "idealisation of a complete or organic cultural holism" (2009: 23) in Scottish literature and literary criticism, and the associated fixation with the continuity and authenticity of a national culture. The Lallans movement can be considered part of this. But so too can a pessimistic view of the validity of Scottish literature – and Scots literature – in this respect. Muir was the flagbearer of this realist ideology, dismissing in his book *Scott and Scotland* (Muir 1936) the possibility of any authentic expression in Scots – a stance which initiated a lifelong spat with MacDiarmid. While both writers felt that 'natural' authenticity had been lost and both neglected the continued usage of everyday Scots in Scotland as a basis for literary language, authenticity for MacDiarmid could be wholly manufactured – it was a project which, to the few deemed capable of building it, was pursued in the name of national identity. Muir's position, which rejected this project as contrived, was "[h]ugely influential", "adopted and adapted by numerous critics" (Carruthers 2009: 17). This split is one that still runs through the centre of attitudes towards Lallans usage, as the contentious authority of antiquated and moribund linguistic features as a mode of expression in various written genres divides opinion, in a dichotomy of what is sometimes described by writers as idealism versus realism.

The Scottish Modernists enjoyed some success in fostering national pride and were precursors to the folk music revival (Munro 1996). But their relationship with urban life was

fraught. The 'falsehood' of Scottish culture was considered to be most stark in popular culture, which had taken hold most strongly in Glasgow. Urbanity, urban speech, moral corruption, and ugliness were indexically linked for Muir in both Edinburgh (Muir 1935) and Glasgow (Muir 1954). Glasgow was the enemy of intelligent cultural production and of the artist, as it was for MacDiarmid (Goldie 2006). Industrialism made Glasgow "not Scotland at all" (Muir 1935: 102) and the urban proletariat above all were "made-in-England" (MacDiarmid 1943, 1994: 332). At times, some[25] writers preferred to reject Glasgow outright rather than engage with it, a position strikingly evident in Fionn Mac Colla's *The Albannach*, in which Glaswegians are compared to "a nest of ants", their breath "of cold human sweat, of breeding rats, of wet earth and rotting wood, of filth and disease and a hundred thousand greasy suppers" (Mac Colla 1932: 152-3). In the tension between idealistic nation-building and the reality of the Glasgow slums, many writers opted for the former, while despairing of and, in their ideals, erasing the social and linguistic fact of the latter; later critics would consider this its own form of denial of the present.

Up to this point in the history of Scots literature, there are clear themes of cultural holism and, since the Union of 1707, efforts to use revivalism or nostalgia to locate singular ideas of Scottishness in vernacular culture; discussed here are only a handful of many celebrated writers concerned with 'revival', 'renaissance', 'renascence', and so on, and there is currently a research group of literary scholars – the Scottish Revival Network (SRN)[26] – dedicated to the study of this 20th-century trend. In *The Wealth of The Nation* (2018), Cairns Craig argues that this "[r]evivalism was the medium by which Scotland's difference and distinction was continually reasserted through the years of the 'incorporating union' that ought to have made Scotland an indistinguishable part of the cultural polity of the United Kingdom" (Craig 2018: 30). Alex Thomson has similarly argued that literary revival is a type of political "justification narrative"

[25] Alternatively, there were those who sided with the masses. In the 'Glasgow' chapter of *Scottish Scene* (Gibbon & MacDiarmid 1934) Lewis Grassic Gibbon celebrates multiculturalism and dismisses "small nation" thinking, preferring the complete anglicisation of Scotland and the "death" of the Scots language over the continuation of human suffering in Glasgow.

[26] http://revival.scot
Accessed 10.01.2023

much like some narratives of Scots, in which the existence of "revival" or "tradition" is justified by its difference; that is, its Scottishness. In the 20th-century revivalist ideal:

> Even if the vernacular is not a popular language, or even a living language [...] it's being constructed in relation to the distinctive idea of the national community or the nation-state, which is a vision of the congruence of social, institutional, linguistic, and symbolic practices.[27]

Here, "congruence" describes the practice of iconisation. History, culture, and language is a "utopian" vision, "counterfactual" to social reality. The Scots-language movement of the mid-20th century was one in which these ideals were designed and assigned by a literary elite that was hostile to complexity and to the culture of the masses. An ideological regime of differentiation based on the 'modernist axis' of standard language ideology had been constructed which separated those two groups along linguistic and social lines.

3.5 Urban Scots literature and fragmentation of national identity

The success of poet Tom Leonard initiated a dramatic challenge to this model. Poems such as *Good Style* (Leonard 1970) use phonetic and innovative nonstandard spellings, without punctuation, in a confrontational tone which does not apologise for any perceived illegitimacy of Glesga. Leonard was a commentator on Scottish sociolinguistics who, famously in *The six o'clock news*, used spellings that he said gave "the appearance of naturalness" (Macafee 1983: 137) to accompany an astute critique of the differentiation of anonymity and authenticity in the 'axis of modernity':

> if a toktaboot
> thi truth
> lik wanna yoo

[27] Alex Thomson: 'What is cultural revival?', *What is revival?*, Seminar I of the Scottish Revival Network, 10th August 2021.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eslwz-W6XLE&list=PLrKbieRwZErOnam9Kyo1Js8llJMUS0uqt
Accessed 11.01.2023

scruff yi
widny thingk
it wuz troo.
Jist wanna yoo
scruff tokn.

[if I talked about
the truth
like one of you
scruffs you
wouldn't think
it was true.
just one of you
scruffs talking.]

(Leonard 1984: 88)

Leonard often targeted linguistic prejudice among both Scots and English writers, of whom he was frequently critical (Dósa 2004). Most commentators or critics of various persuasions do not refer to his writing as 'Scots' without at least some hesitation, preferring the terms 'dialect', 'slang', 'patois', 'argot', or 'demotic' to 'Scots language'. Below, Leonard lists the institutional forces of linguistic stigma that label his language "disgraceful", while dismissing the vision of Scotland and Scots as a past idyll or a future project:

po-faced literati grimly kerryin thi
burden a thi past tellt mi
po-faced literati grimly kerryin thi
burden a thi future tellt mi
[…]
jist aboot evry book ah oapned tellt
mi
even thi introduction tay thi Scottish
National Dictionary tellt mi

[po-faced literati grimly carrying the
burden of the past told me
po-faced literati grimly carrying the
burden of the future told me
[…]
just about every book I opened told
me
even the introduction to the Scottish
National Dictionary told me]

(Leonard 1980)

At the time, the editor of the Scottish National Dictionary (SND) was David Murison, a prominent figure in what might now be called the 'old guard' of Scots activism, characterised by a prescriptive Lallans ideal that actively rejected Glesga. But Leonard was likely referring to the first SND editor William Grant's infamous comment in his introduction: "owing to the influx of Irish and foreign immigrants in the industrial area near Glasgow the dialect has become hopelessly corrupt" (Grant 1931: §93.8). The English language in "jist aboot evry book" [just about every book], too, is an oppressor. Leonard's conclusion is firmly rooted in the linguistic and social reality of the Glasgow working-class as he saw it:

> ach well
> all livin language is sacred
> fuck thi lohta thim
>
> [oh well
> all living language is sacred
> fuck the lot of them]
>
> (Leonard 1980)

What Leonard's poetry represents is not a reconstruction of the language ideologies as such, but a challenge to the valence of its legitimating qualities: it is postmodern, or at least a vision of postmodern language ideology confined to the less regulated genre of poetry. The combination of his spelling with some lexical and syntactic choices is identifiably working-class Glesga, which, with rare phonetic accuracy (Macaulay 1988), rejects the idealism of Lallans and replaces it with a "livin language". In this configuration, Glesga remains an emplaced, 'naturally' authentic language, but one which is no less legitimate as a result. The mostly phonetic spelling choices – some of them relatively common in today's Scots mainstream (<oa>, *jist* [just]), others falling outside of it entirely (*-y* rather than *-ae* endings; <z>; *jiss* [just]; *init* [isn't it]; *a* rather than *o* for *of*, often as an enclitic) – may be said to be deliberately subversive, sometimes purely graphemic (*theez* [these]). The liberal respelling of unstressed function words, something of a taboo in traditional Scots spelling norms, is done innovatively. As well as his jibes at the revivalist/ Modernist "po-faced literati", Leonard has appropriated traditional spellings (*-ae*, <ch>, *o*) to

mock the esoteric self-appointed prescription of the cliques that they formed; this Poster Poem targets the prescriptive *Style Sheet* by referencing a certain "Makar's Society":

> GRAN' MEETIN'
> THE NICHT
> TAE DECIDE THE SPELLIN'
> O' THIS POSTER
>
> [BIG MEETING
> TONIGHT
> TO DECIDE THE SPELLING
> OF THIS POSTER]

(Leonard 1984: 53)

What followed was the beginning of a clear ideological and orthographic rupture in Scots literature, and the start of a separate tradition. This was a new form of anarchic linguistic realism, which Muir's realism has not entertained as a serious possibility. Of course, written language is itself a learned, conscious act (cf. chapter 2) and to refer to any style of Scots writing as 'natural' warrants scrutiny in psycholinguistic terms. Yet, written Glesga is a style firmly facing ideological naturalism in its linguistic proximity to the spoken language it evokes. It purports to be 'real', not 'contrived', and is relatively intuitive to the urban Scots speaker educated in Standard English orthography; it is on this basis that it is understood in this thesis as a manifestation of 'natural' authenticity.

Leonard's representation of Glesga speech inspired its extension to narrative in James Kelman's prose, with the Booker Prize win *How Late it Was, How Late* (Kelman 1994) causing a linguistic scandal. If we can confidently reason that Leonard's symbolic spellings – *-y* or <z> – were intended to subvert the sociolinguistic order, then Kelman's regular use of those same features and his comparable attitude to language seem to have continued that subversive practice. Kelman also felt alienated by the "po-faced literati". Commenting on the pressures of the Scottish and British literary establishment:

> What it amounts to is: go and write a story about a bunch of guys who stand talking in a pub all day but if you have them talking then do not have them talking in the language they talk. Pardon? … I saw the distinction between dialogue and narrative as a summation of a political system; it was simply another method of exclusion.
>
> (Kelman 2002: 64-5)

One of the Booker Prize judges, Baroness Julia Neuberger, resigned from the panel in protest, stating that the "broad Glaswegian dialect, littered with F-words… was too much, too inaccessible, and simply too dull" (quoted in McGlynn 2002: 50). So, while the Lallans movement deemed Glesga 'not Scots' by virtue of its innovations and its proximity to English, some English-language critics themselves considered it unreadable. With regards to Kelman, there is an argument for the former, but little basis for the latter:

> Stupit even thinking about it. Sure as fuck, as soon as he got up and started groping about the fucking door would bust open. With his luck man know what I'm talking about a fucking certainty. Best relaxing, just let it go. What would there be anyway! pencils and fucking pens or something.
>
> (Kelman 1994: 100)[28]

Here, only 1 of 53 words are nonstandard and there is no distinctly Scottish lexis, while the local syntax and idiom is intuitive to English speakers. When comparing Kelman and Leonard it becomes clear that denseness of orthography alone does not necessarily correlate with 'Scotsness'; they are both considered to be writers of the same language variety. In this sense, McClure's (1979) suggestion that a dense-thin continuum in Scots writing can be treated separately to a traditional-colloquial continuum is useful.

In verbal hygiene practices surrounding Scots, intelligibility is sometimes misrepresented in this way or ignored altogether. There are strong indications that what is "too much" in Kelman's prose is the cultural associations of working-class Glesga – particularly in the liberal use of *fuck* and its derivatives (Maley 1996). *Fuck* displeased many readers, as it did Simon Jenkins (1994) and Kingsley Amis (1997: 74), who evaluated the swearing by constructing Standard English as a neutral point of reference and rejecting the possibility of *fuck* bearing any culturally

[28] For all excerpts taken at random, I have selected the first paragraph from page 100 of a given text.

meaningful function. This is a contradictory stance: elsewhere, their hegemonic modernist language ideologies culturally mark Glesga in order to de-legitimise it. In a now infamous article, language use sanctions the charges of "vandalism", illiteracy, hypocrisy, indecorous attire, and stupidity, as Jenkins (1994) compares Kelman and the book to an imagined prototypical Glaswegian drunkard who spits, belches, smokes, begs, swears, urinates publicly, and is apparently prone to racist attacks. Any association with the Scots language, even 'Scots English', or comparisons with Franz Kafka, whose work has rather obviously inspired Kelman's, is dismissed by alluding to apparently self-evident shortcomings in spelling and punctuation. In this way, the new tradition of non-standard Scottish writing was firmly differentiated from 'Scots'. Aitken's (1982) observation that Scottish working-class urban speech is pushed out by discourses of both English and 'Scots' – not by workable linguistic reasoning, but by virtue of who the language users are – seems applicable and Kelman "regards as telling of the unhealthy cultural hegemony that there is so much comment on his language choice" (Carruthers 2009: 68).

Importantly for this thesis, Kelman's response to critics in his Booker Prize acceptance speech reads much like many core justifications of Scots-language literature and advocacy, both past and present, on behalf of the movements to which Kelman appears to be opposed:

> It's an argument based solely on behalf of validity: that my culture and my language have the right to exist, and no one has the authority to dismiss that right, they may have power to dismiss that right, but the authority lies in the power and I demand the right to resist it.[29]

Likewise, for linguist and activist J. Derrick McClure (1988: 69), the preservation of Scots is justified simply "because it is ours", needing "neither explanation nor apology". Meanwhile, eminent activist Billy Kay's address to the Scottish Parliament, given in Lallans in April 2022, was a call for self-determination: "tae be yersels, and tae mak that worth bein" [to be yourselves, and to make that worth being].[30] But both McClure and Kay were speaking unequivocally about

[29] https://web.archive.org/web/20130520120928/http://www.citystrolls.com/z-temp/z-pages/kelman.htm Accessed 06.03.2023

[30] Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=am1MCJsEGYA Accessed 04.07.2023

Scotland as a whole, and views on language, class, nation, nationalism, and their roles in history of Scottish literature set the two traditions – Lallans and urban phonetic writing – in opposition, with language usage and conceptualisation being the divergent manifestations of differing ideologies.

This was a differentiation drawn on Gal's (2017) modernist lines: one of anonymity and authenticity-as-a-project versus natural authenticity; universality, education, and literacy versus particularity, orality, and emotion – even degeneracy. Both Kelman (Hamilton et al. 1976) and Leonard (2014) stated their work was written in a variant of English, not Scots. Themes, too, reinforced this regime of difference. In *A Scots Garland*, Henderson (1931) called for a literary Modernist portrayal of gritty, honest, metropolitan working-class characters. But he spoke of mining, steelwork, trawlers, and knives at the gutting trough, not of the unemployment, addiction, idleness, and knives hidden in jackets that pervaded *Trainspotting* (Welsh 1993). Welsh's characters, represented by a phonetic urban voice, famously mock the pressure to participate in "life", choosing instead the 'degenerate' existence that Muir and contemporaries despaired over. The Modernist representation of 'everyday people' was abstract and exotic, the phonetic writers' was contextualised and complex.

These urban writers of the second half of the 20th century pointed to "a register of local Scottish expression that is often culturally frowned upon and disempowered in Scotland due to the predilection of class more than because of the 'national' situation" (Carruthers 2009: 160). Those using mostly innovative, phonetic spellings to represent urban speech wanted to make visible the ignored lives and language of (normally poor, white, male) working-class urban realities, rather than a national vision which they felt did not recognise them, which was represented by a language they did not recognise.

Prescriptive national holism had already begun to lose its monopoly on Scots literature by the 1980s, as did its related themes of continuity, tradition, and Anglo-Scottish relations. The

notion of a singular ‘Scottish literature’, or ‘Scottishness’ and its association with the past was breaking down in favour of more fragmented expressions of identity. The singularity of the Scots language was also breaking down, growing “less central, not merely to the poetry of MacDiarmid himself, but to that of the younger poets who emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. Scottish poets found they could be comfortably Scottish in any or all of Scotland’s three indigenous languages.” (Carruthers & McIlvanney, 2012: 9). These new, complex portrayals of identity were well received: “[i]t is no coincidence that, throughout this period, fragmented dialects and regional sub-cultures formed the basis of some of the nation’s most successful fiction” (Ibid.: 11).

Fragmentation of identity and postmodern literature presented a challenge to the persisting Modernist Scots nationalism and minority-language activism of the 1990s, initiating a split between vernacular literature and Scots institutions. Far from giving way to this new movement, however, traditional Lallans was at the forefront of yet another cultural resurgence and rise in nationalism in the 1990s. To invoke again Cairns Craig’s model of repeated revivalism, the Scottish Poetry Library became “a spiritual focus for the nation” after the failed vote for devolution in 1979, and “a means of asserting its particular value to the world’s culture. If a culture is defined by its languages, then an institution devoted to the nation’s poetry is at the very core of a nation’s conception of its identity” (Craig 2018: 274). The movement was deliberately defiant of Westminster’s disinclination to offer devolution until 1998 and resolved “to inspire the Scottish people with a sense of the traditions, achievements and the values of their own culture” (Ibid.).

Again, holistic expressions of Scottishness were seen across the arts, growing to fill the vacuum of middling parliamentary politics and a lack of social distinction from England. From a proliferation of histories, dictionaries, and grammars of Scots throughout the 1990s, Scottish culture and history finally seemed to be gaining its capital, particularly via Burns, at a time when the nation strove to re-establish its sense of purpose; the empire was perceived to be no more,

secularisation was well in place, and Americanisation was seen to have displaced British culture. Scotland found its distinctiveness and 'wealth' by yet again reclaiming its cultural past – a guaranteed marker of independence. It was in this vein that the prescriptive pro-Lallans figureheads of the time began to make major efforts to establish Scots as a European language. Leading authority David Purves commented: "[t]he [Scots language] problem relates to the question of national identity: whether we see ourselves as Britons or Scots" (Purves 1997).

How important was Scots to the broader national identity? Purves appears to speak of an inalienable link. But "[o]ne could argue", says Hardie (1996: 62) contemporaneously, "that the essence of Scottish national identity never comprised 'language' as such." Even at the beginning of the Union of Parliaments, middle class assertions of national identity referred not to Scots, but "to the Scottish institutions which were/are so distinct from their Welsh/English counterparts: Education, Law and the Kirk" (Ibid.). Hardie's (1997) attitudinal data from the mid-1990s seemed to suggest a situation in which Scots was correlated with nation to some degree, but was nevertheless a confused and relatively minor component of Scottish identity. Hence, there is a qualification to Craig's comments on identity and poetry (see above, p.87): this is perhaps a culture only partially defined by "its languages". Or, rather, Lallans does not feature prominently among its languages, since Hardie reported a greater identification with the broader term 'accent' (1997: 214-215). Speaking about identity and the development of ideologies of Lallans, Millar comments: "[a] fundamental disconnect exists between the literary/secondary use of a language variety and its status within society as a whole [...]. Poetry does not butter bread" (2023: 62).

But this illuminating distinction cuts both ways. At times, Hardie's interpretation appears to assess the importance of language by measuring it against the vitality of Scots and the relative significance of other cultural symbols (cf. Ibid.: 214; Hardie 1996: 62). Admittedly, Scots has not appeared as coherently as one might have expected in popular discourses of national distinctiveness – neither in the lead up to devolution in 1998 nor the independence referendum

in 2014. But anglicisation and the difficulty in operationalising an authoritative form of Scots in modern Scotland cannot be equated *a priori* with a lack of importance. Rather, we must take account of the specific linguistic-ideological situation, which, explored throughout this chapter, happens to be a rather complex one. For instance, Pinkerton Syndrome has persisted (McClure 1995; see above, p.71), even in activist circles, and there has been a historical trend from at least the 19th century onwards of 'unionist nationalism' (Morton 1999) tied closely to Scottish heritage, if not political separatism.

I tend to take Costa's (2012) view that Hardie's data, among other sociological work, *does* indicate a historically important link between nation and language, although it may not have been as straightforward as in, say, the Basque Country or Wales. Even if we may not speak of direct co-occurrence between Scots and Scotland, the complexity of links between identity, SSE, various forms of Scots, and Gaelic: "ne signifie pas pour autant qu'ils n'existent pas. Ils ont présidé à la naissance du nationalisme écossais moderne, et sont présents de manière symbolique" [doesn't mean that they don't exist. They presided over the birth of modern Scottish nationalism and are present symbolically] (Ibid.: 105). Language – and Lallans – still provided "[practical and symbolic]" (Ibid.: 104) origin myths for various types of national identity; it is in the context of revivalism and the imagined past that language has emerged most vividly as a Scottish icon. Evidence from this thesis warns against overstating the relevance of Lallans and suggests that the link between Scots and national identity has only complicated further in recent years. But at the same time, with identity and revival having gained prominence in the growing awareness of minority languages, linguistic origin myths are, for certain groups, shown to be central to the very meaning of modern Scottishness, even filling the void left by political disillusion and national clichés.

Among those within the world of 1990s activism, for whom language was at the top of the national agenda, attempts at spelling reform held MacDiarmid or Burns's language as

exemplary, while urban styles were still considered a ‘demotic’ unworthy of unifying a homogenised nation. The most influential Scots authorities tended to view dialects such as Leonard’s as entirely invalid (Murison 1977: 56; see also David Purves’s comments in the Spellin Comatee’s meeting minutes in chapter 5), or at least *a priori* unsuitable for the ‘highest’ forms of expression (McClure 1979). Sensing that the popularity of innovative phonetic spellings was a threat to the promotion of a Scots standard, similarly negative attitudes persisted among contributors to the *Lallans* journal and *The Herald* broadsheet. Scottishness was to be sought in the teaching and standardisation of Lallans, which, in an ineffective rebuttal to Aitken’s (1982) sociolinguistic description of it, Purves (1997) saw as a potential solution to the urban class problem in the form of a utilitarian linguistic model, rather than a call to critique verbal hygiene, as Aitken had intended. Below are points 4 and 5 of Purves’s “way forward” for Scots, which models traditional Lallans literature for the purposes of standard language planning:

> 4. The definition of the grammar and syntax of Scots and the standardisation of Scots orthography are necessary before Scots can be taught effectively at any level. The body of literature in Scots provides a foundation on which a standard written form of Scots could be built.
>
> 5. In order to create an image of 'good Scots' to which local dialects can be related, it is desirable that the teaching of Scots should be related to the substantial body of literature in Scots.
>
> (Ibid.)

In this tradition, even substantial contributions to the development of Lallans as a standard, such as Lorimer’s (1987) translation of the *New Testament*, were primarily “scholarly” in nature (Dossena 2003: 394), rather than effective means of restoring the language more broadly; this type of text could not speak to a range of culturally and linguistically polarised Scottish non-standard writers. While resistance to the hegemony of English provided a general motive, some of these writers decided to reject linguistic hierarchies altogether in writing, whereas others attempted to elevate the Scots writing tradition within those hierarchies. The

former, accordingly, tended to follow Leonard's linguistic tradition of 'bad' Scots, whereas the latter preferred the revival of older written language: 'good' Scots.

3.6 Good Scots, Bad Scots

Before resuming this ideological history of Scots writing, it is useful to provide greater sociolinguistic detail of the linguistic choices which emerged from it by the end of the 20th century. The conceptual choice which many Scots writers felt they had to make, described above, is captured by the dichotomy of idealism versus realism, or anonymity/authenticity-as-a-project versus naturalistic authenticity. This terminology is telling of how speakers approached written features: 'ideal' implies a departure from the types of Scots heard in everyday speech – the 'real'. It also implies a commitment to the modernist standard language ideology in which notions of literacy are differentiated from those of orality.

Aitken (1982) has suggested a trinary model in which 'Good Scots', English, and 'Bad Scots' interact with and are differentiated from one another (with corroborating evidence from Sandred [1983]). The difference between 'good' and 'bad' Scots is understood as a difference between, respectively, a maximally differentiated type of idealised Lallans much more common in writing than in speech, and minimally differentiated everyday urban working-class dialects. In this thesis, it is the former which activists generally believe to be a more effective counterforce to stigma. The lexis, symbolic spellings, and the pronunciations suggested by some other Lallans spellings are differentiated from English as much as the writer considers is reasonably possible – but they are also differentiated from many spoken varieties of Scots. Even in the contexts where the 'broader' forms of Scots are spoken, the language is not as dense, literary, or pre-industrial as that of exemplary Lallans texts. Although such comparisons are not always easy to make, abundant spoken data in Smith et al. (2022; 2019) offers some opportunity to do so.

Linguistic judgments of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ language have reflected, via fractal recursivity, social judgments. The speech characterised, above all, by Irish immigrant communities has been denigrated since their arrival to 18th-century Glasgow, drawn to the sugar and tobacco trades, Victorian heavy industry, and the shipyards (although this is overly simplistic: Glesga also derives in part from a pre-existing dialect of Scots). Aitken suggests that disapproval of Bad Scots emerged directly after the Industrial Revolution, coinciding with the popularisation of Kailyard texts as a balm for perceptions of inner-city criminality and “political radicalism” (Millar 2017a: 240). With the advent of urbanisation, “a dichotomy began to develop (as elsewhere) between ‘good’ country dialects and ‘corrupt’ urban ones – a view shared by many speakers of both varieties” (Millar 2006: 63-4). Scots-language verbal hygiene is shrouded by a common narrative that frames Scots as ‘the language of the working-class’, yet evidently deviation from a specific working-class ideal was deplorable. Many perceived Scottishness – the *raison d’être* of 20th-century traditional Scots writing – to be declining rapidly due to the population growth and cultural interests of Glaswegians.

> By 1901 nearly half of Scotland’s four and a half million people lived in the Clydeside conurbation. Glasgow was a city with its face turned westward to America, and perhaps also to Ireland, rather than to the hinterland behind it. And it was a city with a raft of intractable social problems – slum housing and overcrowding being the most pernicious – of a scale and intensity unparalleled in the rest of the country. Glasgow was indeed a place apart.
>
> McIlvanney (2012: 217)

What has developed in these communities is a speech form which is not “acceptable middle-class Standard English”, but which also has “fewer – maybe far fewer – exclusively Scottish characteristics than it should have” to be representative of Good Scots (Aitken 1982: 35). Here, Aitken is referring to the fact of Glesga having lost most of its pre-industrial Scots vocabulary, particularly among the working-classes, while the middle-classes tend to be more aware of “old Scots words” via traditional literature (Macafee 1983: 41; 1994). Glesga does, however, have a distinctive innovative vocabulary, though this is less likely to be associated with ‘Scots’. Stuart-

Smith et al. (2007: 254) have suggested that "working-class [Glaswegian] adolescents are innovating and changing their form of Scots, as they polarise themselves linguistically to and ideologically from middle-class speakers". In this sense, Glesga and closely-related urban dialects have the potential to inconvenience a popular discourse that claims Lallans as the language of the working-classes; Good Scots, especially in its written form, has a general association with the middle-classes and with a landscape outside the cities, sometimes – to the dismay of most activists today – associated with a 'couthy', antiquated portrayal of Scottishness.

Phonetic orthography is the primary resource of distinctiveness for many class-conscious literary writers of 'bad' Scots. These relate to specific phonetic features which were, in the 20th century, often framed as vulgarisms. Some have systematic orthographic representation, such as <u> for the lowered, retracted realisation of the Scots /ɪ/ (Macafee 1983: 39) or SSE /ʌ/, for instance *durty*, represented as /ɐ̈/ according to Stuart-Smith's (2008: 55-6) convention. Others, including the lack of postvocalic /ɹ/ or its uvular realisation, or the notorious intervocalic glottal stop, are more difficult to represent in nonstandard spelling. I list some important iconic 'bad' spellings here, taken from urban texts and observed in Pottinger (2022) (see also Appendix A).

Innovative 'Phonetic' Urban Form	**Examples**
<u>	*durty*, *wurd*, *burd* [dirty, word, bird]
<oa>	*oan*, *Scoats*, *hoat* [on, Scots, hot]
<z>	*yooz*, *holidayz*, *boayz* [you (pl.), holidays, boys]
Respellings of *o* [*of*]	*a*, *ae*, *ay*. As enclitic in: *lohta*, *sortae* [lot of, sort of]
-ny/-nay negative markers and other *–(a)y* spellings	*widnay*, *wullny*, *tay*, *gony* [wouldn't, won't, to, gonna]
'Purely symbolic' innovative spellings	*jakit*, *kin*, *eether*, [jacket, can (unstressed), either], <z>

Table 3: Innovative (pseudo)phonetic spellings of urban Scots

At a national level, these features, along with more recent changes such as *th*-fronting, have been framed as un-Scottish, interpreted as a 'Cockney' English phenomenon rather than a local one (cf. Stuart-Smith et al. 2007). As we can expect, linguistic arguments that support emotive reactions – 'gibberish', 'vulgar', 'ungrammatical', and so on – have no objective basis, yet

this has not stopped speakers of 'bad' Scots experiencing the double stigma (Gal 2006a) of being neither English nor Scots.

Aitken (1982) challenges linguistic arguments against the legitimacy of Bad Scots based on: (1) hybridity, which exists in forms of speech throughout the United Kingdom (but which, as discussed in the introduction to this thesis, disrupts the notion of minority language standards and distinctiveness); (2) the inherent 'vulgarity' of the glottal stop, which occurs in higher speech forms, just not intervocalically; and (3) 'laziness', which can alternatively be understood as the transparent simplification of irregular verbs [31] or the *principle of less effort* (for instance, the loss of rhoticity in RP, in which /fɔː/ now bears more cultural capital than /fɔːr/ in England). That this last example is inverted in Scotland – i.e., that rhoticity is a conscious prestige feature (Romaine 1978) – further suggests the arbitrariness of Scottish verbal hygiene predicated on social standing.

Nevertheless, these beliefs about urban dialects such as Glesga contributed to the construction of a differentiated, 'pure' form of Scots and Scottishness, which Aitken (1984b) conveys as an imagined ideal. Lallans tends to combine Old Scots or Middle Scots spellings with pronunciation respellings that use the orthographic conventions of Standard English. These are used mostly to represent vowels,[32] for which the depth of English orthography and the breadth of Scots literary precedent offer many alternatives. There are some graphemic combinations not generally available for consonants in Standard English, such as <kk> in *makkin*, which further broaden the range. Digitised dictionaries, the most comprehensive being the Dictionary of the Scots Language (DSL), offer long lists of spelling alternatives.

Unstandardised, and with writers relatively free to include or exclude adapted, conservative, or archaic forms as they see fit, Lallans can appear rather idiosyncratic. Important Scots authorities remain split on whether variability is a strength (e.g., those in Costa 2010) or a

[31] *I seen*, *I been*, etc. in order to create consistency between the past simple tense and past participles. This is the same kind of process which simplified Standard English from the more complex Anglo-Saxon inflexional system.
[32] Aitken (1984a; 1984b) has mapped 19 Scots vowels across different varieties of speech.

weakness precisely due to the stigma it attracts (notably Andy Eagle[33] and, latterly, Matthew Fitt[34] [2016]). Nevertheless, there is a tendency to approximate the fairly regular (Bann & Corbett 2015) Lallans style of the 18th Century, which dates back to Allan Ramsay and is familiar in the writing of Burns (Macafee 2012). This thesis confirms a preference for these iconic forms, which are summarised in Tables 4 and 5, below. Lallans is also the preferred style in educational contexts (Lowing 2017; Shoba 2010), legal contexts (Robertson 2024), and in linguistic guides that are bolder in prescribing or modelling 'correct' forms (cf. Andy Eagle [2022; 2020]; chapter 5 of this thesis). How these norms are used and regulated is a central aim of this thesis.

Speakers and writers 'perform' an 'Ideal Scots' by consistently using distinctly Scots variants – the more archaic and/or rural, the better – when they are available as an alternative to English. It is, essentially, a written variety: "'Pure' Scots, if it ever existed, has ceased to be used in speech, although it has a strong presence in writing; in particular in creative work. The gap between spoken Scots and written Scots has never been wider" (Millar 2023: 174). This relates to two observations pertinent to this thesis and reiterated in its findings: (1) those features most representative of 'Scots' are better suited to the slower pace and care afforded by the written medium, and (2) that 'Scots' is not generally discussed or conceived of independently of its written forms.

The written ideal is typified by the items in columns 1 and 2 of Aitken's (1984b) five-column model (see below), which act as a sample of lexical/orthographical features variable with their English equivalents in columns 5 and 4, respectively. Column 3 lists invariable items according to Aitken, although some, such as *before*, do have 'ideal' alternatives (*afore*). While

[33] Andy Eagle is an elusive yet influential figure in the Scots language movement. Not a scholarly linguist and having been raised abroad, the proposed Scots grammar and orthographic recommendations published on his website *Wir ain leid* (www.scots-online.org) are nevertheless frequently cited by advocates on Facebook, X, and elsewhere online. Despite a reputation for extreme views within the movement, he has established a close connection to various Scots language bodies.

[34] Matthew Fitt is an author, activist, and columnist who, along with James Robertson, founded publishing house Itchy Coo. Through the output of Itchy Coo, they are often credited with popularising an accessible form of traditional Scots.

there is agreement that “no one actually speaks” in this ideal style (Ibid.: 522; cf. also Romaine 1978), the kind of native speaker who most closely approximates Ideal Scots is likely to be among small groups of elderly, working-class, rural speakers. An important difference exists between ‘natural’ vernacular usage of Good Scots and its “abstracted components” (Aitken 1984b: 529) in this sense; middle-class Scots who profess approval of the former may find it amusing or coarse when actually spoken, discouraging its use in children’s speech (Unger 2013).

Scots		Cognates	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	cow	remember
sort	hoose	London	house	mend
	loose	winter	louse	
ay	louse	feckless	loose	always
gey	pey	bite	pay	very
kye	wey	tide	way	cows
een		tie		eyes
shuin	deed	feed	dead	shoes
deave	dee	see	die	deafen, vex
gaed	scart	leave	scratch	went
ben the hoose	twaw, twae	agree	two	
	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/		

Table 4: Aitken’s (1984b: 520) model of speakers’ selectional options between Scots and English

Of prestige forms identified by Aitken, by Bann & Corbett (2015), and by myself (Pottinger 2022), the following are salient in the data of this thesis for their frequent use as unambiguously authoritative Scots spellings (see also Appendix A):

Prestige forms originating in Old/Middle Scots	**Examples**
<ch>	*micht*, *nicht*, *richt* [might, night, right]
<ui> or <uCe>	*guid*, *luik*, *mune* [good, look, moon]
<ei> (and not <ea> or <ee>)	*heid*, *deid* [head, dead]
<y>	*vyce*, *mynd* [voice, mind]
'Purely symbolic' traditional spellings	*finisht*, *throu* [finished, through]
Select spellings	*O*, *twa*, *wird*, *wey/pey*, *mair* [of, two, word, way/pay, more]
Moribund or archaic lexis	*Ilka*, *een*, *gin*, *gey*, *gar*, *mynd* [each, eyes, if, very, make, remember]

Table 5: Examples of prestige Scots spellings and lexis

These features, originating broadly in the 15th and 16th century "heyday" of 'standard' Scots (Scragg 1974: 37), now have a complicated relationship with speech, relative to phonetic urban styles. Some spellings indicate only a graphemic change from the Standard English (e.g., *throu*), or serve as supraregional spellings (e.g., <ui>). Some sound changes or lexical items are abstracted from speech, existing only or predominantly in writing (e.g., *micht; ilka*). A lack of corresponding spoken data is a limitation present in most of the analysis of this thesis, albeit one mitigated by asking authors about their pronunciations or by introducing subtitled videos and book readings where possible. In any case, it is rather clear that the primary function of these features is not to represent the everyday spoken forms of Central Belt Scots. The digraph <ch>, for example, appears to be of historical and literary importance; /x/ is now mostly restricted to proper nouns and localised lexis in Scots speech (Maguire 2012) and, even then, is a low frequency phoneme that has been undergoing replacement by /k/ (Lawson & Stuart-Smith 1999; Stuart-Smith 2008; Stuart-Smith et al. 2007). This makes /x/ in common words like *might* unlikely (although some activists have reintroduced this and other historical features in some spoken contexts). If <ch> is not intended to represent /x/, then replacing one silent digraph with another is a purely symbolic act intended to separate Scots from English, for which there are many similar cases in other languages (see chapter 2).

Despite a fearful impression among some Scots writers that spelling is a 'free-for-all', these features constitute generally agreed norms which, rooted in 18th-century Lallans via the 1947 Makar's Style Sheet, represent a 'standard' of sorts.

> Scots remains […] tied to its capacity to index locality and provenance. Forms of written Scots are loosely united by a set of more or less accepted rules, often based on the 1947 document, such as the rejection of the "apologetic apostrophe"—the use of an apostrophe where English has a consonant, said to construct Scots as a form of defective English.
>
> (Costa 2017: 53)

It is worth stressing that the features laid out in this section are idealised indicators of whether a text is 'Lallans', 'slang', 'Glesga', and so on, and rarely are writers entirely consistent in their usage of a given variety. While otherwise 'traditional', *-ae* and <ei> are not uncommon in Glesga texts, likely due to their appropriacy as phonetic spellings. More recently, Lallans texts have employed innovative spellings. <oo> can replace <ou> to represent /ʉ/ (e.g., *doon* for *down*), which is a common feature of speech across different dialects of Scots (Stuart-Smith 2003: 117-118). Also, the distinctly Glesga <oa> for <o> is increasingly common – perhaps since historical spellings have not presented themselves as alternatives to Standard English spellings (e.g., *on* or *got*). Nevertheless, in a writing tradition with many uncertainties, Lallans norms go some way to representing tangible 'rules' through which writers can seek to achieve both *Abstand* (linguistic distance from Standard English) and *Ausbau* (development of a language through language planning – in this case a type of 'standard') (Kloss 1967).

The apostrophe usage acknowledged by Costa is the most overtly regulated feature in Scots writing. Its use in dialect writing is common in English literature, where readers recognise its substitution of graphemes in Standard English to represent nonstandard pronunciation (e.g., *playin'*). Scots writers continue to use apostrophes well established in Standard English to indicate contraction, elision, or the synchronically opaque substitution of segments (e.g., in possessives). Other exceptions emerge in the language guides analysed in chapter 5. As a roundly proscribed feature among Scots writers, the essence of the matter relates to the relationship between Scots and English, and the almost universal desire among Scots writers associated with the movement to quash the perception of Scots as an illegitimate form of English. Within this commonsense

understanding, the apostrophe is believed to represent deficiency, since it marks that which is 'missing' from the 'correct' Standard English form.

However, it is not axiomatic that the apologetic apostrophe, used by two of the most celebrated Scots writers – Burns and, originally, MacDiarmid – is damaging to Scots, and Selfe's (2021) PhD thesis on the matter challenges the association between the apostrophe and recognition of Scots as an independent language. Millar, too, comments: "too much can be made of this point – in its most extreme form it encourages a paranoid outlook" (2023: 61). In the first instance, as I will show in chapter 5, there is sometimes little rhyme or reason to indicate which apostrophes are 'apologetic' – that is to say, why some are damaging and others not; why some apostrophes are still regarded as permissible,[35] for instance in *e'en* or *sumb'dy*, can only be understood by asking authors directly. Secondly, in relation to clearer instances of apostrophe omission (e.g., *greetin* [*whining*]), Tulloch (1985: 168) recognises "that the majority of readers do not stop to think about the implication of the spelling", at least not in a way that differs significantly from their general attitude towards nonstandard spelling. It is perhaps even arguable that a spelling such as *o'* might lend the otherwise celebrated sense of historical value to writing Scots in the 18th-century style; particularly during the 20th century, a tradition within Lallans writing developed that continued to use apostrophes for this very reason. These objections seem to point towards the apostrophe being a particularly symbolic feature associated with writers' rejection of English; in other words, it is neither self-evident nor generally accepted that the apostrophe begets stigmatisation, but, rather, the practice provides a comprehensible framework among writers for either fomenting or counteracting stigma.

[35] It has been suggested (below) that some acceptable apostrophes have their origin in poetic elision. However, the permissible uses of apostrophes given here are not consistent with those from the guiding texts in chapter 5.
https://www.epicureancure.com/302/a-ferlie-he-spied-wi-his-ee-a-brief-examination-of-the-apologetic-apostrophe/
Accessed 08.03.2022

Verbal hygiene surrounding the apostrophe points to a major driver of language choice which I have been touching on: stigma. Unger's (2013) discourse analysis approach to the construction of Scots found it to be simultaneously celebrated and viewed as 'deficient'; it is a language whose position on the 'linguistic market' (Bourdieu 1991) is dependent on the variety and context in which it is employed (Lowing 2017: 3). Despite the social and sexual attractiveness of Scottish forms of speech, they are often parodied or mocked (Cutler 2016) and "perhaps the majority [of Scottish people] regard their language as being *bad English* or *slang* rather than *Scots*" (Douglas 2019: 24).

This is due in part to insecurity. Until recently, speaking Scots at school could invite physical punishment and there is some suggestion that it is still discouraged by teachers. Among spoken varieties, those who speak rural dialects have more recently been "officially encouraged to maintain their speech in appropriate places at school" (Millar 2017a: 241), while urban dialects are typically subjected to greater stigma. Negative attitudes are shown to have been internalised by some speakers, who perceived Glesga as 'slang' (Macafee 1994; 2000; Menzies 1991), albeit with evidence of covert prestige. There is cause to question whether the perception of stigma is especially keen among Scots speakers. It has been suggested in a group discussion among major figures in Scots language planning that "overt abuse" (Future of Scots 2023: 3) is rare, and that it is more common to experience subtle stigma, indifference, or even "internal" stigma. Support for Scots in broader society – nationally and internationally – may be overlooked when speakers experience this type of sociolinguistic anxiety.

3.7 Contemporary Scots writing

Perhaps the classist overtones of Simon Jenkins's article on James Kelman's *How Late It Was, How Late* would today be more polemical than the object of its attack was in 1994. The second Scottish

Booker Prize winner, Douglas Stuart, notes how Kelman's win helped to remedy the view of Bad Scots as "disruptive" (Flood 2020). Stuart's winning book *Shuggie Bain* (2020), its dialogue written in phonetic Glesga, did not trigger verbal hygiene debates. Overt negative attitudes towards phonetic urban styles have dwindled: Graeme Armstrong's *The Young Team* (2020), a story of addiction and violent crime written entirely in phonetic Lanarkshire dialect (using <oa>, <u> to represent /ʌ̈/, and *ae* rather than *o* for *of*, as well as the symbolic <z> and *-y* endings), enjoyed success both as a Times bestseller and as Scots Book of the Year 2021. William Letford's acclaimed collection of poetry *Dirt* (Letford 2016), written in a similar style, has also been received warmly from both English- and Scots-language perspectives. The decision to use nonstandard spellings in these texts was partly attributed to the authors' recognition of their own voices in the work of Leonard, Kelman, Welsh, or Liz Lochhead.

The Scots movement more broadly has also been relatively well received. For Scots-language institutions, which are deeply integrated as linguistic authorities and legitimating bodies for communities of practice on X and the Scots Language Forum Facebook group, the move online has been a successful one that has been central to the growth of Scots usage and discourse. This digital presence reflects a broader Scots language regeneration movement, which includes a groundswell of literary output and a long-dormant expansion into non-literary domains; Scots has proliferated on social media sites. Young Scots-language writers and activists are popular online – the most salient figure being poet Len Pennie – though they are invariably subjected to some degree of ongoing, linguistically-motivated abuse. I offer a more detailed background of Scots CMC at the beginning of chapter 6.

Within Scots-language activism and literary commentary, celebrating the diversity of linguistic variation is now commonplace. It is a key motivation of the literature-focused Scots Whay Hae project. Popular activist and Scots author Matthew Fitt, along with the publishing house (Itchy Coo) and the journal (*Eemis Stane*) he has co-founded, strives to avoid

prescriptivism. The tagline of *Eemis Stane* urges a view of literature which prioritises content over form and welcomes all styles of Scots. Co-founded with author James Robertson and lexicographer Susan Rennie, Itchy Coo can be said to be at the forefront of Scots-language literary output. With a commitment to strengthening Scots-language education and policy, its "aim is to encourage better understanding and greater acceptance of the Scots Language"[36] and it is frequently recommended as a linguistic model for its accessible style of Lallans. Nevertheless, in its mission statements and reports[37] it does not promote linguistic forms or frame its motives in terms other than promotion of Scots itself, while in its educational outreach it does not correct children's usage.

A new 'apolitical' discourse of Scots has emerged from the development of the progressive trends of the 1990s. The problem of cultural fragmentation in Scottish literature gave way to a celebration of the diversity of both language and identity, which is now seen to give Scottishness its strength. This was something of a global trend following the Cold War, which was slow to materialise in Scotland due to the success of its national cultural holism; there was generally in the West "a more flexible understanding of national cultures" and "internal differences of speech and tradition were coming to be seen as evidence of cultural richness" (Stafford 2012: 234), not of failure. Erstwhile language ideological trends in European nations had clustered multiple identifying cultural features, often beginning with language, which could then be attached to religion, history, descent, and so on (Blommaert & Verschueren 1998).

Female perspectives were belatedly welcome in Scots writing, indicated by the popularity of Val McDermid, Muriel Spark, and Liz Lochhead, and so, too, was the concept of complex ethnic identity. Suhayl Saadi's *Psychoraag* (2004) was published in a mixture of (Glesga) Scots, English,

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[36] http://www.itchy-coo.com/abootus.html
Accessed 19.04.2023

[37] http://www.itchy-coo.com/resources/Itchy+Coo+-+At+a+Glance.pdf
http://www.itchy-coo.com/resources/The+Story+of+Itchy+Coo.pdf
Accessed 19.04.2023
See also Robertson (2013).

and Urdu. In literary criticism, poet and critic Robert Crawford coined the concept and eponymous journal *Scotlands* in order to capture the move towards plurality. A stark example of this change is taken from the 50th Anniversary of the 1962 Edinburgh International Writers' Conference, which recognised in 2012 the problem of speaking of a homogenous national culture, particularly in a well-received impromptu speech by author Ben Okri. At the original conference 50 years prior, a volatile discussion on Scottishness climaxed when MacDiarmid called Scottish novelist Alexander Trocchi "cosmopolitan scum".

It is hoped by a majority in the current movement that unity through plurality can extend to language and, indeed, there are efforts to incorporate spoken Glesga into 'the Scots language'. The Aye Can project, which aims to raise consciousness of Scots, asserts that Glesga is "distinct and colourful but it is still a form of Scots".[38] Meanwhile, the SLC describes it as 'West Central Scots' in its non-hierarchical representation of Scots dialects.[39] Contemporary ideologies of Scots speech can be relatively postmodern, framing Scots as polynomic and hybrid. On accepting a Scots Language Award in 2022, Liz Lochhead told the audience that, when it comes to language, "remember: it's not either/or, it's both/and".[40]

Similar attitudes can be found towards writing standards in literature, but are conflicted in other genres of writing. For instance, it is not uncommon for Scots planning to adopt a liberal discourse of standardisation by drawing on the parallels between the Scottish and Norwegian settings to cite structured variation in pluricentric Nynorsk standards. There are certainly similarities to the extent that the lesser-used, 'low', 'indigenous', 'pure', rural varieties of Norwegian exist on something of a continuum with – but are ideologically differentiated from – the 'colonial', 'high' varieties historically associated with Danish (Sandved 2002). Iconic

[38] https://www.ayecan.com/what_is_scots/
Accessed: 28.06.2023
[39] https://www.scotslanguage.com/articles/node/id/77
Accessed: 28.06.2023
[40] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mLnBzA664CM&t=2184s
See 2:04:10
Accessed: 06.03.2023

orthographic variation based on regional pronunciation is indeed used in Scots literature and CMC: for instance, *f-* for *wh-* in Doric or *d-* and *t-* for *th-* in Shetlandic.

However, we again run into a familiar issue: that Scots writing is undercut by a broader conservative impulse towards the preservation of moribund or arcane speech forms, whereas Norwegian language reforms, with the added benefit of much greater institutional reach in the Modern period, moved in the opposite direction. In short, Scots writers of expository prose in particular do not feel that they can be guided by speech – and everyday speech, this thesis will show, is often incompatible with the goals of Scots verbal hygiene. This is also due in part to the fact of variation in Scottish speech and writing being relatively ordered by domain, unlike the Norwegian situation in which, unusually for a European country, there is essentially "no spoken standard proper" (Røyneland & Lanza 2023: 340) and the standard language ideology of writing is also weak (Ibid.: 345). Norway's relatively egalitarian sociolinguistic situation, ideologically linked to social emancipation, is an abstract aspiration of Scots policy and not necessarily one that planners are prepared to pursue (cf. pp.179-180). In reality, notwithstanding typological differences, some of the difficulties of preserving Scots are perhaps better represented in terms of power and domain by 'smaller' Norwegian languages such as Sámi (Jahr 2000), which has been subjected to Norway's historically much stronger ideology of monolingualism and a decline in the land-based culture in which Sámi developed.

Polynomy, too, remains an abstract aspiration: a system of entirely non-hierarchical orthographic variation and domains of use, which I have also called 'postmodern' language ideology. In her discussion of Corsican orthography, Jaffe (2021) doubts the egalitarian potential of various plural standardisation models that are not truly polynomic. She identifies authenticity and anonymous authority as the competing forces in this respect, with specific reference to Scots, where there is evidence that authentic writers attempt to "opt out of standardization as a field of value rather than compete on its homogenizing grounds" (Ibid.: 451). In other words, the

distinction between authenticity and overt authority collapses in 'true' polynomy. However, Jaffe notes that this concept is highly idealised, easily tainted as it is by the inevitability of hierarchical language ideologies, even where polynomy is "officially enshrined in Corsican language policy and practice" (Ibid.: 442). For instance, authenticity is likely to become an order of its own within classrooms, with the potential to create new forms of insecurity, particular for 'non-native' learners. For Scots, the familiar twin issues of speech-writing differences and modernist verbal hygiene are fundamental barriers to polynomy, driving Scots towards an anonymous Lallans standard rooted in anxiety about language status. In terms of its reliance on conservative literary models for written standardisation, historical approaches have compared Scots with similar trends in the development of literacy practices in Low German (Görlach 1985) and Breton (Calin 2000).

Simultaneously, today there is nevertheless a clear intention of abstracting Scots from a single style, but also from a single ideology or authority, and this is often the tone of introductions, prefaces, editorials, postscripts, and media interviews with authors. The Future of Scots project has published a report (Future of Scots 2023) of its final meeting between public bodies, academics, and public stakeholders. It synthesises overlapping themes that emerged in prior discussions with a range of stakeholders, and which form the foundation for policy and planning efforts. Latent within these themes – education, raising awareness, getting rid of stigma, sustaining speakers, attaining national language status, creating official bodies, and standardisation – was a community-oriented discourse that asks: "what do Scots speakers want" in the "more diverse environment that Scotland is today?" (Ibid.: 5-6). Even though the project was impressive in both the expertise and range of its contributors, exclusively top-down bodies were discouraged unless they had the celebration of diversity as their "underlying principle" (Ibid.: 7).

The celebration of diversity is related to an identifiable de-politicisation of Scots organisations, which now present themselves as neutral open-source information points operating under new names online, the most important of these being the SLC (Scots Language Centre, formerly the Scots Language Resource Centre) and the DSL (the Dictionary of the Scots Language, which incorporates the Scottish National Dictionary). In the Future of Scots report, Scots-language policy is treated as a legal given: "[d]e-politicising Scots was seen as important since the focus should be on linguistic and cultural human rights" (Ibid.: 7). The attainment of these rights is connected in the report to the importance of literacy, of standardisation, and of a sociolinguistic situation without diglossia in which Scots is used in the full range of contexts and registers.

These modernist virtues ultimately aim to serve the empowerment of Scots speakers of every type. Hence, the 'political' element of Scots is understood in reference to its culturally holistic and nationalistic past; standard language ideology, meanwhile, is indexically linked to legal rights and taken to be politically neutral and inclusive of diversity. Latent within this assumption is the tension between authenticity and anonymity, and singularity and plurality – concepts which have become entangled as the Scots movement has attempted to depart from its former model. The remainder of this chapter will be largely dedicated to arguing that, within this mindset, Scots activism can only be partially committed to plurality, 'natural' authenticity, and the idea of a polynomic language.

In the first instance, linguistic choices are not as unregulated as much of the discourse around standardisation would suggest. Writers online continue to face a contemporary iteration of the erstwhile traditional/phonetic orthographical binary (Pottinger 2022). This is despite a conscious shift in linguistic attitudes towards a greater acceptance of 'naturally' authentic language. Earlier, I drew linguistic parallels between the 20th-century Lallans movement and that of the current Scots-language mainstream, but publishers such as Itchy Coo have resolved to

adapt this style to make it more accessible to everyday Scots speakers, while maintaining as much distinctiveness as possible. This type of 'readable' Scots writing today is regarded by Bann & Corbett as primarily a form of lexical transparency:

> …the consistent use of a distinctive orthography is one way of marking a text as 'Scottish', and, furthermore, if a writer wishes to make a text accessible to a broader audience, he or she may choose mainly to use words that are cognate with English, but to spell them in accordance with the conventions of Scots… [T]heir readability relies in part on their relative lexical thinness, with respect to a distinctively Scots vocabulary.
>
> (Bann & Corbett 2015: 72)

It is true that orthography has become a greater marker of distinctiveness in this sense. However, as we shall see in the case studies of this thesis, "lexical thinness" presents more of a problem than is suggested here, with the charge from all sides of 'Scotched English'[41] facing writers who are deemed overly reliant on the orthographic adaptation of English lexis, idiom, and syntax. As I will show in the first case study in chapter 4, writing "to a broader audience" does not suggest an international one, as we might assume, but a native one outside the inner circles of Scots literacy – an audience of Scottish people who rely on their intuitions about everyday forms of spoken language, which are relatively similar to English, when reading and writing in Scots. But, at the same time, orthography that is simply a "modified version of English" is believed to reinforce "the prevailing view of Scots as a debased form of English" (McClure 1985: 204). While I consider this particular argument to be circular, it reflects an important and widespread belief that 'transcription' of the everyday forms of spoken Scots is insufficient.

'Natural' authentic Scots, therefore, is seen as both a means of disempowerment and an effective means of expressing identity. In this way, many Scots writers (such as those in chapter 4) feel they must take on the rather difficult task of reconciling the split of linguistic idealism and realism; this is, in essence, an attempt at producing a language that is recognisable to lay Scottish audiences and driven by the author's 'natural' speech, while asserting, by way of linguistic revivalism, that Scots is distinct enough to be worth describing as a discrete language. The trend

[41] A term used in the Scots Wikipedia community (chapter 5).

towards greater accessibility is also related to an ideological shift away from the parochial image of the 20th-century Lallans cliques. Many in the current movement are all too aware of the association of political nationalism with Scots spelling reform, which has been "as much ideological as 'purely' linguistic" (Bann & Corbett 2015: 92). Ostensibly, all sincere linguistic and thematic contributions to Scots are now acceptable, and literature set outside Scotland (e.g., Kurtoğlu 2011) is especially welcome for its purported ability to expand the functions of Scots and overcome the 'cultural cringe'[42] with which it is often associated.

The Scots movement is not, however, apolitical in a strict sense – it is a movement, after all. In the eyes of its supporters, Scots is clearly something which requires defending, whose survival is synonymous with the protection of something cultural. Sensing this, Scottish people may wonder what this 'something' is, if not the Scottish/British distinction of identity recurring within the Scots/English linguistic distinction. Scots activists speak of validating Scots speakers irrespective of their political persuasions, but this motive alone could arguably place the cause of Scots on a par with advocacy for similar rights for, say, speakers of Liverpool English. Other legitimating factors are brought in: Scotland's literary and sociolinguistic history, and the inclusion of dialects from all over Scotland into 'Scots' – itself a title suggestive of a national outlook. All in all, we might say that the current Scots movement sets out to be a *nationist* or *civic nationalist* project, rather than a *nationalist* one: it seeks to define and promote a Scots that "causes the least offence to the greatest number of people, whether native or not, within the polity" (Millar 2005: 28). In doing so, the activist discourse centres heavily on language itself, and ideas from standard language ideology within it, rather than on a received idea of Scottish people.

However, making Scots 'a language' can oppose the movement's bid for maximal diversity: successful urban phonetic texts are more hesitantly spoken of as 'Scots' and more readily described as 'dialect', 'vernacular', or even 'slang', often by the authors themselves. The

[42] An aversion in Scotland to the very notion of Scottishness, both nostalgic and contemporary. The interpretation of this term has been shaped by verbal hygiene – see further discussion in chapter 6.

movement's discourse insists that that these texts are unequivocally 'Scots', which is unequivocally 'a language'. But in the *Can you write Scots?* section of the Aye Can website, there is a suggestion that Scots writing ought to be more than an intuitive transcription of the writer's speech: "[r]epresenting spoken Scots in a written form is a skill which Scots speakers may not always learn".[43] Leonard, Welsh, and Kelman did not claim to be writing in Scots, and it cannot be assumed that the speakers they intend to represent would call their own language 'Scots', or that they might not instead prefer a separate label. Stuart's *Shuggie Bain* (2020) and *Young Mungo* (2022) are scant in discussions of contemporary Scots writing, referenced not for language, but for Stuart's success as a Booker Prize winner (e.g., McDermid 2021). Meanwhile, all praise for *The Young Team* in the paperback copy refer to "voice", "dialect", or "non-Standard English".

Furthermore, attitudes of the 'old guard' of Scots activism continue in the present day: "[w]hile often claiming to be anti-establishment, 'authentic' and radical, this [phonetic] literary trope had the real effect of further disempowering and marginalising Scots" (Young 2023: 26). Scots-conscious output – texts which begin with introductions outlining the author's view of the language and/or whose authors are involved in language activism – continue to use traditional language that is relatively distant from everyday Scots spoken in the Central Belt, where the authors are mostly from. The lexis and the orthography can often be described as Lallans, with popular examples including Matthew Fitt's *But N Ben A-Go-Go* (2000), the majority of Luath Press and Itchy Coo publications, the *Lallans* journal, and *Eemis Stane* features. Furthermore, within a community of new Scots writers centred around official translation, *Eemis Stane*, and Itchy Coo publications, there are some cases of pseudo-revivalist neologism – a new kind of 'synthetic Scots' in which traditional lexis is reappropriated in a contemporary context. Some examples include *unjoukably* [undoubtedly], *web-stravaiger* [web browser], and the popularisation of *owerset*, which has been used as a neologism for *translate* since the late 1990s.

[43] https://www.ayecan.com/write_scots
Accessed: 20.07.2023

Within some of these works and the discourse around them is the troubled ideology that pervades this thesis. Scots writers draw upon the legitimating power of history and tradition – the *Ausbau* it can offer Scots, particularly as a standard form, and the pride located in the nation's cultural achievements and its 'original' national language. "If a language can be shown to possess a known history, the sense of lawfulness of a language is strengthened" write Milroy & Milroy (2021: 172) and, with great authors, scholars, and queens and kings as benefactors, "[t]he language has not just appeared out of nowhere: it is related to other languages and has an attested lineage." Similarly, in Stewart's (1968) typology of languages, *historicity* lends a language a sense of 'normalcy', especially if this history is written. Yet at the same time, the movement seeks to embrace complex national identities and an ideology of egalitarian inclusivity, but often without recognising that, for some, Lallans still bears the marks of nationalism, classism, archaism, or artifice. This creates a tension between two means of attaining national distinctiveness that are difficult to reconcile and, consequently, the movement faces the challenge of distinguishing itself with idealised, arcane language associated with the middle classes without alienating the urban working classes, who have not typically related to that same language and who have historically resisted its symbolism.

There is a suggestion, then, that while the current Scots movement wishes to leave behind the late 20th-century ideological split among writers, I believe it is simultaneously upheld in a newer form. Poet Harry Josephine Giles (2019) agrees, arguing that the semiotic difference (i.e., that Lallans texts are labelled as 'Scots', whereas the likes of *Trainspotting* are not) and "most of all the class-ridden construction of the literary forms" (Ibid.: 174) explain an ongoing division between writers and the difference in their popularity and readership. But it is not entirely true that "the divide [between Welsh/Kelman and Fitt/Iain W.D. Forde] is primarily one of *intention* rather than one of linguistics", meaning that "the obstacle is not that the prose is dense but that the prose is being transmitted and received as a separate Language" (Ibid.: 172). These texts are not all "unremittingly dense" (Ibid.: 174), as Giles claims. Lexically, the language of

Welsh and Kelman is well-known (e.g., *ken* for *know*), or interpretable by context (*have a deek* [look] *at something*), unlike Forde[44] and Fitt's novels. Orthographically, they are mostly phonetic and, in Kelman's case, only very occasionally nonstandard.

Crucially, these facts are not independent of whether a text is called 'English', 'Scots', or something else, and there is a rule of distinctiveness in Scots writing. It is intuitive within popular belief that, independent of several other social factors, the more similar the language used is to English, the less likely it is that it will be called 'Scots'. As the data in this case study will show, some writers' awareness of this fact influences their language choices. It is precisely *because* they are writing in 'Scots' that writers connected to the movement choose a degree of language less accessible to the monolingual English reader (and, incidentally, most Scots speakers). Nevertheless, Giles is correct to suggest a societal explanation as to why some writers follow a Scots-conscious Lallans tradition and others a Scots-agnostic phonetic one. This split, I venture, can be explained by language ideologies and their relationship to interpretations of class identities and working-class urban speech, and, more specifically, how writers decide to respond to these relationships. I offer some initial arguments for this hypothesis below.

Firstly, the construction of Bad Scots continues in the persistence of negative attitudes towards urban working-class language in Scotland. As Aitken said of changing attitudes at the time of his 1982 paper, one must be wary of the idea that prejudices are disappearing, rather than taking on new forms. Once they are no longer deemed morally acceptable in an explicit sense, they may take on new, subtler, more covert lives. Lowing (2017) has reported that, despite proud claims that Scots is now acceptable in schools, educators continue to 'capitalise' Scots codes in the predictable way, namely that:

> Some codes of Scots, such as Older literary Scots, Scottish Standard English, or even loan words or phrases from 'Older Scots', are normally 'culturally capitalised'. Other forms of Scots, such as a type of Glaswegian used by the NEDs, are often marginalised, considered parochial, and therefore, 'un-capitalised'.

[44] Referring here to *The Paix Machine*.

(Ibid.: 5)

This, it seems, extends beyond speech to the more phonetic orthography used to depict it. Unless it serves the function of depicting deprived post-industrial voices in literature, this style of writing is often discouraged by Scots-language authorities, either directly or indirectly.

For this reason, it is reasonable to hypothesise that some urban speakers (still) do not feel represented by the 'good' Scots that characterises the Scots-language movement. Related to this is the fact that some of the Scottish post-industrial working classes have felt blamed and neglected by both government and wider society, feeling that their speech has been iconised as the language of violence, anger, poverty, and stupidity (Burnett 2021; McGarvey 2018). Although this is a major concern of the Scots campaign and, it is essential to note, a core personal motive for some of its activists, the movement arguably perpetuates the 'low' status of Bad Scots. Public figures who speak or write in the vernacular have resonated with popular audiences – for instance Darren McGarvey, who has investigated the origins and maintenance of these societal trends in various BBC docuseries, the 2022 Reith Lectures, and in his Orwell Prize winner *Poverty Safari* (McGarvey 2018). The experience of disenfranchisement in the work of Welsh, Kelman, and Leonard continues to be a primary influence for popular writers; McGarvey himself uses these three writers to discuss addiction, apathy, mistrust of authority, poor community support, or exasperation with local services, often in reference to language. Welsh's novel was propelled to fame after Danny Boyle adapted it for film – an industry where similar stories (*NEDs; Sweet Sixteen*) have been popular internationally.

Giles wrote *Deep Wheel Orcadia* (2021), a prose-poem using hybrid traditional and innovative Orkney spellings that won the 2022 Arthur C. Clarke Award for science fiction, based on a similar critique of the Scots movement's inclusivity. In the PhD (Giles 2019) from which the text originated, *colonisation* is used to conceptualise a similar model to my own: specifically, that there are hegemonic forces acting on Scots (English), but also within Scots (Lallans). "Scottish

nationhood, literature and language are all shaped by double colonial processes in which Scotland and Scottishness are both colonised and colonising" (Ibid.: 166). Giles uses "colonising" in a similar way to how I have suggested the *erasure* of linguistic forms, identities, and ideologies that fall outside the mainstream, and to how Craig (2018: 38-9) contrasts "projective" (versus "resistant") forms of nationalism in Scottish literature. Scots-language activism has had a tendency to present its issues of resistance, colonisation, or erasure as occurring solely via its relationship with English: the only force of power to be managed. The tensions between Good Scots and Bad Scots show this not to be the case.

Some nuance is required here. Urla et al. (2017) warn against an uncritical application of the "reproduction thesis" (i.e., that homogenising minority-language ideologies are comparable to dominant ones). The historical context and aims of these ideologies differ. The core stated aim of the current Scots movement is not political or economic gain, but the empowerment of marginalised speakers and writers of all kinds, with political stances of all kinds. Any erasure within Scots writing is not generally an exercise in 'hard' power (anymore); it is worth reiterating that, while some of the 'old guard' – who bear the mark of national holism, even aggressive separatism – are still active, Scots today is, due to the trend towards inclusivity, no longer aligned with 'hard' nationalism or with overt prescriptivism. In discursive research, Scots has been found to be "an important part of cultural heritage, but not necessarily of national identity" (Unger 2013: 152). Lallans writers often resent the assumption of nationalism, for instance Stuart Paterson (in his poem *Forecast* [Paterson 2023: 9]) and Emma Grae, who was undecided in the 2014 Scottish independence referendum. *The Herald*, a Scottish broadsheet known for its Scots-language contributions, backed the campaign against independence, and quantitative analysis of Scots tweets has de-emphasised the link with nationalist politics (Shoemark et al. 2017b).

Yet, an overtly 'de-politicised' Lallans itself still covertly subsumes linguistic and language-ideological variation under its centripetal project of advocating something of a national language:

i.e., that which gives Scottish people a unique identity, which requires at least a degree of unifying standardisation, which is officially recognised, which claims to represent speech from across Scotland, and which at times advises against phonetic spelling. Furthermore, due to middle-class associations which the Scots movement is keen to rid itself of, but which it has limited control over, the inevitably hierarchical nature of the project may reify, through fractal recursivity, a class hierarchy.

This brings us to the second issue raised by Giles's thesis: there is also reason to suggest that urban styles hold a different position to other regional traditions such as Orcadian, Doric, or Shetlandic. Unlike Glesga, these dialects are often described by advocates as in need of protection. There is a rational basis for this since these dialects, which have older vocabularies than that of the fast-changing, post-industrial Glasgow dialect, are indeed being eroded despite pride in the local vernacular. The National Library of Scotland's 2023 Scots writer-in-residence post was reserved for a Doric writer in the interest of dialectal preservation. Like Glesga, distinctly regional graphemes are marginal in Lallans-dominant literature and scarcely appear in non-literary texts that call for supraregional spelling. But, despite the relative obscurity of dialects from outside the Central Belt, the idea of an archetypal Scots is nevertheless associated with the working-class speech of those regions (even though it seems written Lallans still does not represent the reality of working-class rural speech to the extent that those speakers would broadly recognise it as 'theirs').

In my interview with translator and activist Thomas Clark, he spoke of the relative lack of stigma and diglossia when arriving to live in the Borders, having moved there from Glasgow. For all the criticism levelled at it, the success of nostalgic literature helped make non-metropolitan language almost synonymous with Scots via the historically celebrated images of Scottishness with which it was associated. Since correctness in Scots writing relies heavily on linguistic precedent, these traditions have given rural writing today a degree of linguistic legitimacy that

phonetic urban writing does not have. Added to this is the fact that the Scots of the Central Belt is more distinguishable from Standard English by pronunciation, and less distinguishable by lexis, than 'synthetic' forms of Scots or other regional ones (McClure 1979: 28). Finally, pre-industrial, rural goings-on lend themselves to older, distinct Scots lexis and more prestigious spellings are better suited, symbolically, to the uniquely Scottish landscape outside the Central Belt. Therefore, the choice between 'good' or 'bad' lexis and orthography has a partly deterministic relationship with the content of literature and, therefore, the geography.

3.8 The languageness of Scots: current ideological debates

Scots's double life as an idealised traditional code and a 'natural' spoken one has created difficulties in clearly defining what Scots is, and there is currently no commonly accepted framework for doing so. I offer the matter some more attention here not only because it is worth reviewing attempts to define the code which is the subject of this thesis, but to show also how the nature of those attempts is ideologically motivated. It is often around the discourse of official 'language' status that many of the questions of this thesis revolve.

Mostly, Scots continues to be framed as a singular 'language' with the potential for some degree of standardisation and use in the full range of written registers. The desire for *languageness* can be described as a subversive practice that seeks to challenge the power of English monolingualism following centuries of stigma, erosion, and dialectalisation.[45] Although the U.K. has never had an official language policy in Scotland, its societal monolingualism by "benevolent neglect" (Millar 2005: 25) of other languages (i.e., an attitude of economic progress in monolingualism) has placed on its speakers an intense expectation of conformity. Some of the

[45] Cf. Millar (2022) for an up-to-date sociolinguistic history.

resistant strategies deployed to raise the status of Scots are described in this section. These strategies almost always rely on an assumption that Scots ought to be considered a discrete language, and that national or regional languages exist *a priori*; I take the view of Gal (2017) and Makoni & Pennycook (2007) that they do not, but are, rather, a construct of modernism. Sometimes, it is possible to distinguish between instances of this assumption being held as truth and instances in which this assumption is taken up in discourse for the valency of its legitimation. Whichever is the case, validation of a diversity of speakers is nearly always the stated aim in pro-Scots discourses, and it is assumed that this cannot be achieved without a modernist vision of literacy, nor without 'language' status.

While the range of language varieties in Scotland related to English are appropriately captured by models of continua, linguists recognise that there are some issues with calling all of these varieties 'Scots'. To do so would show 'Scots' to be in constant use in Scotland, but the predominant narrative of vitality suggests that it is "in terminal decline, at least as an *entity separate from Scottish English*" (Millar 2017a: 241, emphasis mine). In a journalistic article responding to a reader's letter, Peter Trudgill (2021) makes the same distinction: "[p]erhaps the answer is that Mr Cooper used the terms "Scots" and "Scottish English" in his letter as if they are interchangeable. I would like to suggest that they are not." It is normal for the boundaries of unstandardised languages to be vague in popular imagination (Milroy & Milroy 2012: 167), but the case of Scots seems particularly troublesome. This is an issue that empirical sociolinguistic research must contend with: Macafee notes limitations of Sandred's (1983) study of Good and Bad Scots "perhaps for this reason of terminology" (Macafee 2015: 1). Similarly, Hardie (1997: 224-225) reports on the variability of results dependent on 'wide' and 'narrow' conceptualisations of Scots, which themselves vary according to different sites of discourse.

Among speakers, there is a specific confusion relating to the ideological conflict discussed in section 3.7, and which Lowing (2017) has reported in schools: the alignment of 'Scots' with its

capitalised traditional forms and simultaneous attempts to conceptualise as 'Scots' contemporary nonstandard urban speech, despite some speakers' views to the contrary. There is reason to suggest that 'Scots' is most fundamentally conceptualised as an entity lying within the less familiar, more arcane, or more rural realms of the continuum, which finds particular expression in its written form. Let us consider certain facts, namely, that (1) there is so much concern for the survival of Scots and for erosion of the type described by Millar et al. (2014) in Eastern fishing communities; (2) that there is a push for Scots to be recognised as a separate language from English based on *Abstand*; (3) that Scots texts produced by poets, the Scottish Government, and Scots-language organisations, in distinguishing themselves from Standard English, draw significantly from Lallans forms; and (4) that 70% of respondents in the 2011 Scottish Census stated that they could not speak Scots. Some commentators offer this conceptualisation overtly: "*The Scots language:* Several (closely) related spoken dialects underpinned by a literary tradition employing established and prestigious (pan-dialect) orthographic conventions" (Young 2023: 21).

Is Scots a 'real language'? The pervasiveness of a language ideology is found, even among some linguists, in relentless attempts to settle this impossible question. Regardless, it seems that Scots is increasingly described as a language. Despite shortcomings due precisely to semiotic difficulties, the 2011 Scottish Census may have gone some way in 'naming Scots into being' (Sebba 2019). The Census generated interest among the public in 2011, then again in 2022: one Reddit user who was surprised by the question posted on r/Scotland, asking if Scots was "an official thing".[46] The thread generated just under 400 comments in one day, overwhelmingly in support of the language status of Scots, providing informed evidence and online resources. The 2011 questions were not aptly constructed for enumerating speakers with sufficient accuracy (Macafee 2017; Sebba 2019), but campaigners have used the reported numbers – typically that there are around 1.5 million speakers – as evidence of language status, although only 1.1%

[46] https://www.reddit.com/r/Scotland/comments/t9qk1q/one_of_the_questions_i_had_to_fill_in_on_the/ Accessed: 09.03.2022

reported speaking Scots at home.[47] A comparison with the 2022 results, for which the question was the same for all intents and purposes,[48] showed an increase in those reporting skills in Scots.[49] Some successful authors following the urban phonetic tradition, such as Colin Burnett, have welcomed the 'Scots language' label as a means of validating their everyday spoken language.

Further policy moves – which include the (re)introduction of Scots into primary school teaching, promotional campaigns by the SLC, and recognition by the UK government and UNESCO – have increased public awareness, although it is questionable how far these moves in education (Costa 2015; Lowing 2017) and in government (Millar 2006) translate to increased usage. The Aye Can campaign, dedicated to a clearer understanding of Scots among speakers, was set up in response to the conceptual ambiguities encountered in the 2011 Census. Scots is now being discussed on popular fora as a language to be celebrated: documentaries aired on mainstream British TV channels – *Secret Scotland with Susan Calman* (Channel 5) and *Great Coastal Railway Journeys* (BBC) – feature young and influential online figures such as singer Iona Fyfe and journalist Alistair Heather advocating for the recognition of Scots, in Scots. Likewise, Scots is regularly reported on as a language in *The Times*. Unsurprisingly, within Scotland similar media representation is much greater.

For a set of codes that many have taken to be dialects of English, Scots also has impressive scholarly and lexicographical traditions that have produced physical attestations to its boundedness (detailed dictionaries, journals, genealogies, maps, curricula, and so on). For all its ambiguities, this somewhat sets Scots apart in the broader minority language landscape: despite

[47] https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/census-results/at-a-glance/languages/
Accessed 13.08.2024

[48] A National Records of Scotland (2017) report also recognised confusion surrounding the concept 'Scots' among respondents. It includes a suggestion that a short definition of Scots be included in the 2022 Census, which was not provided. There was a slight change to the 2022 question format to encourage the distinction between Scots and Scottish Gaelic.

[49] https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/2022-results/scotland-s-census-2022-ethnic-group-national-identity-language-and-religion/#section7
Accessed 13.08.2024

“striking” (Loester 2009: 98) sociolinguistic parallels with Bavarian, for instance, Scots activism is “far more organised and visible” (Ibid.: 99). The vigour of scholarship and activism is understood within Scottish national and literary history, and there is a tendency to highlight the role of this history in making Scots ‘unique’ as a dialect of English (cf. Millar 2017a: 231).

For precisely this reason of uniqueness, McClure (1979) argues for the *languageness* of Scots on the basis that it is not derived from Modern English, but has approximated it. But this argument relies once again on an assumption that distinct and pure languages exist; one could, just as easily and arbitrarily, describe a situation in which speakers have acquired a language that is mostly Modern English, with some continuation of Scots lexis and syntax. Authoritative texts may argue that the ‘language’ label cannot be disputed (e.g., those analysed by Niven [1998]), but ultimately the status of Scots as a language or dialect cannot be stated. When attempting to answer some of the diagnostic sociolinguistic questions, the ambiguities and dualities persist, and we find ourselves replying both *yes* and *no*: is Scots mutually intelligible with English?; is there a shared culture between England and Scotland?; is there a political border?; do Scottish people view Scots as a language?

Yet, within the Scots movement, little room for resistance to the ‘language’ label is afforded to those who the movement, with honesty, intends to support. I have described the conditions of a metadiscursive double consciousness among language activists: that Scots is a living, varied language which belongs to speakers on the one hand (the diversity discourse), but also that Scots is an old language with a literary tradition (the modernist discourse which constructs origins and a hierarchy of norms). The incorporation of most non-standard Scottish speech into the same discrete language is now the predominant description provided by institutional bodies and activists, who seek to provide an inclusive and unambiguous definition in order to promote awareness among everyday speakers. At the same time, the more covert framing of Lallans and rural dialects as the ‘true’ forms of Scots necessitates an erasure of urban

dialects and, one expects, many working-class Glaswegians in particular may be ambivalent about their speaking 'Scots'. When this disjunct is recognised by speakers as problematic – i.e., when those speakers do not recognise idealised forms of Scots as 'theirs' (e.g., in Macafee 2017: 36) – the activists' modernist metadiscourse of languageness produces material effects that are contrary to its aims. For their specific aims centred around working-class Glesga, a postmodern view of linguistic concepts – of the value of hybridity, innovation, and orality, for instance – will likely be beneficial. This is overshadowed, however, by an overarching fear that a modernist interpretation of those concepts continues to delegitimise Scots.

Instances of ideological erasure reinforce this perspective. While some lay speakers accept the *languageness* of Scots, deviant definitions among others (that they speak a dialect of English, or 'slang', or that Scots is not a "viable, contemporary language which can be used across a wide range of registers" [Unger 2010: 114]), who nevertheless recognise the power differential that underpins monolingualism, are very often framed by activists as having internalised sociolinguistic subjugation and ignorance, from which they can be liberated through an awareness of a core assumption: that Scots is a 'real language' and that this term/concept bears an Aristotelian meaning that is the same for all. This practice ranges from the gently avuncular to the overbearing. "Sometimes people call the way they speak slang or Scottish slang", reads the *What is Scots* section of the Aye Can website. "Often people actually mean Scots but may not have heard of the term or aren't sure what it means."

This narrative conceals Millar's (2005: 51) observation regarding these deviant definitions: "that is their privilege; such a view has been created [...] not only by an Anglicized political elite, but also by a cadre of language activists whose use of Scots distances them from the usage and experience of native speakers." There is no doubt that some Scottish people – Scots speakers, even – stigmatise deviation from SSE, though they now seem to be in the minority. Nevertheless, there is a widespread tendency within the Scots movement to ignore

Millar's second description of Scots-language ambivalence as a product of that very movement's standard language ideology, either because its abstraction of 'the language' from the contexts of authentic speech is unwelcome (as documented in Occitan [Costa 2024]) or leads to hierarchical insecurity (as documented in Corsican [Jaffe 1999] and raised as an issue in Scots [Macafee 2017: 36]).

No true Scotsman argumentation transforms critical stances, as Grae does (2022b; 2022c; interview in chapter 4), into a singular "hatred of Scots" rooted in aggressive Unionism, or as an innocent ignorance of the "rich history and culture" of "a legitimate language", rooted in "internalised bias" (Grae 2022b). Softer versions of this practice in the contemporary liberal mindset continue to serve sceptics an ultimatum by positioning them as lacking in 'awareness' of the 'fact' of Scots's languageness (Scottish Executive 2007: 9). 'Postcolonial' insecurity is mobilised to this effect via the concept of 'cultural cringe' (cf. section 6.3.2 of this thesis). Within sociolinguistics, too, there is some tendency to assume that a rejection of the 'language' label is an affliction of the power imbalance from which hierarchical nomenclature was born. But Millar has repeatedly made the point that, in a similar way to relatively successful Norwegian literacy planning consultations (Røyneland 2016), language planning and policy ought to consider whether speakers want a sociolinguistic situation in which Scots is the language of literacy and communication across registers (e.g., Millar 2018: 215). There is substantial evidence that some do not (e.g., Coeyman 2024a; 2024b; Scottish Government Social Research 2010; Unger 2013), yet Scots activism appears, on the whole, reluctant to pay attention to such views. Its goals are less likely to be met as a result.

This disjunct between speakers and language advocates based on differing conceptualisations has been discussed within the somewhat comparable ideological context of Occitan. Costa (2024) has argued that revitalisation efforts were hampered by misunderstandings between these groups about the languageness of Occitan, and has called for a serious

consideration of speakers' refusal of the 'language' label. Despite negative connotations, they prefer 'patois', says Costa, since a patois "cannot be autonomized as a code or be reduced to pure denotation. It cannot be abstracted from the social and material conditions of those that spoke it" (Ibid.: 17). Authenticity is preserved, whether or not one sees this type of authenticity as a deconstruction or a continuation of the hegemonic differentiation of minority languages from standard languages schematised in the 'axis of modernity'. The discussion of Occitan poet Victor Gelu's artistic relationship with the workers of Marseille, and his preference for linguistic realism over Romanticism or idealism, recalls the portrayal of the Glaswegian experience of failing public services in the work of Leonard or Kelman. None of these writers saw their output as belonging to a distinct minority 'language', and all defined themselves in opposition to modernist minority-language practices that preferred prestige, literary usage, and antiquity.

It is a shame that Costa's perspective is a rare one, since it helps to engage more satisfactorily with 'language' scepticism from the perspective of the minority-language speaker. Speakers are told frequently that their speech constitutes a 'real language' because it is ontologically tied to a prestigious entity with a long literary history. However, they may reject the terms of this nomenclature or share a different understanding of the indexicalities – the linkages between language use, identity, and wider social concepts or phenomena – of 'Scots', 'language', or even 'slang'. In a similar manner to Occitan speakers, a fundamental basis for scepticism towards Scots activism rests on the ideology of authenticity, which believes that Scots-as-a-language does not serve the function of representing 'real' Scottish 'voices' in writing. The construction of an anonymous, decontextualised Scots could reasonably be seen by speakers as counterintuitive or self-defeating given the arguments put forward (see above) for considering Scots as a language. If there's "naethin [nothing] special about Scots" (Douglas 2022: 3) precisely because it is an official language like any other, then why, speakers might ask – particularly if their usage is not recognised in the 'standard' linguistic model which represents this discourse of

anonymity – is the cause important at all? Similarly, if Scots is intended as the voice of everyone and no one, but is not, apparently, a nationalist project, then what is it about – who is it for?

Naturally, British and Scottish people interpret language activism as inherently ideological and will often look to infer answers where they are not well understood. Sometimes, given the euphemistic nature of verbal hygiene, sceptics interpret this ideology as a nationalist agenda. Some view the link between 'hard' nationalism and Scots as fundamental to the movement's cause, in spite of attempts at de-politicisation. The evidence suggests that this link is not at all central to the current movement. But, due to the surviving 'old school' of separatist Scots activism on the one hand, and the tendency within standard language ideology to align nation and language on the other, sceptics have some basis for thinking that it is. Some 'apolitical' Scots activists who do receive misdirected criticism of this type make the same reductive error as their detractors if they assume that such criticism must be a product of unionism.

But nationalist politics features only occasionally in metadiscourse. Most often, the discussion centres on language itself, where strategies to overcome the conflict of diversity are common. Young's (2023) book is a recent and detailed defence of Scots-as-a-language[50] in which the author, by all accounts a talented researcher, makes quite clearly interested arguments born of the *Scots-is-a-language* orthodoxy as it relates to ideologies of anonymity and authenticity-as-a-project:

> Although the [Good Scots/Bad Scots] distinction has largely faded, it continues to cast a long shadow. Some writers dismiss 'dictionary' Scots as an idealised, rigid or purist form of the language, disconnected from both regional dialect and the fluid mixing of most vernacular speech. This positioning typically rejects any form of standardisation. It is difficult to overstate how bizarre this attitude is.
>
> (Young 2023: 26)

The final line betrays ideological erasure. It seems the idea is "bizarre" to Young since he, expressing this sentiment repeatedly, has not considered speakers' motivations for viewing Scots

[50] Attempting to provide an archetypal defence of *languageness* would be unfaithful to the varied perspectives within the Scots movement, developed in part from the impressive body of scholarship in which activists are generally educated. They tend to share, however, the desire to elevate Lallans.

as anything other than a collective minoritised language in need of linguistic revitalisation and a written standard. He assumes, against evidence to the contrary, that dialects of Scots are on a par of cultural capital (later calling the Good Scots/Bad Scots distinction "long outdated" [Ibid.: 179]). There is a record of presenting ideal Scots forms as universal when they are, in fact, 'marked'. Sandred (1983: 57) reported that Good Scots lexis such as *dreich* was viewed with suspicion by working-class speakers, but that this reality was erased when these words are otherwise described as "classless". When the good/bad distinction becomes unavoidable for Young, he presents the case that authors who use phonetic spelling to subvert the hegemony of English possess a "deeply conservative political ideology" – again, in direct contrast to those writers' stated beliefs.

This argument is based on traditional views of literacy and 'language': specifically, the virtues of distinctiveness, purity, and historicity. Young's singular vision cannot permit alternate forms of resistance: "[w]hat is presented as a rebellious linguistic counterculture in reality colludes with the long-term goal of the British state: to channel and assimilate divergent narratives of identity so they can never challenge its hegemony" (Ibid.: 125). Rather than accepting innovative urban writing as a means of expressing 'natural' language, "loyalty to the English language is internalised" (Ibid.: 123) and, therefore, authors' "superficial appropriation of the Scots language is far from 'authentic'" (Ibid.: 126). This final comment suggests that authenticity can only be sought as a project – by learning and producing Lallans norms, not by following intuitively 'natural' phonetic spellings.

To take a stark example, Young advocates for the *languageness* of Scots via an unscrupulous pro-standard attitude and the benefits of its anonymity. He responds to two common problems associated with standardisation: firstly, the problem of homogenising regional variability and, secondly, that fact of a 'standard' Lallans having emerged from the practices of the cultural elites in Edinburgh:

> [T]here are two obvious responses. The first is that Scots already has a well-established '95%' standard that with very little upgrading could be 'elevated' to Standard Scots. The advantage of building on the current convention is that it is not 'Embra [Edinburgh] Scots' but a variant evolved specifically to be pan-dialectal. To be fair, it is indeed based on Central Scots, but that dialect has by far the most speakers anyway [...].
>
> (Ibid.: 293)

Aside from the rather obvious contradiction regarding the standard's basis in a prestige dialect, orthographic agreement cannot be said to be anywhere near 95%, and to attempt to rely on this figure is to draw upon a very narrow definition of 'Scots' yet again. Young's questionable interpretation of statistics appears elsewhere in his book: dubious argumentation is used to dismiss a 64% agreement with the statement 'I don't really think of Scots as a language, it's more just a way of speaking' (Scottish Government Social Research 2010) and to authenticate what is likely an unreliable 2011 Census estimation that 1.5 million Scottish people speak Scots (cf. Sebba 2019). Furthermore, *languageness* is aligned with the existence of a standardised spelling system, without qualification. This view is not uncommon. Commenting on Scots educators and artists who advocate a *laissez-faire* attitude which favours the creative expression afforded by *ad hoc* 'phonetic' spelling, Andy Eagle states:

> Ultimately such an approach treats the dialects of Scots as dialects of English, where the standard form from which they deviate is Standard English. Such a position would exclude Scots from inclusion in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.[51]
>
> Eagle 2022: 95

It is obvious at this stage that the linguistic and conceptual delineations of 'Scots' are difficult to draw. So, where can linguistic authority be found? This is a question with many answers. For Young, it is found in the collective action of status-building, to which common Lallans norms are apparently tied. For others, however, where linguistic usage is too variable or too ambiguously defined, correctness in Scots can absolutely become a matter of authenticity – of who the author is, what authority they hold, and in which context they are writing.

[51] Eagle's argument is ultimately made in support of standardisation, which is *not* a stated requirement under part II of the ECRML.

Costa (2017) cites the example of negative reception to 'patronising' menus, written in Glesga, in the Glasgow restaurant of a London-based burger chain. The restaurant was criticised online and in the press for reasons that suggest: "[t]he absence of a publicly available standard makes the use of Scots tied to who the user is, and to where they originate—socially as well as geographically" (Ibid.: 62). Incidentally, some of the language used – *mair* [more], *oor* [our], *fae* [from] – could be used in an authoritative Lallans text. Yet, the relative anonymity of online spaces has made precisely this question of identity a problem (cf. chapters 5 and 6). Language is just one piece of the puzzle, and the absence of a Scots standard highlights the otherwise subtle fact that "[s]tandardization is only one kind of language regime" (Gal 2006b: 17). Other delineations of right and wrong rise to the surface; for the restaurant menu, the humorous intentions of an outsider (a London-based restaurant) signalled inauthenticity.

Costa's paper argues that, without an official standard, it is both the adherence to loose norms, which function as recognisable 'types', as well as other, non-linguistic 'regimes' that create authority in Scots; it is a "game […] whose rules are more complicated than the absence of a standard would have new players believe" (Costa 2017: 50). Not only do I agree with this assessment, I use it as a point of departure for this thesis, in which I attempt to delve into these 'rules' and their reasons. The case of the burger restaurant highlights the tension between those expectant of authenticity, who look for 'natural' speakers, and attempts by the Scots institutions to anonymise Scots: talk of the menu on the SLC's Facebook page was reluctant to dismiss its orthography since there is, officially, no established notion of 'correct' spelling in Scots – authority was expected to reside in language, rather than in the author. This very same tension arises in chapter 5 of this thesis, in which Scots institutions make the same reservations regarding correctness after an American teenager had supposedly 'faked' the majority of Scots Wikipedia.

Addressing the process of semiotic delineation and 'correct' usage within it becomes a matter of sociolinguistic and language-ideological research. I show in chapter 4 how, for skilled

Lallans writers, authority in literature is found in a project of cultivating linguistic norms that support a heritage narrative, itself emerging from a desire for *Scotsness* and *languageness*. A handful of Lallans norms are more overtly prescribed for expository prose in chapter 5, but language guides do not satisfactorily meet Wikipedia editors' expectations of a written standard; where guidance is unworkable, identity becomes one indicator of authority among editors. In chapter 6, 'outsiders' to Scottish culture deem a more caricatured representation of Scottish identity to be the predominant concern relating to language use, while 'insider' ideologies are more complex and conflicted than they are sometimes portrayed to be.

Part 2: Case Studies

4 The Case of Literary Writers

4.1 Why literature?

The previous chapter indicated that, historically, writing in Scots has been a predominantly literary practice. I have suggested that literary styles and attitudes towards them have driven the understanding of which spellings are 'established', and therefore which norms are appropriate for use in other, non-literary genres. The long, proud tradition of Scots poetry and prose explains what observable linguistic standards exist today; the body of written Scots that exists, and from which Scots speakers learn written norms, is mostly literary. I have also observed that a recurring theme among linguists, writers, and laypeople interested in Scots activism is the significance of its literary history and Scots has been described by linguists as distinct from other codes related to English for this reason (Aitken 1982: 30; 1984b; McClure 1985; Millar 2017a: 231). The longevity of Scots literature in British culture is seen by many as a justification for according Scots language status; it seems that those attached to the notion of Scots writing as a minoritised-language project seek to attribute to the language the symbolic weight or "cultural capital" (Bourdieu 1991) of a literary tradition. Scots writers of all styles are inevitably defined in relation to this legacy, including those who have ruptured the established tradition, constituting a major site of ideological contestation in Scots writing.

As attempts are made to increase the output of Scots beyond literature, a distinction is typically made in the appropriacy of different spellings for use in literary and non-literary contexts. Two writing guides – *Scots Warks* and the *RRSSC* (cf. chapter 5) – have recognised a greater degree of orthographic freedom in literature. Investigating which styles are discouraged

in expository prose, and why, will also inform this thesis; as I will explore further in chapter 5, spellings that aim at quasi-phonetic representation of contemporary working-class speech in the Central Belt are generally limited to literature or a certain type of non-standard CMC more reluctantly labelled 'Scots', and they are treated separately to traditional Scots styles in literary scholarship (Calin 2000; Tulloch 1985).

A principal aim of my thesis – to investigate why different Scots writers choose different styles – is particularly concerned with this style of 'Bad Scots', for which a satisfactory account must inevitably consider not only the contexts in which it is excluded, but that in which it appears most. To understand if and how negative attitudes towards Bad Scots persist, I turn to the genre from which ideological debates on orthography originate, and where urban styles have enjoyed success. I will test whether ideological patterns can be observed among literary writers, who, in contrast to the genre(s) of writing investigated in the following chapter, operate in a relatively unregulated zone. To investigate the Good Scots/Bad Scots question and its relationship to the Scots movement more broadly, for this case study I have interviewed a selection of literary Scots writers to discover, with a focus on spelling and some lexis, their motivations for using Scots and their response to different styles of Scots. A similar methodological approach to innovative and improvised practices in literary prose has been adopted by Sebba (2000) for authors of British Creole.

I begin this chapter by providing details of data collection and the sampling of interviewees. An analysis which compares the ideologies and language use of the interviewees is then carried out and organised by theme. Then, I situate the findings within the broader discussion of the thesis, exploring how the interviewees' responses bear upon the usages and 'stories' of Scots beyond this case study. In this discussion, I address the problem that contemporary Scots literature faces in setting out to embrace cultural and linguistic diversity in a language historically tied up in national holism and nostalgia: if Scots writers continue to

participate in the erasure of written urban dialects in favour of traditional Lallans forms, how does this coexist with those writers' interest in the validation of urban working-class speech and the rejection of stereotypically rural or nationalist imagery historically associated with Lallans?

In responding to this trade-off, Lallans writers appeal to three divergent ideological forces. Woolard's (2016) account of Catalan metadiscourse reports a general trend away from natural authenticity towards anonymity, as well as authenticity as a project. This chapter shows that those tied to the Scots movement have moved towards juggling all three phenomena. They approximate everyday spoken Scots while also drawing on the past success of Lallans symbolism as a resource in the creation of a credible and 'neutral' Scots literacy. For some, the importance of elevating Scots to the status of 'a language' is a narrative used to rationalise the contradictions within this practice, which are otherwise difficult to overcome. The attempt to iconise Lallans as 'the Scots language' is intended to validate a broad range of speakers of all regions and social backgrounds. This effort is rhetorically underpinned by the urgency of self-realisation for stigmatised Scots speakers. But this cannot happen without conflict. While the movement may appeal to ideas of universality and historicity in its bid for languageness, it relies on conceptualisations which are not shared by the urban phonetic writers (nor the full linguistic and social variety of Scots speakers). As such, the problem of authenticity has not been overcome, as Giles's (2019) commentary on "civic nationalist Scots" illustrates.

4.2 Data

Semi-structured interviews were used – a format which, by comparison with a questionnaire, allows participants to respond in greater detail and in dialogue with the researcher. Interviewees were prompted on the following themes:

- The motives of writers who use 'bad' and 'good' styles (including some who use both)

    - for using nonstandard or Scots spellings, rather than Standard English ones
    - for specific orthographic and lexical choices
- The attitudes of these writers
    - on which texts can/cannot act as a model for spelling in both literary and non-literary contexts

Authors could be prompted to elaborate on their initial responses: often, answers useful to this investigation only became apparent in follow-up questions. This was particularly useful when vague motives for language choice were given; "just because they popped into my head maybe, or I liked it, or I liked the way it fitted into the bit of writing I was doing" (Stuart Paterson [SP]). While informative in one sense (we should not assume that spelling choices are always connected to strongly held beliefs about wider society), such vague responses are an inherent limitation of the decision to interview writers of fiction. But had comments such as this been given in a questionnaire or a more structured interview format, the cultural significance of those spellings or any secondary motives that interviewees might hold would have been matters of inference or speculation.

Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed (a preferred method in qualitative research [Corden & Sainsbury 2006: 6-7]). Before offering their consent, interviewees were made aware of the ethical procedure for handling their data (see Appendix B), a procedure which had been approved by the University of Oxford's Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC).[52] Occasional Scots syntax and lexis are represented, with Standard English glosses given in square brackets. Mostly Standard English spelling conventions have been used: firstly, because, by my estimation, interviewees spoke mostly SSE in interview. Of course, SSE can be understood as belonging to the Scots continuum, and therefore existing outside the bounds of English; some of the interviewees may take this stance. Nevertheless, without an agreed-upon framework for

[52] Reference no. R84436/RE001.

delineating English and Scots, it cannot be stated at which point interviewees were speaking which code. To the extent that they did speak Scots, the transcripts may be viewed as glosses. Secondly, given the variable, ideological, and sometimes inconsistent nature of spelling choices and their relationship to speech, about which I will say much more in this chapter, I take the view that these choices could only reasonably be made by the interviewees themselves. Nevertheless, where Scots lexis occurred or where an interviewee's shift to a noticeably more vernacular pronunciation was considered important, these choices have been represented orthographically.[53]

Interviewees were sent transcripts for approval. The purpose of this was not to permit them to modify the content, but an ethical decision to allow them to consider the representation of their views before the deadline to withdraw from the study. One interviewee – Ashley Douglas – preferred not to be quoted from the verbatim transcription of spoken language, preferring instead to write the permissible quotations herself, in Standard English, without making discernible changes to their content. Six interviews took place online and two in person, following participants' own preferences. Unfortunately, the quality of their internet connections and their facility with video conferencing software could not be controlled, and sound quality was occasionally poor. Where sound quality impeded interpretation, I have used parentheses when a likely interpretation was possible and '*(unclear)'* when it was not. All transcripts were suitable for analysis except for the interview with Emma Grae, for which field notes were taken, with relevant quotations transcribed. Contextual information provided by extralinguistic or paralinguistic features is given in italics and parentheses (e.g., '*(nodding)*').

[53] I have aimed mostly for a rough representation of nonstandard speech, using common phonetic spellings typical of the Central Belt. Where pronunciations were deemed traditional, or were used in combination with traditional lexis, Lallans spellings were used. There is a risk here of reifying some of the ideological divisions that this thesis observes, but by offering some semblance of the writers' own orthographic choices I consider this approach to be less damaging than using any other single orthographic style, e.g., Standard English.

In the analysis, I have included data from the works of poetry or prose written by each respondent to compare attitudes with orthographic styles. I asked authors directly about some of their spelling choices from these works of fiction, particularly choices that are not obviously explained by pronunciation.

4.3 Sample

Interviewees were approached on the basis that they are published Scottish authors of prose fiction (including children's literature and literature in translation), poetry, and drama. Many have also contributed in various ways to Scots-language education and public debate. They were also selected to represent both sides of the stylistic division between traditional Scots (Lallans) and urban Scots, although some are intermediate, using hybrid forms or both urban and traditional styles for separate functions within the same text. Popularity and influence in Scots were important criteria when selecting writers, and this drew in interviewees mostly from Glasgow and surrounding areas.

Scots literature has typically been understood as an older, white, male domain, despite contributions by writers who do not fit within this majority. With this in mind, I contacted writers from a range of regional backgrounds, ages, races, and sexual/gender identities,[54] with some agreeing to be interviewed. In addition, a varied sample invites balance and contrast of opinion, while allowing the researcher to investigate the urban/traditional issue across different areas of Scots literary writing; for example, urban styles do not tend to appear in translations. At a more general level, the sample was designed to capture the largest possible range of attitudes and motivations among contemporary writers of Scots.

[54] Signifiers of identity listed in Table 6 were self-declared or could be suitably inferred from information given in the interview.

Most interviewees engage regularly in public discussions of their work and publicise their views on Scots via podcasts, TV and radio shows, public interviews, conferences, talks, editorials, articles, books, or social media. All have experience with some form of public engagement regarding Scots. There is, therefore, reason to believe that they are less likely to be unsettled by the publication of data in this thesis, to which they have agreed to have their real names attributed so that I may set their responses in the context of the critical reception and linguistic content of each literary text. Furthermore, interviewees were invited to maintain contact with the researcher and were offered the opportunity to withdraw their data after reading their transcripts.

The interviewees, who will be referred to in this chapter by their initials, are as follows:

Name and age	**Demographic information**	**Role(s) vis-à-vis Scots**	**Additional information**
Ashley Douglas, 30	Woman, mixed-race. Working-class childhood. Edinburgh and Fife.	Translator, editor, and researcher	Scots-language consultancy, translation, and public engagement writing and speaking for important public bodies (e.g., National Library of Scotland; Historic Scotland). She is an editor at *Eemis Stane* and translates children's stories for Itchy Coo. She co-translated the Scots Firefox browser.
Emma Grae, 29	Woman, white Irish[55] Catholic. Working-class. Clydebank.	Journalist and novelist	Was part of the Scots Warks project, for which she wrote a guide to editing. *Be Guid Tae Yer Mammy* won Scots Book of the Year 2022. Scots-language journalist for *The National*.
Hamish Macdonald, 64	Man. Working-class. Clydebank.	Poet and novelist	2022 national slam poetry champion. Was the National Library of Scotland's first Scots Scriever (Scots writer-in-residence). Held a Robert Burns Writing Fellowship, along with various other Scots-language awards, projects, and residencies. Writer for Itchy Coo.
Wulf Kurtoğlu, 66	Woman, white. Working-class.	Novelist and linguist	*Nom de plume* of accomplished Scots linguist and lexicographer Caroline

[55] Writers who identify as Irish Catholic or similar are not describing their national origins but rather their ethnic identity; by birth and upbringing they are Scottish. In chapter 3 I mentioned the importance of this ethnic (as well as linguistic and religious) divide in Scotland, and Glasgow in particular.

	Lanarkshire/West Lothian.		Macafee. Notable work includes: editing a series of Jack Aitken's papers, working on the Scots National Dictionary and Thesaurus, publishing a book on Glasgow speech, contributing to *Lallans*. Macafee was involved with the Scots Spellin Comatee.
Stuart Paterson, 57	Man, white. Working-class. Cornwall/Ayrshire.	Poet	Scots Writer of the Year 2020. Has been poet-in-residence for BBC Scotland, the SLC, and Dumfries & Galloway. Has been interviewed by *The Guardian* and *The Herald*.
Thomas Clark, 42	Man, white. Working-class. Hamilton (South Lanarkshire).	Translator and editor	Translator for Itchy Coo and co-founder of *Eemis Stane*. Judge for the Scots Language Awards. Keen interest in Scots-language engagement in schools. Co-translated the Scots Firefox browser.
Willy Maley, 62.	Man, white Irish. Working-class. Glasgow.	Playwright and critic	A figure in Scottish theatre since the 1990s. Professor of Scottish literature and has written several papers on James Kelman.
Raymond Wilson, 28	Man, white Irish. Working-class. Clydebank.	Poet and performer	Poetry is mostly published on Instagram. Has taken performances to important events, including the Edinburgh Fringe.

Table 6: Interviewees' biographical information

The primary texts analysed here, and a sample of notable features used, are as follows:

Initials	**Notable works**	**Key features of spelling and lexis used within works**
AD	*The Nichtingale* (from *The Itchy Coo Book o Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales in Scots* [Fitt & Robertson 2020])	Lallans: <ch> (e.g., *nicht* [night]) <ui> (*guid* [good]) <y> (*vyce* [voice]) <i> (*wird* [word]) <ei> (*heid* [head]). Also *tung* [tongue], *ilka* [each], and *een* [eyes].
EG	*Be Guid Tae Yer Mammy* (2021); *The Tongue She Speaks* (2022a)	Variable Lallans/phonetic Glesga. *Be Guid* varies between different generations, using more Lallans for older characters. For the young protagonist, *The Tongue* includes both: • Phonetic Glesga: <oa> (*toap* [top]) and *th*-fronted <f> • Lallans: <ch> and <ei> as above, and *twa* [two].
HM	*Sing Like a Linty*;[56] *Frescoes*	Lallans: <ui>, <y>, <ei> as above. *Een*, *airts* [regions],

[56] https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poem/sing-like-a-linty/

	in Anatolia;[57] *Kreshchatyk Park*[58]	*afore* [before]. Also Glesga <u> (*burd* [bird]).
WK	*Braken Fences* (2011)	Lallans: <ch>, <ui>, <y>, <i> <ei> as above. <ee> (*ceevil* [civil]). <eu> (*beuk* [book]). *Ilka*, *twa*, *gin* [if], *een*, *ettle* [try].
SP	*Wheen* (2023)	Lallans: <ch>, <ui> <y>, <ei>, <i> as above. *Ilka*, *een*, *ettle*, *gin*.
TC	*Animal Fairm* (2022)	Lallans: <ch>, <ui>, <y>, <i> as above. <í> (*hístory* [history]). *Twa*, *thon* [that],[59] *gar* [make], *ilka*.
WM	*From The Calton to Catalonia* (Maley & Maley 2014, 1992)	Glesga: <oa>, *a/ae* [of], <u>. Some purely symbolic spellings: <z> (*boayz* [boys]), *oa**ff**en* [often], *wimmen* [women].
RW	*Erskine Bridge Boys; Yer Man Jealousy* (see Appendix C)	Low-frequency Glesga: <u>, *ae* [of], *jist* [just]. *wae* (as opposed to *wi* for *with*). Apologetic apostrophe.

Table 7: Interviewees' authored texts and Scots usage

4.4 Analysis: capturing a voice or 'doing something with the language'

In this section I analyse writers' responses. Before doing so, I briefly note again that some writers are flexible with their styles. In their literary texts, Emma Grae and Hamish Macdonald frequently alternate between Lallans and phonetic/innovative Glesga spellings, and in my questioning I sought to elicit when and how they chose to alter their language. Furthermore, there is more linguistic variability between writers than I have space to describe satisfactorily in this chapter; I have decided to focus on the most consistent differences and commonalities in order to address the research aims.

> A comment by Wulf Kurtoğlu concisely describes a fundamental choice for Scots writers:
>
> I think there're probably two reasons why people would write in Scots, and the first is that that's the language they think in, or have their interior monologue in, which isn't the case for me. And the other reason is that they have some theory about what the language can do, or ought to do.

[57] https://www.scotslanguage.com/articles/view/id/4601
[58] https://www.scotslanguage.com/articles/view/id/5666
All accessed 30.05.2023
[59] To indicate a third degree of spatial deixis, for which the pronouns *yon* or *thon* are now only used for antiquarian value in English.

While this comment was not made in the context of linguistic variation, I believe that these two motives are related to it. Kurtoğlu later suggested the same, commenting on phonetic Central Belt writers:

> I think the way that people write depends on why they're writing. So a lot of people want to recapture their childhood language and if that is in a dialect that's not represented by the mainstream tradition, then they won't write in the mainstream tradition.
>
> What these writers are doing is going back to square one in terms of how they're going to express that dialect; they're discarding the inherited conventions.

The analysis below shows that interviewees are aware that the urban style is more phonetic than Lallans, and that Lallans usage consciously moves away from common speech. There is also an awareness that the motives of writers who write in these styles differ. In general, those seeking to immortalise their everyday speech or "interior monologue" do so in a written language that more closely reflects it. Meanwhile, Lallans writers often have motives relating to language advocacy, which leads them to favour 'good' supraregional norms belonging to the "inherited conventions" of "the mainstream tradition". This is essentially a difference between representing Scots as a naturally authentic language and a divergent representation which draws upon two intertwined qualities, which are both aptly afforded by the historicity and *Abstand* of Lallans: (1) legitimating aspects of anonymity, and (2) written language as a constructed system which must be learned in order to reclaim authenticity.

4.4.1 Writing how you speak: capturing a voice with phonetic spelling

There were two relatively unambiguous cases of phonetic spelling used to represent everyday speech. A close speech/writing relationship was straightforward for Raymond Wilson; if his writing 'looks like' his speech, it feels right. "I just write the way I speak"; "it just came from within"; "because it sounds just more natural"; "it's kind of just about putting my voice on page – people tell me that even when I'm texting, people will be like: you just write how you sound." As a young writer, he does not knowingly follow any guides or the model of urban writers and is

more or less unaware of their existence or influence. His spelling choices are made "maybe subconsciously, this isn't conscious at all", some of them acquired from CMC practices among friends dating back almost 20 years.

He writes undeterred by the few debates around Scots he has engaged with. Furthermore, since his work is mostly posted directly to Instagram, he bypasses the editing process. Low-frequency nonstandard spellings are identifiably innovative, phonetic Glesga. His poem *Erskine Bridge Boys* includes: *burd* [bird], *jist* [just], and *ae* for unstressed *of*, along with easily interpretable local lexis (*ye heavy tried* [you really tried]) and syntax (*ah proper prayed* [I really prayed]; *fuckin' state ae you* [the fucking state of you]). Elsewhere in non-literary Instagram posts, unstressed function words are respelled innovatively: *fir* for *for*. No clear examples of purely symbolic spellings were found.

Although he is of an older, pre-CMC generation, Willy Maley's writing is similar, and he shares a similar perspective. Of his spelling choices he stated: "we never dwelt too much on it … people were gonna be speaking in their own voices … we didn't debate or discuss the issue of language much at all"; it was "just second nature", "absolutely effortless", and required "no planning". His choices came from what he heard as a child: "I used to joke and say 'I write great Glaswegian' cos I've been listening to it all my life. We grew up in a slum, a ghetto – Possilpark in Glasgow, where people spoke a very raw, unapologetic, unforced, expletive-ridden form of Scots". Maley also innovatively respells unstressed pronouns and auxiliary verbs: *thum* for *them* and *diz/wiz* for *does/was*. But whereas Wilson's perspective was relatively personal, Maley's speechlike writing has a much broader point about class identity within Scots and about representing the real language of working-class Glaswegians. While Wilson does use non-standard spelling to create specific working-class characters, Maley discussed class as a conscious reaction, at the time of publication in the 1990s, to what he perceives as the middle-class Scots activist "snobs" of the time: "I think there is a lot of snobbery around; I think class is absolutely

fundamental. And I think that Glaswegian had a particular status that was looked on pejoratively."

In general, Maley consciously shares the subversive attitudes of Leonard and Kelman. He described his own writing as "natural", whereas Lallans is "contorted":

> WM: In the 1980s and so on I would see things, I would think that's Scots, but it's the kind of Scots that people who wrote to *The Herald* would write
>
> Researcher (R): absolutely
>
> WM: and it struck me – and it wouldn't make me popular with advocates of the Scots language – but it struck me as kind of contorted. *(impersonating)* 'weel in thi mither tung … if ah'm spikkin tae ye nee' [well in the mother tongue … if I'm speaking to you now]
>
> R: yeah haha
>
> WM: it seemed to me to be kind of contorted and distorted and I could imagine taking five hours to write one of these letters to *The Herald*. You know, I have to say, like all working-class Glaswegians, I would've scoffed at it, I would've spoofed it, I would've had the same attitude as Tom Leonard, who was very suspicious of all these Scots, you know, language advocates

Simply by asking if his play *From the Calton to Catalonia* was a Scots text, Maley discussed "snobbery" and classism without further prompting. For Maley, middle-class snobbery, via the erasure of Glesga, is aligned with the "forced", "invented", and "sanitised" Lallans, which is deemed inauthentic by virtue of its distance from spoken Central Belt Scots, or any form of 'natural' language, since it takes great effort to produce. While Wilson also recognises this – "Robert Burns is like it's still old-timey language to us now, you know? So there's still a detachment there" – he does not share Maley's oppositional view. But, whether by conscious reaction or by an agnostic view towards the Scots movement, a clear distinction has been drawn between these writers and Lallans. While both Wilson and Maley called their own work 'Scots' when prompted, there was no suggestion that they viewed Scots in the same terms as other official or standard European languages.

All of this points to a commitment to a contextualised, realist, emplaced, oral Scots. With such configurations there can be a very fine line between reinforcing one's place on the

marginalised side of modernist differentiation and radically reimagining that differentiation with postmodern ideologies. The difference often seems to be a matter of perspective. Regardless, it is clear that stigmatisation does not discourage urban phonetic writing in this case, but fuels it. A post-industrial language similar to English is what is spoken, and therefore what must be written, irrespective of its negative indexical links.

Maley's "very cynical" view is related to the fact that "your level of intelligence was assumed from your accent". While this is still a concern for him, he does not seem to carry his own "prejudice" about Scots activism into the present day, speaking always in reference to the 1980s and 1990s, when the 'old guard' of linguistic gatekeeping was prominent. Strictly according to his metadiscourse, it is inconclusive whether or not Maley's choice to use purely symbolic spellings drew upon his rejection of linguistic hierarchies. However, some considerations are important here. Ways of talking about language are firmly shaped by traditional discourses – i.e., the idioms for expressing postmodern or "radical" linguistic ideologies are underdeveloped. This has been observed specifically in the context of minority languages (Jaffe 1999; Urla 2021: 30). For precisely this reason, these ideologies rarely find clear expression in metadiscourse, but are more likely expressed in other ideologies or in language use, particularly in creative contexts such as literature (Jaffe 1999: 31). When one adds to this the difficulty of describing sound-spelling conventions for non-linguists and the emphasis on expressing one's 'voice' in Maley's interview, it is likely that the topic of purely symbolic spelling was too sudden or incongruous. Maley's answers on the matter of innovative symbolic spellings – <z> for plural markers,[60] *wimmen* [women], or *oa**ff**en* [often] – are inconclusive, and he wavered over their purpose and phonetic quality. Yet, within the very clear narrative of authentic working-class urban identity, I tentatively take these spellings as further evidence of that same ideology.

For both Maley and Wilson, the function of using orthography to *capture a voice* has changed over the decades. There is now less of an impulse to use phonetic spellings specifically as

[60] Not always realised as /z/. Maley said /ʃʉdərs/ for *shooderz* [shoulders] in the interview.

a subversion of Lallans, though they are still used to validate low-status speech, even in non-literary genres. Maley expressed that he would like to have written an academic paper using the phonetic conventions. When asked in which genres he would use Scots, Wilson responded:

> RW: Any time that there's written language there's opportunity for – I don't see it as unprofessional either. Like if it's a professional email and it's like a … unless they're not gonny [gonna] understand it, if it's somebody
>
> R: ah right
>
> RW: non-Scottish. This is the thing though, because a lot of Scottish people would still find it unprofessional if I did all that, but it's my own kind of little: no it's not unprofessional, this is just our language

Importantly, the matter of intelligibility and stigma are separated here. Neither Wilson's language nor Maley's are intended to be unintelligible to native and non-native English-speaking audiences. Thus, differentiation from dominant culture is not pursued to the extent that these writers are isolated from the complex and hybrid reality of Scottish society. Furthermore, their desire to use Glesga in higher registers is not for the purposes of affording language status to Scots – rather, it is an expression of a postmodern language ideology in which the value of an oral, authentic language is reimagined: "no it's not unprofessional, this is just our language".

4.4.2 Written Scots is not spoken Scots: doing something with the language through Lallans

When providing guidance to the Scots translator, Ashley Douglas, who writes in a Lallans style across different genres of higher-register Scots writing, has written: "there is a massive difference between spoken and written language, and it is not necessarily the role of a written word to reflect or indicate how a combination of letters is realised in spoken language". It is certainly true that, as observed in chapter 2, there are core differences between speech and writing. Standard languages in particular avail themselves of a singular written form in order to represent varied speech. However, these written forms still correspond to sound; it was also noted in chapter 2 that even 'deep' orthographies such as English are relatively well-organised and well-understood

as phonemic systems. Having prompted discussion on this matter with Lallans writers in relation to specific and contested common features, such as <ch> and /x/, <y> and /ai/, or *ilk(a)* [each], Scots conventions within the movement are instances of a particularly conscious and deliberate abstraction from speech. The spoken equivalents of the written features do not occur, for the most part, in everyday speech:

> R: Would these words occur to you in speech or is it something else?
>
> HM: no, not *ilk*, *ilka*; no, I wouldn't use *ilka*. I've heard it used occasionally in recent times by people speaking. To me, it's you know it's an older word that I would maybe use in a piece of text like a poem, but I would – highly unlikely I would use it in common, everyday speech

The consensus showed that differences in speech and writing in this respect were, *like in other languages*, 'normal':

> R: Do the spellings or word choices always reflect your speech? Or are there some things you'd write that you wouldn't
>
> SP: no. No. Well what other language do you do that in?
>
> R: Of course.
>
> SP: You don't, you don't. Scots is a language, and this is what we have to keep telling folk [people]: that it's a bloody language

A standard language ideology is reiterated in these comments: the model for Scots is that of a discrete 'language' whose literacy ought to abstract from speech in order to indicate etymological history and provide 'neutral' norms.

For Thomas Clark, regardless of whether readers and writers use the corresponding speech forms, Lallans features are both necessarily distinct from English and more authentically 'Scots', to be acquired through education in Scots literacy:

> TC: the <ch> in *light* and *night* and so on and so forth, it's just an easy win. You're always looking for things that are distinctive, but that nobody's gonna read them and get tripped up by them. And especially I write for kids a lot so obviously I'm always looking out for things that I think: ok this is an easy way of getting a Scots word in there and educating the reader on Scots or in Scots and teach them a word they didn't know they knew before – they didn't know before or they didn't know they knew – and doing so without losing them. N-I-C-H-T: anybody, anybody in the world, regardless of how much Scots they've got is gonna work out that it means *night*, whether they know how it's pronounced or no [not]

And:

> TC: I think that with very very common English words, like *each* or *every*, then it can very quickly undermine a text if those words are peppered throughout it. Especially when you've got to hand a ready-made Scots alternative like *ilka*.

Emma Grae also strives to use features not found in her speech in order to bolster the Scots language effort:

> R: Why do you think it's important kind of later down the line, or once you start getting aware of what Scots is, to start using things like *twa* or *nicht*, or things that I'm guessing wouldn't be part of your natural Glasgow speech?
>
> EG: I guess because it's more authentic to the language and stuff. Kind of displaying that it is a real language. It felt appropriate to use those words even if they weren't necessarily part of my vocabulary.

Grae's phrasing here is important. By drawing upon learned (as opposed to intuitive) lexis and orthography, she achieves authenticity for a more universal and abstract "language", not for the linguistic expression of the 'natural' self. At the same time, however, the value of a 'natural' authenticity of the self remains important: phonetic Glesga elements were chosen by Grae because English is "not my voice" and not "what I grew up speaking".

Authenticity, then, has adopted both natural and post-natural meanings in the Scots movement. The departure from one's own spoken Scots requires a certain amount of extra effort to produce. This involves a process of language learning, despite claims that writers are writing in their native tongue. For Kurtoğlu, this effort is required specifically when expanding the functions and legitimacy of Scots:

> Gin we're honest, mony o's likely funs it easier whiles tae marshall wir thochts and get thaim doon on paper in Inglis, than translate thaim intae Scots efter. Ah confess Ah dae, whan the subjeck is yin that streetches the leid.[61]
>
> [If we're honest, many of us likely find it easier sometimes to marshal our thoughts and get them down on paper in English, then translate them into Scots after. I confess I do, when the subject is one that stretches the language.]

For Hamish Macdonald, "painstaking effort" was required when writing for a broad Scottish audience, particularly in formal and expository registers. In general, these registers demand a more precise and conscious approach to writing, but Macdonald's efforts came from

[61] http://wulfkurtoglu.blogspot.com/2011/09/style-tips-for-scrievin-in-scots.html
Accessed 24.05.2023

spellchecking and looking up dictionary definitions. In contrast, when writing in his native Glesga, he used the language of ease and 'natural' authenticity: "I would just blast away in in our language, you know?"

It seems unlikely that the effort required to produce a post-natural Scots, which by implication refers to the type of Lallans seen in the narrative of Kurtoğlu's *Braken Fences*, would be authoritative in speech, where, particularly for notions of authentic minority-language speech, a 'native speaker' would not be expected to continuously hesitate while searching for 'good' or accurate linguistic forms. Conversely, the nature of written language (i.e., that it permits refinement prior to publication) allows for seamless production of the style of Scots which is said to most convincingly provide languageness.

This is not to say that Lallans forms are not used in speech at all, but they are usually minimal. In the data, /x/ for <ch>, /aɪ/ for <y>, and the pronunciation of select lexis such as /aʊəɹ/ for *owre* [over] were said not to be, or seem unlikely to be, features of the interviewees' everyday speech. Applying the sound-spelling conventions of English to historical spellings, some sought to consciously reintroduce these pronunciations as more authoritative Scots forms, indicating that pronunciation can align with or even follow orthography in Scots, as it can in some other languages where the written forms are highly authoritative. For Douglas, adopting these features in both speech and writing is an inherent part of engaging more with the Scots movement "as a Scots professional and advocate". In private communication, she shared with me an institutional document that offers notes on delivering heritage tours in Scots, in which the systematic use of the /x/ fricative – now moribund in Scots speech – is "*required*" for the speaker to sound "authentically Scots, and not English". Again, authenticity resides in a constructed conceptualisation of a traditional language, rather than in the speaker. This feature in particular is often legitimated by its provenance, whether spoken: "it's a fricative. That's traditional, that's what we use in Scots" (SP), or whether primarily written: "it is so much a shibboleth of rural Scots that I think people will go on writing it forever" (WK).

To continue to use these older and rarer features is important for advocates of the language, who do not want to see them fall out of use. Clark said that revival is: “important because you don’t have much of a language if we don’t replenish and resuscitate these words”. And for Douglas:

> AD: I’ve also enhanced my vocab in Scots; I use tonnes of Scots words today that were not part of my everyday vocab growing up Edinburgh and Fife. Working in Scots, as a minoritised language in modern times, is also a revival project. You have to teach yourself literacy in it and enrich your vocabulary in it.

It was made clear that the use of Lallans was closely aligned with the development of Scots and of a distinct literacy – i.e., one that suits the image of a ‘full’ or ‘successful’ European language. The reasons for this, and the means by which writers addressed difficult linguistic and ideological questions, are explored in the following themes.

The balance of accessibility and distinctiveness; the natural and the traditional

Most Lallans writers agree that there is a limit to the degree to which traditional forms may be reasonably used. I begin with this theme to make it known from the outset that Lallans usage is generally sanctioned within this limit, indicating a change from the more esoteric idealism of the 20th century. Scots advocates today seek a balance that may be described as managing two opposed forces. The first: away from English and towards distinctiveness via historical forms. The second: toward English or written forms which represent recognisable forms of Scots speech (and which themselves are generally intelligible to English speakers outside Scotland). Some spellings, as Clark said of <ch>, are viewed as “an easy win” in this respect, marrying distinctiveness and legibility. But clear cases are relatively few, and an advanced knowledge of traditional Scots must be tempered for a less knowledgeable readership. From Clark’s translator’s note to *Animal Fairm*:

> Owersettin intae Scots, if ye’ll allou me sae muckle, is a high-wire act. On wan haun, the Scylla o inauthenticity. On the ither, the Charybdis o indistinctiveness. Whether yer prose is ower similar tae the English or ower different, ye’ll get pulled up for it aw the same. Sae ah’ve ettled, faur as ah could, tae taik doon the narrae strait o accessibility.

> [Translating into Scots, if I may be so bold, is a high-wire act. On one hand, the Scylla of inauthenticity. On the other, the Charybdis of indistinctiveness. Whether your prose is too similar to the English or too different, you'll get pulled up for it all the same. So I've tried, as far as I could, to navigate the narrow strait of accessibility.]
>
> (Clark 2022: 7)

Douglas expressed a very similar sentiment in her guide to translation.[62] This was repeated in interview, where "accessibility" was a means of validating Scots speakers: for audiences that aren't "literate" in Scots, "*accessibility* is my watchword; there is no point trying to include people and make them recognise their self-worth, as Scots speakers, if you write Scots in a way that's completely alien and alienating to them". There was agreement that "overdoing your Scots" (HM) is off-putting for the reader when "you go as far in Scots as you maybe could go" (EG). Keen to avoid anything "too contrived", Macdonald goes on to say: "Scots, whether you like it or not, whether anybody likes it or not coexists in its modern context and next to English".

What cannot be ignored here is the inherent virtue of going at least somewhat "far" in Scots – an impulse which is mitigated by inconvenient language ideologies from outside the movement: it is the reader, the lay speaker, or the beginner to Scots literacy who is being accommodated in this balance. As indicated earlier, within the movement distinctiveness is deemed necessary if Scots is to achieve the language status that is so desired. When I enquired about *ilka* and /x/:

> AD: Given the misunderstandings around Scots and its frequent stigmatisation as nothing more than a corrupt form of English, wherever it is possible, it is good to highlight quite how distinctive Scots is from English

One such 'misunderstanding' is the belief that Scots is not a language; Douglas resolves to convince readers of the contrary. Implicitly, there is an assumption that 'the Scots language' exists in a metaphysical sense, and that education and literacy in Scots are means of attaining awareness of this supposed fact. Associated with this is a doxic assumption that a sufficient degree of *Abstand* exists between Scots and English, and that this ought to be exploited. Intent

[62] See here for references in this chapter to Douglas's guide to translation.
https://www.translationservices24.com/minoritised-languages-in-translation/
Accessed: 15.05.2023

and linguistic fact are conflated in this discourse: it is not the case that Scots simply "is" sufficiently distinct from English, for there is no such measure in marginal cases such as this, but that it is being made so via a form of revivalism. I also mentioned earlier how, for Clark, revivalism of distinct Lallans forms was tied to the development of Scots. This includes, for the translation work of himself and Douglas, a form of 'synthetic' neologism which establishes new meanings for traditional lexis. He went on to say how this served to allay doubts as to Scots's languageness by "not inviting every Tom, Dick or Harry with a Twitter account to pile on you and tell you that you're just writing phonetic English". Paterson expressed the same viewpoint when discussing spellings of *over*:

> SP: /aʊə/. O-W-R-E. Some folk [people] spell it O-W-E-R.
>
> R: Yeah.
>
> SP: But then if you go back in Scots texts a long time, then it's spelt O-W-R-E. That's the way we spelt it, and I think it's the way Burns spelt it, I don't remember actually. But no, I just … because it might as well just be English with a <w> instead of a <v>.

Clark went on to describe this type of distinctiveness as a "unique selling point" for Scots. The language of advertising here is more than just a standalone metaphor; various instances of such discourse have been reported precisely for the purposes of advocating an anonymous minority-language ideology to a plurality of speakers (Urla 2012b; Woolard 2016). As is the case in commercial advertising, the use of persuasive ideas which play on wider society's common-sense beliefs (e.g., that a 'language' has a sufficient degree of *Abstand*) are apparently required to 'sell' the virtues of a language, whether those ideas are strictly logical or not, to achieve broader goals. These discourses point to the understanding of Lallans not as innately 'good', but as a means to an end.

Nevertheless, the perceived need for a balance resides in Lallans writers' sensitivity to diversity; they recognise the expectation that usage should reflect a view of Scots as a contextualised variety. This is, in essence, an acknowledgment of the urban writers' stance, resulting in a partially successful attempt to bridge the linguistic and social gap between writers.

The overuse of traditional forms was considered an impediment of intelligibility as well as being described as “contrived”, “inauthentic”, and “alienating”. But common Lallans norms are perhaps inherently alienating or contrived whether or not they are balanced cautiously with more familiar forms (cf. Maley and Wilson’s comments above) and this tension seemed apparent in Stuart Paterson’s responses. He reiterated that speech and writing should have close semblance for the purposes of authenticity:

> R: Sometimes people write *vyce* or *nicht* but they don’t really speak them. Do you know what I mean? And I find it interesting.
>
> SP: I find it shite [shit], to be honest. Why would you write … well, folk [people] call themselves Scots speakers or Scots writers, and then you read them. You read them and they sound nothing like, in reality, what they’ve put across on the page. Why are you putting that on the page if it doesnae [doesn’t] reflect who you are? And what your community is? And what this language is?

While he was wary of speaking in absolute terms, he doubted the authenticity of some writers in this respect. Where others have settled on their own particular balance, Paterson appears to be conflicted by the choice between what he described as “traditional” forms going “way back” and the ‘natural’ authenticity of everyday speech:

> R: Things like *ilk*, *gin*, *ettle*, *een*; w- would you say those when you’re speaking?
>
> SP: No.
>
> R: But you’d write them down.
>
> SP: *Ilk? Ilk’s* pretty old-fashioned. Would I write it down? No – no [not] really. Why would I write down what I don’t speak? Or what folk [people] don’t speak?

Yet, Paterson regularly uses these four lexical items in his poetry, as well as consistent traditional spellings, including for settings beyond the Scottish context. A recent collection of poems (Paterson & Lambert 2020) written during and on the topic of COVID-19 (including concurrent global events, such as the killing of George Floyd) uses the same forms discussed here.

‘Consensus’ norms and the ‘organic standard’

It is within this balance that the hope for a set of written norms lies. The Future of Scots policy and planning project has recognised “the possibility of having a non-threatening form of [standard] Scots” (Future of Scots 2023: 7). The issue is whether this is indeed possible given the expectation of a sufficient degree of *Abstand* on one hand, and the expectation of familiarity on the other. Lallans writers offered mixed reactions to the possibility of having a balanced set of writing norms broadly established, but were optimistic about pursuing it. Some common features were spoken of as taken-for-granted norms – these include many of the Lallans features of note already mentioned: <ui>, <ei>, <ch>, <y>, the omission of apologetic apostrophes, and *-ae* endings. As the interviewees acknowledged, the Lallans consensus norms are small in number. Limited to a handful of somewhat systematic spellings or select lexical choices, they do not constitute a full standard spelling system. Nevertheless, what some called “standard” Scots was framed as practical, easy, and a natural point of departure, including in literature.

> AD: Where an organic standard has developed, I think that people should probably stick to it and not arbitrarily deviate from that. To write /hid/ as H-E-I-D is simply standard Modern Scots. I can’t imagine a situation where I’d write it in any other way, because it is an organic and recognised standard form, in as much as a standard Modern Scots exists. Where those forms exist – and they do exist – they should be used.

Although Douglas’s claim to the fact of a Scots standard requires a relatively narrow view of ‘Scots’ and its written output, there is an undeniable orthographic consistency among writers connected to the Scots movement.

Discourses of authenticity faded when discussing ‘standard’ norms. Lallans writers continue to value ideas of anonymity which contribute to the sense of Scots as a convincingly discrete language. Hallmarks of anonymity – consistency, ease, universality – were doxically advantageous to the development of Scots within the framework of standard language ideology. In Douglas’s guide to translation, *tae* and *gonnae* (and *not* their respective *-y* ending alternatives seen in urban writing) form part of “organically developed and now established form[s]”, for which the reputed publishing house Itchy Coo provides model examples. Macdonald, another

Itchy Coo writer, agrees: “I’ll tell you where you can find a good model, probably is in a lot of the Itchy Coo translations”. He also saw these norms (specifically *auld* [old], <ui>, and <ei>) as self-evident: “to me they’re just genuine Scots spelling”. “Standard” features were introduced in the editing process for Grae, who initially wrote *Be Guid Tae Yer Mammy* with improvised phonetic Glesga spellings: “I made up my own spellings and then in the editorial process they were like, right you need to be consistent, and then at that point it was sort of like what’s the right spellings to use and stuff like that”. This meant that apologetic apostrophes were removed and, for older characters who spoke “more Scots”, <ei>, <ui>, and <ch> were included.

As ever in Scots verbal hygiene, the apologetic apostrophe is the clearest “red line”,[63] “considered extremely bad practice” precisely because it contributes to the notion of Scots “as a variant of English and not a language in its own right” (AD). Paterson and Grae also spoke about the apostrophe in these terms and Kurtoğlu strongly advises against it; Clark and Macdonald do not use it. Initially unaware of any debate around the apostrophe in Scots, phonetic writer Raymond Wilson consciously includes apologetic apostrophes for /ɪn/ endings where /ɪŋ/ would occur in Standard English, viewing the spellings as “a Standard English that’s just like clipped, then that’s when there’s an apostrophe there. And often if there’s not an apostrophe there, that’s just cos I’ve missed it.” Phonetic writer Maley omits the apostrophe, but in keeping with his broader motives for language choice, does so as a reaction to the perceived practices of the Scots mainstream. Responding to a now unpopular style of Lallans that, in following the Burns tradition, continued to include apostrophes, he said:

> WM: ‘It’s right in front of me, it’s in my head, this is what I do’, and I’ll just do what I think is authentic to me and my style of writing which is not …
>
> R: right
>
> WM: not too apostrophe-laden, you know?

[63] See also *Eemis Stane Presents: No Yer Usual Burns Nicht:* https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=eemis+stane+burns+nicht (42:40)
Accessed 30.05.2023

Maley's generally oppositional attitude was, he confesses, part of the late 20th-century tension between writers of "real" language and a "contrived" Lallans. However, Lallans writers are now themselves among the strongest critics of the apostrophe, a feature which here provides an ironic and unambiguous example of how a single linguistic feature can index contrasting cultural symbols and, therefore, represent a linguistic choice with plural and rather different underlying values (Cameron 1995).

The gravitational centre for the authority of written norms was invariably identified as respected Scots authors and bodies that campaign for Scots. In their use of Lallans norms, interviewees have followed the model of these authors and of official institutions.

> TC: The Scots language campaign Oor Vyce and things like that I think do establish that *vyce* … I would've spelt *pynt* [point] and *vyce* the same way as in English up until relatively recently, but I feel that we have reached a tipping *pynt* where using <y> instead of the <oi> is the right thing to do.

In her use of <y>, <ui>, and <ei>, Kurtoğlu followed the Scots Style Sheet drawn up by the Makar's Club (the forerunner to the Scots Language Society) – latterly Hugh MacDiarmid's proposed model. Paterson acquired Lallans spellings via exposure to other writers and contact with "very Scots-language" poets William Auld and William Neil.

Conversely, there is also some suggestion that "working against the organic standard" (AD) is an unnecessary impediment to developing the language. One reason that Lallans writers conform to norms is to not disturb the momentum of the Scots movement, thereby allowing them to focus on content. It is hoped that Lallans becomes, therefore, an unmarked style. For any given editor of her work, Kurtoğlu will "go along with the spelling consensus if there is one" and "didn't want to do anything very outré" when writing *Braken Fences*. The variability suggested by the preferences of different editors is, essentially, a difference in the orthographic minutiae of Lallans. Even if a digraph such as *aa* for *all* is "a particularly problematic one, because *aa* suggests the pronunciation that's more associated with the north and south [than the Central Belt]",

Kurtoğlu discounted *aw* and *a'* as they weren't popular among Lallans writers at the time of writing.

Writers' spelling and lexis change as they "become literate"

Over time, and particularly after becoming involved in institutions that promote Scots, some writers reported incorporating more Lallans forms. Writers who use Lallans are motivated by the campaign for the language status of Scots, and all are involved to some extent in the associated institutions: Itchy Coo publications funded by the Scottish Government (AD/HM/TC), The Scots Language Resource Network (which funded Clark's *Animal Fairm*), the National Library of Scotland (sponsor of Macdonald's *Wee Windaes* project), the SLC/Scots Warks project (EG), while Kurtoğlu/Macafee has been a central figure in developing or contributing to Scots-language dictionaries, academia, the Scots Language Society's *Lallans* journal, and the spelling committee of the 1990s. Paterson does not regularly work for these institutions, but has an interest in them. Writers who changed their style over time only did so in one direction, adopting more Lallans forms as they became involved in these institutions, and this linguistic change was framed as a process of acquiring an assumed 'Scots literacy' (which belongs to an assumed 'Scots language').

Contrastingly, among the phonetic writers, Maley stated that he was, at the time of writing *From The Calton to Catalonia*, almost hostile to these institutions. Wilson was at the least agnostic, or at the most wary of Scots as a form of "performative Scottishness" that can make him "cringe", with Lallans being an "old-timey" language that can create "detachment". In the context of institutional literacy, Jaffe (2003) has reported similar responses rooted in 'natural' authenticity which viewed the anonymous variety as undesirably decontextualised – a tension which Corsican education, much like Scots institutions, is at pains to manage. For Scots writers, negative responses were based not on shame or insecurity, as some in the Scots movement assume, but a lack of identification. Wilson was careful to make this very distinction, separating 'cringe' as a

feeling of cultural inferiority (which he had been working to overcome; cf. discussion on cultural cringe, section 6.3.2), from this particular form of cringe as a reaction to inauthenticity (which he deemed justifiable). Indeed, the reasons for Maley and Wilson's distancing from 'Scots' and its institutions points towards their view of nonstandard writing as emplaced: as indexically linked to the context of their writing. Meanwhile, an author that falls in the middle of the linguistic divide – Emma Grae – firmly supports the campaign to have Scots recognised as a language.

Grae has increased the number and frequency of Lallans forms in her writing over time. This can be seen as a process of standardisation and anonymisation.

> EG: I think it's probably because at this stage in my life I write Scots more than I speak it, so I guess my Scots has now developed more into using those spellings, whereas when I'm speaking it … like I'm in the very very early stages of recording *The Tongue She Speaks* audio book. And it's been interesting to sort of see how I would speak it and sort of how it's coming out.

The necessity for authoritative, centralised written norms is taken for granted here; adopting these features is an assumed consequence of engaging in the writing tradition. Grae's final comment recognises the marked difference between her Lallans spellings and her relatively standard speech in an early reading of *The Tongue She Speaks* in the Scots Warks project.[64] *The Tongue She Speaks* is the second of Grae's novels, both of which are set in Glasgow, at similar times, with similar young, female, working-class protagonists. Yet she included more Lallans in its narration than for comparable characters in her first novel – *Be Guid Tae Yer Mammy*. Grae "didn't know there was a whole Scots language movement" until after the publication of *Be Guid Tae Yer Mammy*, when SLC director Michael Dempster contacted her and provided orthographic guidance. As part of the SLC's Scots Warks project, *The Tongue She Speaks* involved more engagement with dictionaries and other resources; Grae described it as a more institutionalised process, again receiving guidance from Dempster. When asked about the higher frequency of Lallans forms in the book, she replied: "because I was engaging more with the spellings and the

[64] https://www.scotslanguage.com/articles/node/id/1124
Accessed 15.05.2023

DSL, I felt a little bit more positive using it in *The Tongue She Speaks*." It was "unapologetic in its Scots. I was like: right, here we go".

Having begun with improvised Glesga spellings and intentionally avoidant of other Scots writers' practices, the nature (if not the fullness) of Grae's change is very similar to Clark's:

> TC: When I first started writing Scots I wasn't too bothered about spelling, I wasn't bothered about whether anybody had spelt the way I'd spelt, I was very – and that's a particularly Glaswegian thing – I was very much into phonetic spellings. It was only I think because I've got a kind of education string to my bow, and because I've been involved in things that are more like Scots activism and Scots writing, that I've come to accept that we do need a standard Scots, we can't just all spell things our own way. Principally because then you can't expect Scots to be treated like a normal language and supported financially by our government like a normal language and taught to people who don't speak it as their native language, like a normal language.

Lallans and 'the Scots language' are, in this instance, viewed synonymously by Clark. As it was for Grae, themes closely associated with anonymity – language institutions, literacy, and education – require an archetypal or standard form. In addition to Hamish Macdonald's previous comments about the "painstaking" effort of non-literary writing, he shared this view when writing in "higher" registers in his role as Scots Scriever:

> HM: I was trying to find in that case – you know I didnae [didn't] think it was appropriate to sit down and write *Wilson's Ornithology and Burds* in my Glasgow …
>
> R: right
>
> HM: voice, if you like. Same as I would've done in …
>
> R: why not, do you think?
>
> HM: because it was for a national audience or a global audience
>
> R: right
>
> HM: I'm not saying it's wrong to do Glasgow … umm … speech or you know Glasgow dialect written down for that, but I wanted to find a kind of – something I've never really tried before, except maybe a little bit in poetry – to find a kind of generic (form)
>
> R: yeah
>
> HM: for all those pages because it was in the National Library and it was being shared Scotland-wide and of course worldwide.

Once again, Lallans becomes the unmarked variety, suitable for unmarked genres and anonymous audiences.

Yet, Lallans is not entirely an unmarked variety for Lallans writers. Macdonald also discusses this "generic" register as "a nice traditional form of Scots". By describing traditional Scots as "nice", his discourse attributes positive value to Lallans. In a brief guide to translation[65] published on Kurtoğlu's blog, *guid Scots* [good Scots] is taken to include <ch> and <ui>, with the post itself written using these features, as well as <y> and typical Lallans lexis. In her own guide to translation, Douglas described the impulse towards distinctiveness as one which manifests in "richer" Scots forms. This narrative continues: "the translator should always opt for as rich and distinct a Scots as possible"; "Scots speakers generally cannot comfortably read or write in Scots and are not well versed in its history or literature, and thus its full linguistic richness." Similarly, in interview Douglas often described the process of "becoming literate" in Scots as "a journey" in which "advanced Scots" lies at the end: a "full-blown Scots" with "more historically authentic" spellings. The ideological picture constructed by various writers differentiates distinctive Lallans forms from the more speechlike ones via indexical links with history, essence/purity, literacy, and "richness". Unlike discourses of anonymity elsewhere, legitimacy here is found in the authenticity not of everyday speech, but of Scotland's literary history, the conventions of which must be learned in order to both construct languageness and realise speaker identity. This view of authenticity as a project is one I shall return to in this chapter in the discussion of the findings.

In sum, "becoming literate" aptly describes the portrayal of writers' changes in the data, which were always changes towards Lallans. Interviewees observed a utility to Lallans as far as language activism is concerned. Change was also spoken about as a process in which writers adopt taken-for-granted Lallans norms as they develop or improve their own writing. This echoes some findings in the following case study, which show how, while avoiding overt prescriptions, recent guides such as *Scots Warks* imply that following the common Lallans norms mentioned here are good practice. "Becoming literate" – a refrain which implies a single, neutral, learnable

[65] http://wulfkurtoglu.blogspot.com/2011/09/style-tips-for-scrievin-in-scots.html
Accessed 24.05.2023

‘literacy’ as differentiated from, as I shall illustrate presently, the unfavourable impression of orality – is a means of accessing the ‘truer’ realms of ‘the Scots language’.

Positioning of phonetic spelling as problematic

Macdonald’s hesitancy about the appropriacy of Glesga in higher registers points to a broader erasure of phonetic spellings in expository writing, ‘higher’ literary contexts, and translation. The term ‘eye dialect’ is used – with a significant degree of ambiguity, as it is in the data from chapter 5 of this thesis – to refer to phonetic spellings, which are discouraged for the negative reactions they attract. The choices of phonetic writers themselves are spoken of as legitimate. But at the same time, there is agreement that a ‘higher’ Scots ought to have less of a phonetic element.

“Phonetic Scots is very tethered to the first person, it’s tethered to the idea that it’s spoken Scots – like you know the notion of spoken Scots written down. Everything that the rest of us are doing *isn’t* that” (TC). Here, Clark has acknowledged the split between phonetic writers and “the rest of us”, who are motivated by language planning and language revival rooted in the value of traditional forms: “what the Scots stuff I’m trying to do and a lot of other people are trying to do is to solidify what we’ve got and make sure it doesn’t erode away.” According to Clark, the phonetic urban style is “a dead end” precisely because it is contextualised, limited to “these specific things – drug dealers and fights breaking out in pubs and … so on and so forth”. “Irvine Welsh and James Kelman are great examples of how to write in your *own* Scots; if you want to write a pan-dialectal Scots, then no.” Since ideologies are constructed via differentiation, anonymity is valued by implication. But there is more than a mere suggestion of anonymity. “*Animal Fairm* is my idea of what a standard, formal Scots would look like”, to be used for “a catch-all way of translating things, because what we really lack in Scots is registers. You know, formal registers” (TC). This perspective subscribes rather neatly to the kind of indexical links characteristic of the modernist model of ‘language’; that there ought to be linguistic forms which

are iconically linked to universality (the “catch-all”) and truth, which are used in decontextualised registers for disseminating knowledge, but also literature which transcends specific urban working-class Scottish contexts. This is differentiated, conversely, from an emplaced, “specific” form of writing appropriate only for the situations which it indexes: drug-dealing and drunk fighting. In chapter 5, I explore further the role of these writing styles in the context of knowledge dissemination.

A common theme running throughout this thesis is that, for those interested in promoting Scots, the perception of ‘bad’ written Scots as illegitimate is to be managed by adopting ‘good’ Scots, rather than by rejecting the terms of linguistic hierarchy outright, as Kelman and Leonard did. Grae shares this view: “I guess in terms of if you were going for a more formal Scots, you’d go for the older spellings, I guess, just to sort of distinguish it a bit more from English, rather than the phonetic (style).” In her guide to translation, Douglas makes it clear that phonetic spellings should be avoided for this reason of distinctiveness, drawing on the modernist conflation of universality, literacy, and languageness: “there may be the temptation to simply write the words down how they sound when spoken”; “this overly-phonetic [...] reinforces the minoritised status of the language being transcribed by perpetuating the perception that it belongs exclusively to the spoken and informal sphere and does not have a legitimate written form”.[66] This imagined “legitimate written form” becomes synonymous with “literacy” and “Scots writing” in Lallans writers’ responses.

Douglas explicitly describes phonetic writing as *transcription*, not *translation* from English. This is again argued via valid observations of the nature of literacy: “spoken and written language are very different forms of communication in countless significant respects. Specifically in relation to phonetics and orthography, there is not always a clear or direct relationship between how a word is written and how it should be pronounced.” But it does not follow, of course, that written

[66] https://www.translationservices24.com/minoritised-languages-in-translation/
Accessed 06.08.2024

forms ought to be less phonetic or that phonetic forms somehow do not constitute 'literacy'. As a pseudo-scientific rationalisation of a popular belief in the Scots movement, I offer a scrutiny of this argument to suggest that it mystifies language (Cameron 1995), serving ultimately to move Scots literacy away from a variable authentic practice and towards a more singular, learnable, anonymous one.

It has already been observed in this thesis that phonetic Scots spelling is stigmatised. However, this must be due to cultural associations, rather than any inherent shortcoming of speechlike writing. The de-legitimisation of Glesga based on the impression of orality is made in the context of three interrelated assumptions, which I believe speak to some of the salient standard language ideologies surrounding Scots that favour Lallans. The first: that there are invariable, taken-for-granted, legitimate spellings that ought to be used. These are the diaphonemic "consensus norms" which stand in contrast to phonetic ones, but which many Scots writers (according to the Scots movement's typically broad definition) might not identify with or have ever used. Secondly, that by virtue of its proximity to speech, phonetic orthography "fails to transition from spoken to written language" (AD: translation guide), the implication being that it does not fulfil some criterion that writing ought to. However, phonetic Scots spellings can be described as similar to, but still less transparent than standard Spanish or Finnish in its rendering of spoken language (notwithstanding the necessarily diaphonemic elements of those standards). The difference is, rather, that the standard varieties do not evoke particularity. The third assumption is that, in formal contexts as well as literature tied to language development, supraregional spellings are more appropriate by virtue of their distance from any given dialect of Scots.

In sum, there was an assumption that an orthographic diasystem exists or ought to exist, and that it is logical, practical, and democratic to use common spellings and lexis that are now taken to be "pan-dialectal". The advocacy of these features is common in Scots movement:



Figure 3: Tweet by Michael Dempster advocating an orthographic diasystem (23.11.2022)

On the basis of universality, democracy, and diaphonology, <ui> is here described as a "Scots" convention, while others intended to represent regional pronunciation are "English".[67] Clark makes the same distinction for the same digraph, differentiating, respectively, a Scots "placeholder" from "eye dialect":

> TC: In Hamilton we just say /skʉl/. In the Borders they pronounce it /skɪl/. In … Aberdeen it would be more like /skwil/. And so either we have 5 different spellings of the word *school*, or we have we just accept that the <ui> is a placeholder for whatever vowel sound you happen to use in that word without having to distinguish it through eye dialect.

The three assumptions are indicative of a standard language ideology, and, given the recommendation against phonetic spelling in particular, one that is found specifically among those literate in the 'deep', etymological orthography of English. Importantly, it is axiomatic in the Scots movement that the "placeholder" spelling cannot be the <oo> of Standard English, both by virtue of its *Englishness* and its distance from /wi/ or /ɪ/. Neither can the 'standard' spellings be

[67] The tweet reads: ["Juist" is said just as you say it. It's spelled just as traditional Scots spelling conventions put it. You'll maybe be more familiar with it as people spell it with English spelling conventions: "jist" or "jeest" or with a Scandinavian style: "jöst". But in Scots those sounds come from words that are traditionally spelled <ui>. This ui spelling unites our dialects, we just need to learn that it works like this. Good, eh? (And there's the odd word like "uise" that is said 'yaize' with the ae sound)]

drawn from Glesga, and not just because Glesga is tied to an identifiable regional dialect, but because it has the potential to damage the image of Scots. As is common in the Scots movement, neither Dempster nor Clark's presentation of <ui> is explicitly prescriptive, but is 'sold' as a feature of functionality and democracy, the problem being, it is suggested, not that speakers do not see the value of a standard spelling, but that they simply have not yet learned that spelling.

The discourse surrounding phonetic writing provides a relatively clear example of how an anonymous ideological regime of Scots is constructed. The terms of the 'axis of modernity' are upheld via fractal recursivity: one differentiated concept – orality and literacy, as they relate to written styles – is mapped onto others: utility/artistic expression, universality/particularity, formality/informality, legitimacy/illegitimacy, uniformity/variability, Scots orthography/English orthography, distinctive 'language'/indistinctive 'dialect'.

Inclusivity and anti-prescriptivism

Under this regime, norms are implied, if not overtly prescribed. However, this does not amount to a covert campaign of unwavering standardisation; writers expressed what appeared to be genuine concerns about hegemonic authority. Within the 'paradox of diversity' that minority language literacies tend to face, the verbal hygiene practices observed so far are opposed to the liberal tenets of plurality and democratic authority. Despite the preference for Lallans and its iconisation as the 'highest' form of Scots, the Lallans writers did not feel that they could discuss norms without distancing themselves from the notion of a central linguistic authority, particularly when asked to name or to embody that authority.

Clark and Macdonald suggested that they would welcome others' use of phonetic Scots in formal contexts or expository genres, even though their attitudes elsewhere do not appear to allow this to be the case. Internal contradiction of opinion regarding phonetic spellings in Scots (cf. Pottinger 2022) echoes a tension between the notion of inclusivity and the various reasons for

preferring prestigious Lallans features, which sometimes manifests in conflicting rationalisations of language choice. On the one hand, we have seen arguments made for a hierarchical model of Scots writing styles. But much like phonetic writer Willy Maley, Lallans writer Kurtoğlu recognises the potential for this same approach to create a marked and alienating notion of correctness. There is general agreement that this was an undesirable consequence of the earlier Scots movements and, as a response to this, an attitude which positions all dialects of Scots as equal is now common in the current movement. Accordingly, interviewees distanced themselves from the prescriptive 'old guard':

> WK: The old school – people like David Murison, who was the main editor of the Scottish National Dictionary – had an ideal of Scots. There was just this idea that the rural dialects, the language of Rabbie Burns, were setting a certain standard and that the urban dialects had lost so much vocabulary. So, you know, what did the urban dialects have to offer? They'd lost everything that was worthwhile and acquired all this trash. So that was the sort of attitude and the urban speakers themselves had taken that on board. They're measuring it against something that's "real Scots", that their language isn't.
>
> TC: There's a lobby, there's a swing of the Scots language activism that *hates* Tom Leonard, *hates* him, because how he wrote was not in any way "Scots".
>
> HM: Language of course is fluid, it moves all the time, it's dynamic, so it's just a complete farce to suggest that any writer… Of course, if you wanted to follow the model of the Makars and you're successful at it and it would inspire people, that would be great, but I don't think you can pontificate that that should be the norm.

Lallans writers sometimes shared with phonetic writers the class-based view of prescriptivism as "snobbery" (SP).

In this vein, writers conferred authority onto individual authors so that they may claim texts as authentically 'theirs'. When asked to recommend a model for Scots writing in general: "I'm not really sure if such a thing exists right now, because every writer's Scots is unique to them" (EG); "that's a beyond … quite a difficult question to ask, because they all kind of express different dialect or period voices in their own way" (HM); "that is a searching question" (WK). These three interviewees did mention Lallans guides or resources as a possible help, but ultimately left questions of language choice to the individual.

Although I have argued that ideologies do not need to be consistent in order to 'work', and that, in fact, they often necessitate inconsistency, there is a particular pressure on minority-language discourses to rationalise verbal hygiene practices. The paradoxical situation described here asks of advocacy how it can simultaneously favour linguistic hierarchy and democracy. Many in the Scots movement accept this as an impasse. Others appeal to either side of the paradox in separate sites of metadiscourse. But, as I shall explore in the discussion of the data in this chapter, still others appeal to diversity, being as it is an ideology of authenticity, by framing Lallans not only as an anonymous style, but also one of authenticity as a project. In other words, the right to sociolinguistic equality for working-class 'voices' is presented as achievable via an output of Lallans, which is intended as an authentic written representation of that voice, apt for the self-realisation of speaker identity.

Individual and artistic elements

There are significant subjective factors in spelling choice, which sometimes oppose the impulse to conform to consensus norms. For instance, Clark's consistent use of the digraph <í> for /i/ is an uncommon feature, even though it is argued for based on his interpretation of the accessibility/distinctiveness balance:

> TC: If we want to suggest that we're pronouncing *parteecular* differently, let's use the <í> with this the little diacritic that you're no gonnae [not going to] notice unless you're actually looking for it. So that we are (a) suggesting that it's pronounced differently and it is a different word, but (b) we're not just tripping up the reader willy-nilly with the <ee>

We might infer from this that the Lallans <ei>, the other common alternative, also has the ability to "trip the reader up". This apparently esoteric choice nevertheless reflects ideologies described in this section. Clark avoids <ee> in this case because it is a form of "eye dialect" seen on Scottish Twitter, or in parody news articles that can "embarrassingly" be mistaken for "real Scots" (TC). Although Clark cited precedent for <í> in William Lorimer's renowned Scots translation of the New Testament (Lorimer 1983), his decision to employ the rare and otherwise unwelcome use of

diacritics may support Costa's (2017) notion that his authority in doing so derives from his status as a well-known Scots writer and commentator.

Kurtoğlu has published a blogpost which advocates and educates on the avoidance of Latinity in Scots lexis.[68] This is, again, an interpretation of the balance. First, distinctiveness: "aabody that ettles tae screive in Scots kens foo important it is tae wyle disteinctive Scots wirds (an no juist wird forms that haes near Inglis cognates)" [Everybody that tries to write in Scots knows how important it is to pick distinctive words (and not just words that have more or less English cognates)]. Second, accessibility: "whitever oor lealty tae Scots, intelligibeility cannae be aathegither pit tae the horn" [Whatever our loyalty to Scots, intelligibility can't be altogether outlawed].

Clark and Kurtoğlu's linguistic idiosyncrasies are therefore aligned somewhat with the Lallans writers' principles outlined so far, and they generally write within the Lallans tradition, rather than seeking the excessive degree of individualism identified among some Scots-language "hobbyists", to which they are opposed. Excessive innovation constitutes "overdoing it"; it is an impediment to "how we can preserve [Scots] and build on it" (TC). Clark nevertheless notes artistic motives as a legitimate exception to conformity and, elsewhere, linguistic homogeneity was seen to impede creativity. The desire to *capture a voice* in literature can be motivated by creativity: there is organised orthographic variation between characters in *Be Guid Tae Yer Mammy*, which is sometimes highly innovative in its representation of Glesga. Grae is the only author in the sample, and one of very few in general, to represent *th*-fronting with <f>. For this reason, Grae stated several times that standardisation stifles character development and artistic creativity: "it's good that we have our own ways of using it. It gives each writer a unique voice"; "the idea that you could standardise Scots baffles me". This meant that, prior to the editing process, Grae's writing was improvised and replete with apologetic apostrophes: she "was

[68] http://wulfkurtoglu.blogspot.com/2011/09/style-tips-for-screivin-in-scots.html
Accessed: 17.05.2023

refusing to read other Scots writers" because she "wanted was I was doing to be original" and "how I heard it in my head, that's how I wrote it". Similarly, for Macdonald, "where do you actually umm decide … or pontificate … that there's such a thing as a Scots standard in literature?"

Kurtoğlu exhibits a self-conscious awareness of how the indexing of features may influence readers' perceptions and draws on this in order to vary at the level of dialect: between Lallans for aperspectival narration and Insular Scots (representing the dialects of Orkney or Shetland) for Neandertal dialogue.[69] This involved avoidance of the "old-fashioned" <ee> digraph in narration (e.g., *weel* for *well*; note that Clark indexed <ee> as "parody" Scots). Other writers' creative choices also related to indexicality: sometimes they wanted a word to look old, or *not* look old, or to look particularly urban. Referring to the lowered, retracted Glesga /ʌ̈/ phoneme in the spelling of *durty* [dirty], Wilson said: "that's like character… imagine that I'm like a guy in the pub that has maybe a slightly thicker accent than me". Similarly, one of the motives for Scots spellings in Wilson's *Erskine Bridge Boys* is to create characters that can effectively represent themes of poverty, "meaninglessness", and the resulting depression among post-industrial working-class men. In this practice, spelling is predominantly a vehicle for Wilson's personal artistic pursuit as it relates to social commentary. Further to Macdonald's earlier comments on genre and language choice:

> HM: It would feel artificial to have a young boy, a 14-year-old telling a story of growing up in Clydebank that was in too classical a Scots context. It's quite an obvious thing to say you know but there is a separation of the two when you're writing *(unclear)*
>
> R: yeah
>
> HM: of that more traditional form of Scots and contemporary Scots

At a more individual level, Macdonald uses language play by drawing on the serendipitous shape of certain letters and to mimic the sounds of birds with Scots phrases: "the Doric birds you know going "fit like fit like fit like" ["what's up what's up what's up"].

[69] *Braken Fences* is a science fiction novel set in Central Asia, in the near future. The extinction of the Neandertals is reimagined.

While these individual and artistic elements present a limitation to how much we may rely on broader language ideologies to explain language choice, they are themselves limited in explaining why writers interested in the development of Scots choose Lallans forms. Despite liberal attitudes towards language choice in literature, "Scots writers need to accept their own limitations" (EG) if they are not well-versed in the verbal hygiene of Scots authorities, to which they are expected to defer. Despite her staunch attitude against standardisation, Grae aligned herself more with Lallans after publishing *Be Guid Tae Yer Mammy*: she describes her decisions prior to the editing process as not "acceptable", stating she was "lucky" to have been given linguistic guidance – something she believes all Scots writers ought to have before publishing. Grae, Macdonald, Clark, Douglas, and Kurtoğlu have all indicated that Lallans is a 'higher' form of Scots. And not only do they use Lallans when writing expository prose, but also for higher registers in literature: poems with solemn themes, translation into a form of standard Scots, folk tales requiring "literary" language, and 3rd-person narration. Paterson appears to use a particular Lallans style across his poetry, generally preferring English for X (with occasional Lallans spellings). By contrast, Maley and Wilson eschew Lallans, with Wilson using more or less the same form of phonetic Glesga across a range of registers and genres.

4.5 Discussion: 'third ways' for Scots?

Kurtoğlu's suggestion that Scots writers either want to *capture a voice* or *do something with the language*, and that this is reflected in language choice, appears to be a useful observation. More specifically, interviewees who reported a desire to *capture a voice* used phonetic spellings, while *doing something with the language* (i.e., developing Scots as an independent language) concurred with orthographic and lexical forms of Lallans that are more distant from common varieties of spoken Scots. This second group tends to follow some commonly agreed linguistic norms among

Scots advocates, but also commonly agreed principles: striking 'the balance' between accessibility and distinctiveness; orthographic and lexical distance from speech as a virtue of an independent tradition of literacy; the revival of orthographic and lexical features with a history of 'good' usage in order to help Scots achieve language status. Phonetic Glesga does not coincide with these principles but is a comparatively straightforward expression of working-class speech used to validate the author's identity, or to develop contextualised literary characters.

It is also clear that the desire among Scots writers to either *capture a voice* or *do something with the language* is a less binary choice than it was in the 20th century. Some writers reported that their output was motivated by both forces, although these still seem to correlate with different written styles. When Macdonald and Grae alternated between styles, or combined them, they did so in keeping with specific contexts, functions, and motives that reinforced Lallans as a 'higher' variety of Scots, and phonetic Glesga as a 'voice'. Reflected in this is a general ambivalence towards that voice, which is rooted in a conflicted language ideology.

On several occasions Lallans writer Paterson referenced 'naturally' occurring speech as a justification narrative, but also the need for standardisation and official recognition of Scots as a language. In the broader context of his interview and poetry, his unwavering commitment to the authenticity and legitimacy of Scots speech does not always, by his own admission, find expression in a language that is as 'essential' or as 'natural' as he suggests when he says: "it was just the way we spoke, it's just who we were". This duality also appears in commentary on his work. In the foreword to his collection *Wheen*, novelist and Itchy Coo co-founder James Robertson presents the authenticity of Paterson's own spoken Scots as a motive alongside activism, while suggesting that activism drives more historically symbolic usage: "Paterson's commitment to writing in Scots is neither pose nor born out of some sense of obligation. It comes from the simple fact Scots is his first language", yet "some of the poems here reflect that history

[of social stigma]: they defend Scots and deliberately set out to display its versatility" (Paterson 2023: 4).

Paterson's dilemma resides in the opposing forces which the contemporary Lallans writing tradition aims to fuse or to satisfy simultaneously. The discourse around his writing, which seeks to uphold the authority of both 'natural' spoken and 'high' written Scots is emblematic of the ideological challenge facing Lallans writers and their responses to it. In this discussion I will draw from the analysis above to show how and why Lallans writers address the opposing discourses of hegemony and democracy, homogeneity and diversity, anonymity and 'natural' authenticity.

Sometimes these tensions are recognised and sometimes they become shrouded in a 'double discourse' similar to Paterson's. Sometimes writers involved in Scots advocacy search for 'third ways' which bridge the modernist binary of authenticity and anonymity; this is done via an "accessible" style which appeals to both sides of the modernist axis of differentiation. This style is imagined as an initial gateway to an idealised Lallans, which can be its own 'third way' – "rich" Scots forms which represent authenticity as a goal that speakers can access only via a process of language learning. By virtue of their prestige and historicity, these forms are not only deemed apt to fulfil legitimating ideas of anonymity – such as 'literacy', decontextualisation, and standardisation – but are supposedly also suited to the authentic self-realisation of identity. In fact, these two ideological functions have become, deliberately and conveniently, deeply intertwined as icons of the same written style. Yet, however open-minded this approach is intended to be, it nevertheless rests on an erasure of the 'naturally' authentic ideology held by many people outside the Scots movement, some of them Scots writers. Arguably, this reifies the terms of modernity, and the 'diversity paradox' remains problematic.

Firstly, what underpins the ideological and linguistic split between Scots writers? Crucially, stylistic differences exist despite a consistency in the underlying motives for not writing in Standard English. The validation of stigmatised Scots speech was given as the fundamental motive for not writing in Standard English. Writers both young and old on either side of the linguistic divide share a common belief in linguistic equality, expressed through criticisms of the negative iconisation of Scots speech and through a reluctance to judge other writers' choices. Polarised 20th-century writers, too, were aligned[70] in their rejection of the hegemony of English over vernacular Scots speech, but their differences were more obviously drawn on social lines as they related to class and nationalist politics. I have predominantly focused on the ongoing differences between Lallans and phonetic writers in this chapter, but I have also shown that this divide has eased ideologically, with interviewees from either side expressing no animosity towards the other in the present day, instead speaking about the other with respect.

Validation of identity was sometimes framed as a nationwide issue in the data, but the primary point of reference was normally interviewees' own experience of stigma as working-class speakers from Glasgow, or elsewhere in the Central Belt. Douglas, the most transparent advocate of Lallans, stated:

> AD: I am all about inclusion and self-worth. Languages are spoken by people, and so if people are calling Scots bad English or slang or uneducated or uncouth – in essence, lesser – you are also saying that the people speaking it are those things, and I'm just not here for that sort of denigration of people – real, living, feeling people, including bairns – which has really insidious impacts on their sense of self-worth and self-esteem and validity. It's rooted in ignorance and prejudice, but it has serious consequences. They are speaking the Scots language, and they should not be made to feel in any way lesser or ashamed because of that.

Clark and Paterson also spoke candidly about the pressures of peers and teachers (sometimes via physical punishment) put upon them to not appear "stupid", "poor", or "bad". Emerging unprompted in the data, the phonetic writer Wilson echoed this sentiment. For Maley, the experience of stigma distanced him from the Scots movement because the sanctioned forms of

[70] Cf. comparison between James Kelman and celebrated Scots figures in chapter 3, in which all non-standard writers defended the right to 'be themselves'.

Scots in education were inauthentic: “you could get the belt” for speaking “your own language”, but “you could recite The Twa Dugs by Robert Burns to your heart’s content. So there was something wrong about that … So I never dealt with the theory of Scots language”. But Grae, another (much younger) working-class Glaswegian, who also commented on Scots being “physically beaten” out of older generations, and who writes primarily about the verbal abuse directed at Scots speakers in her role as a Scots-language commentator for *The National*,[71] sees stigmatisation as a primary reason for Scots to be recognised as a language. For Paterson, also, when asked why recognition of Scots as a language was important: “it would make folk [people] realise that how they talk is real”.

In the shift towards inclusivity and plurality of language and identity, the Lallans writers fit the general ideological arc of Scots-language activism and literary criticism by welcoming diverse themes, perspectives, and orthographic styles. On the one hand, the value of central authority and normativity was in doubt, with language presented as an individual choice in order to confer agency on the victims of sociolinguistic stigma. This can be set in the context of a broader national or international trend: in the modern history of British prescriptivism, the assumption of Standard English hegemony has been giving way to an increased recognition of the legitimacy of non-standard dialects and accents. On the other hand, it is precisely this bid for recognition which prompts the campaign for Scots as an independent language, whose historical legacy as a language of state and of ‘high’ literature provides the appropriate symbolism for that recognition.

Validation of identity thus offers writers a choice between the ‘natural’ language of everyday speech and the contrived, effortful language of revival (whose departure from the ‘natural’ cleaved the relationship between Muir and MacDiarmid, and stoked tensions between the 20th-century Lallans movement and phonetic urban dialect contemporaries). Marrying these two styles is now a primary concern and Lallans writers reported having consciously moved away

[71] For example: https://www.thenational.scot/news/19640400.author-emma-guinness-speaks-online-abuse-scots-speaking-creatives/ https://www.thenational.scot/politics/20101806.billy-kay-attacked-speaking-scots-proves-speech-needed/ Accessed 24.05.2023

from the past tendency to favour linguistic "idealism" over "realism" (Murison 1977). Hence, there is a stylistic shift towards a more speechlike form of writing to attempt to provide a 'third way'.

Contemporary Lallans writers also separate themselves from the self-proclaimed or perceived nationalism associated with the cultural revivalism of the 20th century. To summarise Cairns Craig's study of Scottish revivalism:

> Scotland might have been a nation which had lost its statehood, but in its commitment to the remembrance of its national past it became an almost exemplary case of the hypotheses of recent theories of the nation and nationalism which [...] have laid an ever-increasing stress on the role of memory in national identity and in the politics of nationalism ... Without a core of shared symbolism resting on an accepted body of cultural memory, the argument goes, the modern nation could not maintain the social solidarity which makes its existence possible.
>
> (Craig 2018: 33)

Within the Scots movement, the "shared symbolism" of traditional spelling and lexis indeed rests on "an accepted body of cultural memory" in Scottish society, but not always to these ends. The Lallans writers in this case study show no evidence, in interviews or in their texts, of the type of nostalgia or cultural holism that has surrounded Burns and MacDiarmid. Mere mentions of Scotland and Scottishness were rare in the interview data (as well as some texts) and, without prompting, some interviewees rejected accusations of nationalism. Grae, who was undecided in the 2014 Scottish independence referendum, said of her critics:

> It's just like falsely equating anything Scottish with nationalism. And especially ... yeah that's entirely what it's about. It's just this false sense of nationalism and it's this certain portion of people in Scotland that don't like Scottish culture and think that it's obnoxious in some way. I'm not a member of the SNP, like I live in England.

Paterson's poem *Forecast* laments the assumption that Scots indexes a "low-born nationalistic tendency to complain" (Paterson 2023: 9). In interview, too, he observed that Scots is no longer aligned with the Scottish National Party, as it once was. Of course, Scots is still organised around a national outlook – it is still an aspect of "Scottish culture" for writers such as Grae. But the social

function of Lallans is the realisation of democratic linguistic rights throughout Scotland, and this continues to be understood mostly within the terms of modernity.

Writers continue to draw upon the same legitimating linguistic symbolism of the past, but as a resource in the pursuit of an 'apolitical' anonymity. For instance, Douglas discourages any marked cultural associations with Lallans/Scots: in an editorial which bears a title drawn directly from the idiom of anonymity – 'Scots belangs tae awbodie and naebodie' [Scots belongs to everyone and no one] in the first issue of *Eemis Stane* – she argues, in dense Lallans, that Scots ought to be separated from any particular speaker, author, function, attitude, or judgement. "Scots is nae mair nor a mixter-maxter o sounds and wirds" [Scots is nothing more than a mishmash of sounds and words] because it is "like aw ither leids" [like all other languages] (Douglas 2022: 3). In a similar vein, Kurtoğlu's *Braken Fences* consciously uses Scots as a medium for expressing characters and events outside Scotland and Scottish history in order to "push the boundaries of what the language can address".[72] It does not contain distinctive Scottish themes at all. Such is the tendency in the Scots movement to 'de-politicise' Scots, replacing Romantic notions of authenticity with a modern cosmopolitan anonymity.

In sum, it seems that the difference between phonetic and Lallans writers today is not an overtly cultural and political polarity, but a difference in how socially comparable writers decide to respond to stigma based on their respective views of language. As it was for Kelman and Leonard in particular, phonetic Glesga can be used to reject the hierarchical terms of stigma outright, while Lallans is a means of managing them. Within the bounds of literature, this is a difference between postmodern and modernist (Gal 2017) ideologies of writing. The phonetic writer Willy Maley recalled the counterhegemonic attitudes of his predecessors in urban literature who both challenged the dominance of English and "proposed novel discourses of justification by re-working the valence of qualities" in the modernist model – specifically, the

[72] Interview with Wulf Kurtoğlu:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlDA4A3xSWw
Accessed 19.02.2024

legitimacy of authentic oral language represented in writing – "re-signifying what is indexed by practices and linguistic forms" (Gal 2017: 224). Put simply, they made no apologies for the written representation of their 'bad' speech and its indexical link to a specific subordinated culture.

Lallans writers have celebrated this practice. But they mostly take the view that everyday victims of sociolinguistic stigma can be helped by elevating language status nationally via an appropriate linguistic register, rather than viewing that same theory of language as a denial of their social experience. It is a workaround which does not disrupt the modernist framework for understanding stigma but takes possession of it: anonymity is constructed as a means towards an aim related to the concept of authenticity – validation of identity for all. Specifically, Lallans was described as a means of distinguishing written Scots from an undesirable form of English dialect or 'slang' and, thus, the higher written forms are intended to stand in for the lower speech forms. Writers can be said to be engaging in a form of intermedial translation:

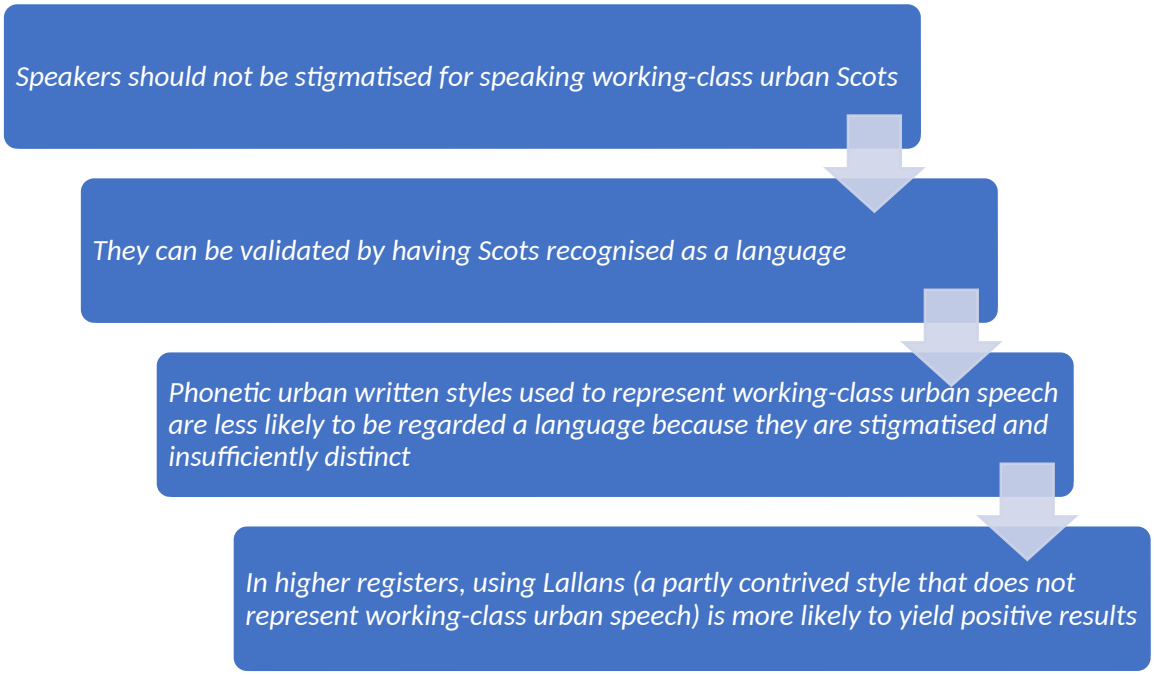

Figure 4: Rationalisation of the use of Lallans as a means of validating working-class urban speech

This constitutes a fundamentally modernist metadiscursive strategy for confronting the postmodern social issue of diversity since legitimacy for speakers is constructed via the differentiation of literacy and orality, and of universality and particularity. This line of thinking provides a straightforward, recognisable, tangible framework for stigmatisation and, therefore, legitimation. As ever, we must approach with some caution the 'reproduction thesis' (Urla et al. 2017) – the notion that the recursion of modernity within minority languages reproduces the terms of hegemonic power. Here, universality is intended as a democratising force rather than one which discreetly marginalises, as has been the case for countless standard languages. Linguistic rights, rather than social control, is the goal of having Scots treated as *any other language*. Often, this meant the relationship between Scots and English was framed as that of any two languages. When asked why writing in Scots was important, Paterson replied: "would you say that to somebody who's German, or Dutch, or Russian, or Lithuanian, or Norman, or Welsh? No."

Yet this democratic intent does not absolve the Scots movement of its instances of erasure. Firstly, languageness is seen to necessitate verbal hygiene; it must be proved by way of differentiation from English. It is common among Scots activists and writers, even linguists (cf. McClure 1979: 30), to claim that comparisons with English can undermine the inherent legitimacy of Scots as a language, and, if they themselves are wont to make such comparisons, they do so for convenience since Standard English is well known to Scottish people. But there is ample evidence to suggest that Scots is necessarily defined in relation to English to the extent that *Abstand*, and the iconisation of specific graphemes and digraphs, are believed to be essential. Since much of the 'naturally' authentic written representation of Scots speech is relatively similar to English – in lexis, syntax, and sound-spelling conventions – the attitude of inclusivity, in which Lallans writers were reluctant to overtly position different forms of Scots into a hierarchy, cannot exist in the same space as normative verbal hygiene practices.

It is for this reason that instances of ‘double discourse’ were observed. Alongside anti-prescriptivist attitudes, Lallans features were spoken of as taken-for-granted “standard” Scots spellings and lexis which are suited to institutional and supra-regional usage: features belonging to no-one-in-particular. Interviewees expressed a desire for these spellings to be detached from the symbolism and origins of those same spellings, as is the case for languages in an advanced stage of standardisation. The Scots ‘standards’ are generally assumed to be synonymous with a learnable ‘Scots literacy’, which writers appeared to adopt as they gained experience in Scots writing and became involved with Scots-language institutions. To the extent that standard norms exist, this lends further weight to the use of Lallans as a ‘high’ form of Scots. Yet there is no escaping the fact that this attitude of anonymity is counterposed to authenticity.

Some interviewees accepted normativity as necessary, and a sound analysis of this situation is provided in Douglas’s guide to translation, which candidly states the need to challenge “negative sociolinguistic perceptions of Scots by avoiding similarity with English” via two “hard” rules: the use of Scots spelling, lexis, and grammar wherever possible, and omission of the apologetic apostrophe. Nevertheless, the ideology of anonymity is limited. The data indicated that Scots norms are not received with *méconnaisance* (Bourdieu 1991), in which language is deracinated from its history and social indexicality. In this same sense, speakers and writers know that Scots is not anonymous and cannot be so long as it serves a nonreferential function.

It is for this reason that, in fact, Lallans writers called to mind the known symbolism and origins of written features to rationalise their choices. This second function of revivalism as a project of authenticity is closer to the practices of the 20th-century Lallans writers. Today’s Lallans writers cited the inherent value of the historical, lexicographical, and literary provenance of digraphs such as <ui> and <ei>, which “you can find … going way back probably into Medieval Scots texts” (HM). For Douglas, the “full linguistic richness” of Scots is synonymous with vocabulary such as *forby* (*moreover*), and other “historical high-register terms – from the many

centuries when Scots was a formal language of state". The continued usage of Lallans is justified by the longevity of Scots:

> R: People might say to you: "why not just do it in English? What's the point?" So, why do these poems in Scots?
>
> SP: If people say that to me, I would educate them and let them know that Scots is an old, old language

There is, in this, a linguistic and tacitly cultural form of revivalism to the extent that, in higher registers, older language is used *because* it is old, and to the extent that the written language of the Lallans-leaning Scots movement aims to literally revive moribund pronunciation and lexis.

The more advanced the Scots writer, it was said, the greater their cultural autonomy from Standard English, and the "more authentic" their language. In this formulation, phonetic writing was always placed at the beginning of a "journey" towards "richer", "full-blown" Scots literacy. These examples of authenticity as a project can also be viewed as an attempt at a 'third way' for Scots literacy. The discourse of authenticity, as it relates to everyday speakers of all types, is reappropriated in such a way that, it is hoped, those speakers will identify with the same prestigious linguistic forms which can provide the legitimacy of *Abstand* and – in other sites of discourse – anonymity. Hence, the pursuit of anonymity and authenticity-as-a-project are intertwined and united in their goal of achieving legitimacy. They are two goal-oriented strategies that are contradictory in principle, but united in their ends: one strategy relates speaker identity to a particular historical "shared symbolism" of the nation, the other de-emphasises anything "special aboot Scots at aw" [special about Scots at all]. While anonymity is a means to an end for the validation of identity, authenticity-as-a-project dictates that self-realisation is found in the very cultivation of language. In both cases, the inconvenient proximity of 'natural' Scots to English can be removed from the ideological picture.

I do not consider these approaches and their interrelated conflicts inherently false – at least, no more or less so than any other ideology. But I do believe that, like any other ideology,

they erase inconvenient realities – in the case of Scots, significant realities whose erasure may cause problems for the Scots movement's overall goals. The various strategies observed here operate in the new landscape of Scots where prescriptivism is to be avoided and validation of all dialects sought, but where stigma still drives verbal hygiene. For the Lallans writers themselves, a portion of them working-class Glaswegians who were introduced to Scots writing via phonetic literature, Lallans has provided them with perhaps genuine 'third ways'. For them, their goals have been met. But what is the position of the phonetic urban style? When used to represent specific 'voices', it was mostly considered as authoritative as any other form of Scots. Yet it was discouraged elsewhere, not only because Lallans is preferable as something of a standard, but because Glesga is viewed as particularly damaging to the status of Scots.

Acceptance of the urban style in first-person narrative and poetry provides a means of appreciating diversity, while discouraging it in higher registers satisfies the desire to avoid stigmatisation. Giles views this as a cynical rhetorical strategy:

> This points towards an ideology of Scots that is neither nativist nor nation language nor subaltern English but rather *civic nationalist Scots*: a model of Scots that self-consciously absorbs difference and dissent, models standardisation while accepting variation, and constructs a nation and language through the practice of concealing the border guards. That is, this "late liberal" model of Scots which "care[s] for difference without disturbing key ways of configuring experience" (Povinelli 2011:26) contains multiple internal contradictions – such as practitioners of working class vernacular refusing the name "Scots" […] – which are invisible until the very moment they are policed.
>
> (Giles 2019: 187)

Giles's analysis points to the types of inconveniences that a given ideology must manage via Irvine & Gal's (2000) concept of erasure, or Flew's (1966) concept of *no true Scotsman*. Fairly recently, Tom Leonard approved a request to have his work labelled as 'English' in an A-level literature textbook, but not as 'Scots' by the Scottish schools exam board (Leonard 2014).[73] Yet, in chapter 5 I note how the current director of the SLC Michael Dempster has described Leonard's spellings as

[73] The reasons for this are illuminating. In this blog entry, entitled *The Self in "Self Determination"*, Leonard explains that he based his decision not on a perceived understanding of any linguistic boundary between English and Scots, but because the English publisher recognised agency and the legitimacy of individual expression in his use of language. "There is no one in Scotland just now that I know capable of making that connection", he said.

"100% valid" variants of Scots while modelling particular Lallans spellings and lexis. To both Leonard himself and the 'old guard' of Scots who "*hates* Tom Leonard, *hates* him" (TC), the conflicts of this "late liberal" culture insist that his writing is 'Scots' while also suggesting it is undesirable in some way. The phonetic writers, Maley and Wilson, did in fact call their own writing 'Scots', perhaps due to the aforementioned easing of polarisation, but they did so with irreverence and hesitation, respectively. They did not share the mainstream Scots movement's conceptualisation of Scots as a language *like any other* and they did not identify with Lallans. Neither would their writing meet what standards could be observed of the 'best' forms of written Scots – above all, we can assume that Wilson's use of apologetic apostrophes would meet strong opposition from Lallans writers.

My questioning raised Giles's observed conflicts, and, arguably, "the practice of concealing the border guards" can be found in ambivalent attitudes to written Glesga in higher registers and, at one level of consciousness, in the general hesitancy to speak of absolute ideal norms. In other metadiscourses, however, those ideals emerged. For Douglas in particular, Lallans is less apologetically the 'standard' that ought to be used in higher registers. For her and other Lallans writers,[74] an ideological picture is put forward in which all forms of Scots speech can be appropriately represented by a supposedly accessible Lallans, even elevated by it, and the use of these written norms is in the interest of all Scots speakers and writers.

In this, there is significant potential for the unintended erasure of those interests as imagined by the speakers and writers themselves. The virtues of Lallans – its symbolic potential to confer linguistic rights and satisfy the pursuit of self-realisation – is sometimes taken as a fact which Scottish people have not yet learned. But for Maley and Wilson, their 'voices' can be unproblematically validated by phonetic spelling. It is precisely this point about the agency of the writer over their personal voice and personal interests that distanced Leonard from Scots. The

[74] An exception is Kurtoğlu/Macafee, who, speaking as an accomplished sociolinguist specialising in Scots, strove for consistent ideological neutrality.

more ‘developed’ stages of ‘Scots literacy’ contain “contrived” (WM) spellings and basic lexis – *gin*, *ilka*, or *een* – that are unlikely to be associated with ‘natural’ language, or even be known to everyday Scots speakers. There is also a small indication that even spoken Scots may be erased as a product of ‘Scots literacy’, with ideal Lallans norms sometimes corresponding to ideal speech forms being reintroduced as post-natural “authentic” features or as spelling pronunciations, particularly <ch> (/x/) and <y> (/ai/).

4.6 Concluding comments

The findings in this chapter highlight the problem as described by Giles: if Scots writers continue to participate in the erasure of written urban dialects, how does this coexist with those writers’ interests in urban working-class speakers’ validation and the rejection of stereotypically rural or nationalist imagery associated with Lallans? This was a point of departure for the interviews conducted. Paradoxically, the success of that imagery, the linguistic symbolism that remains, and the lower status of urban Scots dialects in other areas of Scottish, British, and global discourse leads Lallans writers to lean on prestigious spellings and lexis, rather than to dispense with this imagery or hierarchy. For them, this is something of a solution. However, it was one which came with self-reflection, linguistic flexibility, and a hesitancy towards singular authority.

The following chapter finds these same issues at play, with similar outcomes, in the ‘highest’ registers of written language, where the ostensible purpose of writing is to provide information. Developing a greater output in these registers is a major concern within the Scots movement, which I have observed in planning meetings (e.g., for The Future of Scots). But, in a genre predicated on the idea of anonymity, the discourses which respond to the conflicts of Scots literacy are further shaped by the expectation of singular, authoritative guidance on correctness.

5 The Case of Scots Wikipedia

The previous chapter suggested the influence of genre and register on variability in Scots orthography. Unsurprisingly, in less regulated genres such as postmodern prose or poetry, Scots writers are mostly accepting of the innovative ways authors choose to express themselves. Whether affirmed or by implication, the Lallans interviewees suggested that formality would require closer attention to the norms of a learnable 'Scots literacy'. The previous case study also indicated that the authority of official bodies is an important factor in shaping the usage and conceptualisation of Scots. There lies within this a fundamental sociolinguistic tenet of modernity: that when writing informatively – in the modernist arena of science and truth – there is an implicit expectation that a standard 'correct' form corresponds to the dissemination of knowledge, and that Scots-language institutions are poised to model that standard. The expectation of a standard can be found regardless of one's attitude towards the legitimacy of Scots.

There have been challenges to this idea only on rare occasions. In a conference on the topic of standardisation hosted by a major Scots-language planning organisation, a researcher presented a comparison of approaches to standardisation in Scots and Norwegian. Being a fairly typical meeting for Scots-language planning, in which open-minded and democratic discussion was undercut by the pressing need to bolster languageness, the researcher was asked how Scots could come to displace English in various registers if standardisation could not be established. This question is emblematic of the problem of Scots literacy. The researcher's reply was critical of standard language ideology: would the Scots movement consider disposing of the notion of register altogether? One might go further to ask: is there a need to write in expository prose at all? There is, after all, an indication that many lay Scottish people do not see any form of Scots as appropriate for use across a wide range of registers (Unger 2013). The other participants were receptive to this, highly aware of the threat to diversity which a written standard may represent.

Yet ultimately the necessity of an appropriate register for expository writing prevailed – seemingly because, even though those present at the meeting could apparently conceive of polynomic or pluricentric approaches, they did not think that wider society would be as accepting.

This chapter now turns to the challenge of how Scots writers produce expository prose, analysing the guidance of a set of 'bottom-up' texts from an online community, and those of 'top-down' organisations, which are also used within that community. The analysis of top-down guides also provides a look inside the institutions of the Scots language movement, scrutinising the linguistic and discursive normativity within them. The temporal setting of this case study is also important, investigating verbal hygiene for formal writing at a moment when petitions for guidance were at a height. The data shows normative approaches to the 'diversity paradox' that are similar to those found in the previous chapter. However, there is a greater emphasis on discourses of neutrality and universality, which are sometimes relied upon to imply – rather than to name and detail – normativity. The reasons for preferring Lallans forms, for erasing urban styles, and for writing in Scots altogether, appear to be evoked more euphemistically in these metadiscourses of anonymity.

5.1 Comedy of Errors

Red, Redd(e). *V. p.t. and p.p. also* Reddit. *To tidy, put in order, settle a dispute. (Dictionary of the Scots Language [DSL])*

On 26th August 2020, news articles began to appear which reported on the fact that a male teenager from North Carolina, who did not speak Scots, had authored around half the entries in the Scots-language Wikipedia. These reports appeared in major national broadsheets, political

magazines, and tabloids, as well as internationally, and on various internet news websites large and small, all of them implying the language used in the entries was incorrect.

Ostensibly, the reports approached the matter respectfully and soberly, treating Scots as a distinct language. But the reception of the story was more mixed. For some, this was a case of the comical 'Scottish Twitter' and the *r/Scotland* community page on Reddit (where news of the scandal first broke) reaching new levels of absurdity; suggested Google searches related to "Scots Wikipedia" are: "is Scots Wikipedia a joke" and "Scots Wikipedia meme". For others, it was a sensitive issue. According to the Reddit user Ultacht, who has become well-known in the Scots Wikipedia community for having brought the problem to wider attention, the offending editor – by most accounts a well-meaning man – "has possibly done more damage to the Scots language than anyone else in history".[75] While the assertion is questionable, the hyperbole was common; *The Times* ran an article that described the edits as error-strewn vandalism (Wade & Yeomans 2020). This points to the inherent value of standard language ideology in expository prose (i.e., that it is important that the articles were written correctly and with sincerity) and the corresponding converse fear that the Scots project will suffer greatly if those standards are not met.

There was general agreement that these articles were not linguistically authoritative; the 'fake' Wikipedia articles are now an obvious and popular reference point for what Scots *is not*. There is an implicit assumption in the news sources that this is an issue of authenticity: the fact of AmaryllisGardener's (AG) being American is foregrounded in all reports, in a manner that questioned his linguistic ability. Nevertheless, identity was not a sufficient condition. Experts were prompted by the media to give explanations of the Wikipedia entries' linguistic failings, typically with the same partial answer: Scots is not just orthographically reimagined translations of English – it requires the appropriate use of authoritative lexis and syntax.

[75] https://www.reddit.com/r/Scotland/comments/ig9jia/ive_discovered_that_almost_every_single_article/ Accessed 17.09.2024

This common justification (cf. comments by Ultacht; articles in the *i* newspaper [McDonald 2020] and *The Guardian* [Brookes & Hern 2020]; SLC 2021a: 19) is explained in more detail by Scots linguist Robert McColl Millar, who stated (McDonald 2020) that the author was unlikely to be a Scots speaker for reasons of syntactic usage: firstly, the use of *an aw* as a substitute for *also* in all positions (rather than only in clause-final positions where it parallels *as well* or *too*), and secondly the use of *thir* as a demonstrative pronoun (rather than a demonstrative determiner, as it is used in some dialects – e.g. *thir jaikets dinnae hae sleeves* [these jackets don't have sleeves]). The Scots Wikipedia administrators in particular have taken issue with literal translations from English pages, as is the case in AG's entries, and these have now been labelled 'Scotched English': a dependence on Standard English "grammar an eediom [grammar and idiom]" that does not use (or that misuses) authoritative Scots structures.[76]

AG's entries fall into this category. There are clear examples similar to those given by Millar and the Scots Wikipedia entry for Blaise Pascal,[77] which is now preceded by a disclaimer that it was written with a poor knowledge of Scots, is a literal translation of select passages taken from the corresponding English page. From the perspective of the English-literate Scots novice, AG's writing is fairly easy to read; for the most part, it is a matter of reading an English text which has been spelled differently. By contrast, pages apparently written by experienced Scots writers are dense with lexis and syntax not intelligible to less experienced readers of Scots.

The initial Scots Wikipedia community response is documented in a discussion entitled: *Requests for comment/large scale inaccuracies on the Scots Wikipedia*.[78] This discussion was hosted by Wikimedia – the not-for-profit organisation that runs the encyclopaedia. The bulk of the community reaction to AG's edits is found here, along with the author's apology: "[h]onestly, I

[76] https://sco.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scotched_English
Accessed 08.11.2021
[77] https://sco.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blaise_Pascal
Accessed 08.11.2021
[78] https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Requests_for_comment/Large_scale_language_inaccuracies_on_the_Scots_Wikipedia
Accessed 10.11.2021

don't mind if you revert all of my edits, delete my articles, and ban me from the wiki for good.[79] I've already found out that my "contributions" have angered countless people". The crux of this "anger" is the belief that Scotched English fuels negative stereotyping and constitutes a mockery of Scots speakers. The SLC's survey of Scots writers (SLC 2021b), which was commissioned in response to the Wikipedia scandal, showed some agreement that this was a problem, and one that begets the secondary problem of learning how to write in a manner that was more convincingly 'Scots'. Not all agreed, however: one apparently fluent speaker insisted that this view of 'Scotched English' "is not a valid complaint" and that even the forms of Scottish language which most closely resemble Standard English should be understood as Scots.

While this all provided sufficient detail for news stories, within activist and Wikipedia circles many more questions of correctness were raised than were answered. How should AG have written? Editors seeking to 'fix' the articles expect to be instructed and questions of spelling, rather than other feature of language, have been most thoroughly debated in language guides and online. But the orthographic norms for building a Scots encyclopaedia are rarely explicit. A group of eager Wikipedia editors sought guidance from the SLC, which went as far as to launch a multi-faceted project in response, but, as we shall see, provided little in the way of practicable instruction. It may have been possible to identify unidiomatic Scots in select examples, but the relative lack of accepted written norms beyond experienced Lallans writers contributes to anxieties about the legitimacy of Scots. The ambiguities of Scots – specifically, that its status as a 'language' is as tenuous as the authority of its linguistic forms in broader society – seemingly give supporters of Scots great cause for concern when a writer with poor language skills is in the public eye. Contrastingly, in modern-day Catalonia, where the legitimacy, norms, and linguistic bounds of Catalan are well-established, such figures are either parodied or celebrated for their efforts (Woolard 2016).

[79] In actual fact, once the initial furore had calmed, AG reported: "[the] welcoming atmosphere of the Wikimedia and Scots language community has warmed my heart" (Harrison 2020). Despite harassment, AG is now welcome to continue editing in the approved manner.

Since the summer of 2020, new pages dedicated to reforming Scots Wikipedia have proliferated, along with user activity on pre-existing ones. It was observed that a broad lack of qualified editors contributed to the initial problem; a large number of contributors besides AG self-reported poor knowledge of Scots. In a subsection of the Wikimedia discussion entitled *Some points about the Scots language*, these editors' contributions are said to fail in the following ways:

> The close relationship with English leads to misunderstandings and all sorts of issues with unproductive contributions. Users do things like:
>
> - contribute entirely in English
> - "correct" pages to English
> - contribute a whole [English] wikipedia post and "translate" three words with find and replace
> - look at a page of Scots, see [its] similarity to English, and then phonetically write a bad impersonation of a Scottish accent
>
> user: Monospaced

Deeper discussion of linguistic specifics reaffirmed the fact that it is easier to identify the incorrect than to state definitively what is correct. There was an assumption that native speakers would be able to resolve this issue: it is they who are to approve "muckle chynges" [big changes], it is to them that editors frequently defer, and their absence from the decision-making process is often lamented. And indeed, native speakers were reported to have been largely absent from the Scots Wikipedia administration at the time, with major contributors self-reporting low levels of knowledge[80] in Scots.

> I just looked at "recent changes" There were four recent major contributors. One is from Ohio, one is I believe from Connecticut, and one is from Sri Lanka. Only one is native Scottish.
>
> Blythwood

But this led to a further, unsettling revelation. Scottish contributors – even those who claimed to speak fluent Scots – did not feel confident acting as arbiters of its written form, admitting that they would not know how to write authoritatively:

[80] The self-declared tags 'sco-1' (lowest level of Scots competence) and 'sco-2' (second from lowest) are attached to the profiles of non-native speakers. Both levels are said to be insufficient to authoritatively edit Scots Wikipedia.

> I have lived my whole life between the Clyde and Forth Valley; I have read Scots documents from poetry to [...] 18th century legal opinions; I've read MacDiarmid's synthetic Scots – but despite all that, I never felt qualified to edit sco.wiki.
>
> AllyD

In this instance, there is an unintended outcome of pursuing the modernist model of a standard language. Minority-language speakers "become aware of standards of correctness without having easy access to training" (Jaffe 1999: 24). In Scots, this is further complicated by that fact that those standards are covert and perhaps particularly unintuitive.

Discussions around correct usage failed to produce an exemplary Wikipedia entry for reference, since the few native speakers involved in the project admitted to not having been taught how to write in Scots. They did not assume, as non-native editors did, that they possessed the capacity to write in Scots. They assumed instead that appropriate norms were available (predominantly regarding traditional orthography and spelling), but not known. The SLC's survey of writers (SLC 2021b) found that lack of literacy among native speakers was predominantly a matter of orthography. Perhaps non-native editors expected that speech could be transcribed intuitively, while native speakers expected a written standard to be set by external consensus or top-down authority.

Overall, there did not seem to be a willing editor who considered themself sufficiently equipped to write an entry. *Some points about the Scots language* accurately assesses the challenges facing the editors: variability of spelling and opinions on 'good' Scots, as well as ambiguity regarding a singular conceptualisation of 'Scots'. Despite this, the community made consensus decisions about how to proceed. One recommendation was to try to mitigate against the broader problems of Scots writing by creating and/or petitioning writing guides whose authority would be limited to the Wikipedia community. These guides provide data for the following analysis.

How the community of Wikipedia editors established authority in Scots is the subject of this chapter. The chapter will analyse the linguistic features and discourses that emerged in response to the scandal. First, a brief description of Wikipedia's role in minority language activism is provided, in the context of Scots Wikipedia. Then, after a note on the frameworks I have adopted, I first consider the 'top-down' texts that are sought for guidance and then the 'bottom-up' texts of the Wikipedia community that seeks them. Pulling the data together, a discussion is then provided that assesses the success of these projects in providing clear guidance and what ideological functions the proposed norms, or the discourses of norms, may serve. Finally, I offer a concluding comment.

5.2 Minority language Wikipedia

Wikipedia is the largest open-access repository for knowledge consumption. In English, the dominant language, there were over six million articles as of October 2021, and these tightly regulated articles are now considered to be much more reliable sources of information than previously imagined.

Shortly after Wikipedia's creation in 2001, parallel versions of the encyclopaedia in other languages began to grow, providing their speakers with instantly accessible and editable information. While the undeniable utility of a free online encyclopaedia has changed the nature of knowledge – its creation and distribution – it is Wikipedia's institutional power and reputation that are of interest here, specifically, how institutional recognition can give a language status. According to a particular common-sense belief, 'if it has its own Wikipedia, it's a language' (and *vice versa*). The language status phenomenon is essentially a matter of people's views towards a code – in this case, how those views are/are not changed by the code's presence on Wikipedia. But there is also the question of people's views on how language status, usage, and revitalisation

operate, and although these views are not always aligned with the reality of those practices, they can inform on the motivation for minority language projects. These themes are explored on Wikipedia administration discussion pages, guidelines, and within Wikipedia entries themselves (particularly those dealing with language, nation, and culture) – all of which have complete editing histories available to the researcher.

There are also linguistic expectations of an encyclopaedia. In societies where the dominant language has a written standard, it is used for expository prose. It is unsurprising that members of those societies will value this standard, which often does not exist for minority languages. This is one way in which written standards (and their contribution to the development, or *Ausbau*, of a code) are intertwined with language status, and played out through expository prose of the type used on Wikipedia.

5.2.1 The Wikipedia showcase

What purpose does a minority language Wikipedia serve? As the issue of language status suggests, the answer often has nothing to do with providing encyclopaedic information. It is certainly useful for some entries such as those providing essential medical information to be available in languages whose speakers cannot otherwise access that information. But minority language speakers are generally educated in a majority language with its own, larger, more accurate Wikipedia. Some may even argue that simply speaking a minority language such as Welsh for basic communication is a means of indexing group membership, rather than being of referential value (Trosset 1986).

Minority language Wikipedia projects continue to emerge, and the challenge they represent to the authority of dominant languages has sometimes proved scandalous and/or attracted ridicule. These projects are, in the most practical sense, unnecessary, but they can

effectively serve important ideological functions. An obvious motive might be a nationalistic/regionalistic one that aligns *one nation/region* with *one language*, while seeking to cement language status for that language in the process. The very idea of a minority language Wikipedia is in itself an apt example of the type of ideological contradiction that is easily held in the mind: the semblance of anonymity in referentiality (in this case literally the construction of reference pages) ultimately serves a nonreferential function.

So, the mere existence of these projects possesses cultural meaning insofar as it brings languages and their symbolic attachments into being. But their construction is not a straightforward matter. The problem of education in literacy resurfaces here, both in terms of reading (this in turn raises the potential redundancy of these projects if they cannot be understood or if they appear strange to the point of alienating readers) and writing (represented by the problems editors face in producing authoritative language satisfactorily). It may be the case, with the Egyptian Wikipedia, for instance, that there is no spoken standard that can be agreed upon for transcription, or that the approved orthographic standard may be too difficult to reproduce, as in the case of the Veneto Wikipedia.

Ivan Panović's (2011) work on the Egyptian-language (ʿAmmiyya) 'Wikipedia Masry' showed how the nationalist drive behind the minority-language project outran the cohesion, credibility, and general writing ability of its authors, leading them to make self-justifying linguistic rationalisations. Egyptians are literate in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA or Fuṣḥa) and entries written in ʿAmmiyya serve as an anti-standard – one produced, ideologically and linguistically, by "run[ning] away, away from Fuṣḥa as far as possible" (Ibid.: 163). A more ideologically extreme project was that of Croatian Wikipedia which, existing as a separate entity to the Serbian and Serbo-Croatian Wikipedia pages, received media attention in 2013 for its association with right-wing extremism. Croatian is written in Latin script, as is most of the Serbo-Croatian Wikipedia, with Serbian Wikipedia in Cyrillic script. Among the varieties within 'Serbo-Croatian', all of them

very similar, the choice between Roman script and Cyrillic is historically a highly symbolic one, and these scripts have become icons of "the inherent nature or essence" (Irvine & Gal 2000: 37) of national, cultural, or religious groups; the contrast between the scripts "both produces and symbolises the contrast between Croatian, whose speakers are mainly Catholics, and Serbian, whose speakers are mainly [Eastern] Orthodox" (Sebba 2007: 164). It is this kind of iconisation (and, as the evidence for Croatian suggests, sometimes the forging of radical political associations) which users may seek to legitimate via Wikipedia projects, afforded by the validation of a code of ambiguous status. And so, the publishing of articles can provide evidence that a given code and any discernible ideologies are in use; if society uses language as a proxy for wider political debates – and by no means are these necessarily extreme or harmful – then it serves these interests if that language is first credible. Hence, Wikipedia showcases the language.

5.2.2 ScoWiki

Launched in 2005, Scots Wikipedia grew steadily to the size of around 40,000 articles around the time of the scandal. Quantification can be misleading: the second-largest Wikipedia is not in Spanish or Chinese, but Cebuano, almost entirely the product of machine translation and the automated creation of entries. Many Scots entries are 'stubs' (very short articles lacking sufficient detail) and many have been labelled as poorly written. Prior to the 2020 scandal, Scots Wikipedia had already received attention in the media, with some stances treating the project as joke-worthy (in 2011, a Wikimedia proposal was made to shut down the project on this basis),[81] and others, such as those in Scottish newspapers and on popular international news website *Slate* (Hu 2014), framing it as a sincere project of language activism.

Relative to other minority language Wikipedia projects, administrators' discussions of Scots Wikipedia are highly focussed on language. The emphasis on language status is also

[81] https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Proposals_for_closing_projects/Closure_of_Scots_Wikipedia Accessed 14.01.2022

suggested by the project's link to other minority-language speakers in Europe; a mass editing event in January 2022 was dedicated entirely to the creation of 37 articles about such languages or language groups, including Friulian, Aragonese, and Sardinian. Among editors, the focus is overwhelming on Scots itself, whose existence as a separate language is taken for granted.

This is consistent with the broader approach of 'de-politicised' Scots activism, which is reluctant to make sweeping claims about culture and Scottishness; with its discourses centred on the language, the focus can be shifted from cultural holism to the speakers themselves. But this same commitment to constructing a 'language', and all the prerequisites of anonymity that come with it (such as the perceived necessity of building an encyclopaedia), diverges from and erases, in its assumptions, an important view of Scots from the speaker's perspective. The SLC's survey, which set out to gather speaker-led perspectives on literacy following the scandal, points to the authentic functions of Scots writing: "for me, the Scots language is something I learned through speaking and listening, not through reading. So, I don't use it to access information but for creative writing." In this sense, the project faces a fundamental problem in its very nature.

Elsewhere, the question of Scottishness does eventually emerge among Wikipedians. There is some agreement that the Wikipedia project should also serve as a showcase[82] of multifarious Scottish culture. Noting the scale of the task of 'fixing' Scowiki, the community observed that not all pages could realistically be 'corrected', and that:

> [T]he focus should be on articles relating to Scottish content, otherwise what's the point. Once that's under control then articles on non-Scottish content can be added, but who wants to come to a Scots wiki to read about non-Scottish content [...]?
>
> AllyD: Wikimedia response to scandal

As the last comment in a thread discussing the rewriting of articles, this suggestion was heeded by a user making substantial semi-automated edits and was approved as a general proposal.

[82] "Showcase" is in fact the exact word that Wikimedia project manager Sara Thomas uses to display the "richness and variety" of the language: https://www.scotslanguage.com/articles/node/id/1125 Accessed 06.08.2023.

Others have made similar suggestions. A significant proportion of editors and administrators are self-proclaimed 'outsiders' to the Scots movement and not themselves Scots speakers; in chapter 6, I show that many outsiders' views of Scots are related to this type of cultural holism. The purpose of Scots Wikipedia from this perspective is to use the encyclopaedic symbolism of knowledge dissemination in order to expand the repertoire of the Scots language as an icon of Scottishness. This constitutes a paradox of anonymity and authenticity.

But this same paradox is related to the problems, mentioned earlier, that native speakers face when seeking to edit Wikipedia. Despite the lack of a written standard, writers are met with subtler linguistic expectations (Pottinger 2022). The myth of the 'free-for-all' of modern Scots spelling can be illustrated by a smaller Scots Wikipedia scandal that occurred in 2015. Costa (2017) draws on the example of a young Falklander who, experienced in conlanging and a native speaker of Scots in the family home, devised his own Scots standard which used a range of letters from Icelandic, Old English, and Middle Scots. This particular Wikipedian's contribution was somewhat aggressively rejected by the administrators, as well as by writers and activists connected to the SLC. The main arguments employed to reject the proposed standard – Staunirt Scóts Screivin [Standard Scottish Writing] (SSS) – "revolved around ideas of authority and authenticity, as is usual in minority language standardization: first, SSS was said to be unrecognizable to speakers; second, no single person has, or should have, the right to propose a standard" (Costa 2017: 57). The online communities of advocates and Scots-language Wikipedians preferred instead to draw upon a sense of established codification: the orthographic model of dictionaries and the consensus recommendations of the Scots Wikipedia administration based on Scots literature and scholarship. While an approach which relies on more familiar conventions and known authorities is much more likely to succeed, this chapter will reveal the same problems of authenticity raised by SSS.

The 2020 scandal indicates the extent to which Web 2.0 has become a medium for contemporary Scots. This is the story of a single, remote internet user who edited articles for nearly ten years, and who was the main administrator of Scots Language Wikipedia for seven of those years. This news emerged on Reddit, where content is published and ranked by online communities. Community members have taken it upon themselves to fix the problem as they saw it by organising and participating in online 'editathons' and 'writing drives', in which Wikipedians undertake to find and correct as many articles as possible. This contributed to a larger process of updating the language of Scots Wikipedia articles based loosely on the approved norms of a Wikipedia community of practice and those of top-down organisations such as the SLC, which itself drew upon a survey of internet users and exploited social media platforms to circulate its digital guides[83] to writing. In one case, the scandal moved an internet user to teach himself skills in corpus linguistics in order to build a contemporary corpus – specifically to resolve the issue of orthographic variability on Scots Wikipedia – and publish it on a purpose-built website.[84]

5.2.3 An approach to orthography and standardisation for ScoWiki

In this case study I ask: which orthographic features are being advocated for use in expository prose and why? The choice to focus on orthography derives from the fact that the majority of the Scots Wikipedia linguistic debates and guidance are on spelling. More broadly, it is the issue of spelling that tends to stoke heated debates across fora, from X to academic conferences. One reason for this might be that lexis and syntax play a comparatively straightforward role in Scots; it is easier to identify vocabulary and grammar that is used in speech (for instance, using *ken* for *know*, or nonstandard verb agreement) and to put it into writing, particularly for a native speaker.

[83] https://www.scotslanguage.com/news/5724
Accessed 11.11.2021
[84] http://chrisgilmour.co.uk/scots/
Accessed 06.02.2022

Where these forms, lexis in particular, are uncommon in everyday Scots speech (e.g., *gar* for *make*), there is relatively little debate about their appropriacy for use in expository contexts. Occurring in relation to nearly every word, orthographical doubts appear more frequently than lexical and syntactic ones, and cannot be settled simply by consulting one's intuitions about spoken language or by replacing a handful of high-frequency lexical items. There is no evidence that any editors consider the consistent use of Standard English spellings as an option.

It is difficult for an amateur editor to grasp Scots orthography in simple terms. Given the variability of current writing and of texts available for reference, the 'free-for-all' myth of Scots orthography co-exists alongside an awareness of prestigious variants and their stigmatised counterparts, multiple pan-dialectal standards, regional ones, and various literary traditions. In constructing a literacy guide for a minority language – much like organising a spelling bee – certain tensions emerge. In the current cultural zeitgeist cohabited by both modernist and postmodern ideas, decisions about spelling are challenged by both the variability implied by plurality on the one hand, and the prohibitive standards of consistency and systematicity on the other.

This chapter analyses the linguistic guidance available to Wikipedia editors. As instructive documents and discussions, ideological analysis of the data requires the researcher to scrutinise the link between linguistic norms and the rationale(s) given for them. Where these rationalisations are conflicted, we might assume that norm-enforcement is driven by some identifiable ulterior motive – underlying *value* (Cameron 1995) or ideology. This may suggest the simple desire to bring writers together or increase output, but sometimes structural power is the product and/or source of regulation. By scrutinising the reasoning given in the guiding texts, and then looking for plausible ideological patterns in the data, we can see how language regulation acts as a means of acting on one's beliefs and anxieties about language and the world. In the case of Scots, since prescriptivism and singular notions of Scottishness have become increasingly

taboo, only occasionally are hierarchical ideologies (i.e., those that subordinate ‘bad Scots’) expressed transparently in reference to linguistic regulation.

All the projects under investigation in this chapter involve multiple parties, many of them relatively unknown in the case of Wikipedians. Therefore, there is an awareness here that language and rationale(s) from different contributors are being reported. Nevertheless, at a given time, the Wikipedia administration can be identified as a single community of practice with shared aims and attempts at shared norms; its members will inevitably differ, but disagreements are published on discussion pages, where they are considered by the community before final decisions are made democratically. The more official publications analysed in this chapter are the products of top-down organisations with specific goals. The SLC published its co-authored guidance specifically to aid non-literary Scots writers and a single collaborative document has been provided to this end. The Scots Spellin Comatee’s *RRSSC* (Scots Spellin Comatee n.d.) is very similar in this respect, with the benefit of meeting minutes.

For the purposes of providing a clear comparison, the different guiding texts of the Scots Wikipedia administration have been analysed separately from one another. These exist as webpages, some of which were created following the scandal, while those created prior have not changed significantly since as long ago as 2012. However, all are put forward as recommended resources for editors who form part of the endeavour to ‘fix’ Scots Wikipedia; their editing histories show that they have been reviewed by the post-2020 administration. In short, they all consciously constitute the latest advice.

The comparison of guidance with usage must be approached with caution. It is unproblematic to note inconsistencies between the two within a single text, but the language used on Scots Wikipedia articles collectively is not representative of any single linguistic style. Not only are its pages highly variable, and the smaller-scale methods of this thesis ill-suited to capture a broader picture of usage, but the campaign to reform Scots Wikipedia clearly has a long way to

go in ‘fixing’ everything and there are still many articles which the administration would like to have changed.

5.3 Top-down texts

This analytical section considers official guidance composed by leading Scots authorities, which is offered to editors. I compare three top-down projects created to guide expository prose, which are recommended for the production of articles by the Scots Wikipedia community.

5.3.1 RRSSC

The *RRSSC – Report & Recommends o the Scots Spellin Comatee* [Report & Recommendations of the Scots Spelling Committee], also titled *Mensefu Scots Spellin* [Sensible Scots Spelling]) – is a publication of the Scots Spellin Comatee (1996-1998), whose members have been highly influential in Scots activism and scholarship. They include: amateur Scots linguist Andy Eagle; erstwhile Scots language PhD student and current Scottish Minister for Scotland’s languages Alasdair Allan; Scots linguist J. Derrick McClure; writer, activist, co-founder of the SLC, former editor of *Lallans*, and respected senior Scots-language figure John Law; poet George Philp, known for his preference for tradition and strong views on orthography; lexicographer and erstwhile director of the Scottish National Dictionary Association Iseabail Macleod; poet Liz Niven, also a researcher in Scots education; and writer, former editor of *Lallans*, and former president of the Scots Language Society David Purves. The *RRSSC* is put forward as a model for Wikipedia editors in Scots Wikipedia’s *Spellin an grammar* page (see section 5.4).

The guide is extensive, totalling 66 pages. With a significant number of discursive caveats (see below), the *RRSSC* discusses specific orthographic points in detail. Under a section entitled *Aesthetics*, the apologetic apostrophe is discouraged for its apparently damaging consequences. But the reasoning for allowing some apostrophes cannot be deduced:

> Apostrophes shuidna be uised ti shaw "missin" English letters - e.g.: he'rt, ca', ha'e, wi'- but is better uised ti shaw missin Scots anes - e.g.: 'im (him), 'e (he, the), 'is (this) etc. This haes the effect o lattin Scots by-leids be seen as dialects o Scots raither nor English.
>
> [Apostrophes shouldn't be used to show "missing" English letters – e.g.: he'rt, ca', ha'e, wi't – but is better used to show missing Scots ones – e.g.: 'im (him), 'e (he, the), 'is (this) etc. This has the effect of allowing varieties of Scots to be seen as dialects of Scots rather than English.]
>
> (Scots Spellin Comatee n.d.: 38)[85]

All lexical items listed are missing a grapheme or digraph that would render them Standard English. Translations are offered in parentheses for the Scots tokens, although it is unclear what distinguishes them from the English ones (if such a distinction can be made). This does not appear to be a matter of provenance; variants of the lexical items from both the English and Scots examples, e.g., *heart* and *him*, date back to Old English and Old Scots. If these distinctions are not transparent to Scottish people, it is certainly far-fetched to suggest that the language status of Scots can be affected by omitting the apostrophe from one set of words and not the other. Nevertheless, correct apostrophe usage in informative texts is put forward as a key element in "forderin [promoting] perception o Scots as a language" (Ibid.: 37).

Aware of Scots speakers' English-language education, and consciously accommodating other readers educated in English literacy, the guide simply suggests: "[h]aud wi English consonant rules" [follow English consonant rules] (Ibid.: 20). There is no mention in the guide of how the appearance of proximity to English resulting from this accommodation, a proximity which elsewhere drives anxieties about the status of Scots within the Comatee and the movement more broadly, influences language status. In practice, consonants are commonly respelled. While the *RRSSC* recommends no systematic change to Standard English consonants, there are exceptions to this both in specific rules and in its wordlists (partial but straightforward spelling recommendations for specific common words). For instance, consonant changes include the retention of an etymological (but now silent) <h> in the Old Scots *hit*, although only the

[85] No publication date is given for the *RRSSC*, but it assumed to be between 1998-1999.

Standard English *it* is used in the *RRSSC* text. The Lallans <y> is recommended, as is <ch> to replace a silent <gh> in Standard English or to represent /x/.

Present participles, irregular verbs, and vowels all have systematic spellings, which are described in relative detail. When discussing vowels, the rationale for proposed digraphs and graphemes variably favours literary precedent, preservation of "established" spellings, accommodation of English literacy, distinguishing Scots lexical items from English ones, avoidance of homographs, and the literary education of Scots speakers. For instance, a symbolic *-ie* ending where Standard English would use *-y* (e.g., *monie* for *many*) is prescribed for an unstressed /i/ in words that are "unique" to or "characterеistic o Scots" [characteristic of Scots] (Ibid.: 50), again to indicate that they are *not English*. Many of these vowel norms are included in Bann & Corbett's (2015) Older Scots Residue category (antiquated spellings that have survived in literature, for which newer innovative Scots spellings are available), for instance the <ui> of Middle Scots origin.

In short, the text does indeed provide single recommended spellings for common words and systematic orthography with carefully considered exceptions. The result is an orthography which will help to "represent Scots as a language in its ain richt [own right]". The guiding principles of homogeneity, consistency, and diaphonology, are all said to contribute to languageness. However, the discussion of standards and standardisation is periphrastic and sometimes vague. A double consciousness regarding standardisation is summarised by the attitude to creative writing, which does not differ greatly from the discourse regarding other registers:

> The Comatee recognises the primacy o screivers in recordin the leid, an disna ettle ti pit fowk aff uisin dialects o Scots freely in creative screivin. On the contar, we ar eydent at screivers shuid prefer thair ain knowledge o the modren spoken form ower onie fause concept o linguistic staundardisation thay micht imagine we'r ettlin ti habble them wi. *E'en in sic screivin, we div think at haudin wi whitiver in oor recommends set oot here can aye be hauden wi, will impruve readabeility an benefit aabodie.*
>
> [The Committee recognises the primacy of writers in recording the language, and does not try to put people off using dialects of Scots freely in creative writing. On the contrary,

> we are resolute that writers should prefer their own knowledge of the modern spoken form over any false concept of linguistic standardisation they might imagine we are trying to impair them with. *Even in such writing, we do think that following whatever can be followed of our recommendations set out here will improve readability and benefit everybody.*]
>
> (Scots Spellin Comatee n.d.: 19, emphasis mine)

The reader is left with the impression throughout the extensive discussion that standardisation is beneficial in all contexts from education to creative writing, yet a rigid spelling system not only runs the risk of alienating speakers and writers, but the committee also does not see as its role the unequivocal prescription of norms. In its attempt to recognise the agency of writers, the *RRSSC* provides a discourse which sometimes hedges against a standard language ideology, even though the purpose of the document is ultimately to homogenise variability.

The qualification of the *RRSSC's* spelling recommendations appeal partly to the functionality of standard language ideology, but also abstract and poorly understood concepts:

> Dinna lichtlie invent new weys o spellin at haes naither precedent nor authority. Conseider homogeneity, readabeility, aesthetics, conseistency, diaphonology. Evyte hyperphonetic spellins. Dinna mak it ower hard for the Englishthirlt reader: written Scots shuid be accessible ti sic readers.
>
> [Do not lightly invent new ways of spelling that have neither precedent nor authority. Consider homogeneity, readability, aesthetics, diaphonology. Avoid hyperphonetic spellings. Do not make it too hard for readers reliant on English: written Scots should be accessible to such readers.]
>
> (Ibid.)

This stylistic balancing act is, as the committee recognises, subjective. But the rather clear implication in the context of the broader text is that the norms in question relate to traditional Lallans forms which do not, as literary writers in the previous chapter observed, 'overdo it' by differing too much from Standard English spellings. These are the features which are believed to fulfil the functions of neutrality and practicality on the one hand, and languageness on the other. The now familiar tenet of striking a balance between the traditional and the contemporary, the ideal and the real, *Abstand* and the 'natural', and notions literacy and orality, includes lexical advice which discourages contrived meanings, neologisms, or archaisms. But the problems of

attempting to reconcile two sides of a paradox are, at this point, similarly familiar; from the perspective of everyday usage, the *RRSSC* is itself filled with such lexis.

If we scrutinise the abstract and evaluative descriptors used, discursively, to support the linguistic recommendations, the reader is covertly ushered towards Lallans and away from urban phonetic writing. Beyond diaphonology, readability is said to be achieved through "fameiliarity" [familiarity]. Unfamiliar orthography, it is said, is a superfluous, irregular, or odd spelling of a familiar word. But the interpretation of these descriptors requires a common understanding of pre-existing orthographic norms. Variants as common as *isna/isnae/isny* [isn't] and even *ay/aye* [yes] are contested and, as acknowledged by the Wikipedia administration and the *RRSSC* alike, most Scots speakers have no literary education in their language. In other words, there is not enough orthographic homogeneity on which to base "familiarity" and "oddness" in the first place and, if there were, writers would not feel the need to request orthographic guidance. Both by the definition of these terms and when read consistently within the broader context of the document – particularly the criterion that Lallans spellings apply to words that are "unique" to and "characteristic" of Scots – the guidance suggests that readers can learn authoritative Scots spelling by familiarising themselves with tradition.

At first glance, we might not identify the proscriptions implied by these evaluative descriptors as relating to a particular variety of spoken Scots, since the *RRSSC* model is intended to (1) avoid dialect bias and (2) *not* be a representation of speech – hence it puts forward supraregional and purely symbolic spellings, and recommends against "hyperphonetic" orthography. But it seems there is indeed a regional/class bias of some kind, which has some basis in speech. Although the *RRSSC* is informed in part by Glaswegians, the main regional orthographic concessions made are to Doric (specifically, *f-* to replace *wh-*) and notable Insular variants (*pör* [poor]). While no reference to Glesga or Glasgow is made, the category "hyperphonetic" seems to disproportionately draw upon and reinforce the low status of spellings

associated with Glasgow. Of the three transparent examples offered – *jiwanni*[86] [do you want to], *sumhin*[87] [something], and *urnae*[88] [aren't] – all are only identifiable as examples of Glesga dialect writing (McArthur et al. 2018). With no reasoning or definition of "hyperphonetic" offered, we are left to qualify this category (and to exempt spellings like *spellin* or *fit* [what] from it) by interpreting "hyperphonetic" as 'Glesga', 'humour', and 'bad'. And, if these are the categories upon which "readability" is based, the model appears to be most readable to those educated in the model – or the Lallans literary tradition which it favours.

Suggestions of stylistic and social bias are more salient within the committee's meeting minutes, in which George Philp recommended against "difficult digraphs, such as that in "oan", which led if widely applied in spelling to aesthetically unacceptable results". <oa> is a common urban phonetic feature seen on Scottish Twitter, in *Trainspotting*, and in Glesga narrative fiction, although it has more recently been taken up alongside Lallans variants. Despite using the term "neutral" to justify many of the *RRSSC* suggestions, several members of the spelling committee seem to have placed judgments about Scots dialects, typical of the pro-Lallans Scots movement of the 1990s, over functionality. Also from the meeting minutes: "David Purves cautioned against seeking simplicity for Scots by adopting a debased urban language of depravity as the model. Sheila Douglas stressed the value of the folk tradition in this context." (Scots Spellin Comatee n.d.: 17).

Traditional spellings may appear neutral and functional to those whom they favour – those with more scholarly or literary approaches, or others to whom this style of writing appeals – but the emergence of phonetic orthography in other contexts may suggest otherwise. The

[86] Used in Baxter & Mitchell (1982)
[87] Used in Stewart (2014). This variant also features regularly on Scottish Twitter. See also Munroe (1985: 34). Cited in the DSL under *thing*: https://www.dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/sndns3812
Accessed 18.11.2021
[88] Sources for this variant are less reliable, but include:
http://www.britannia.org/scotland/scotsdictionary/u.shtml ;
https://urbanglasgow.co.uk/who-says-scottish-men-urnae-romantic-t1543.html
Both accessed 18.11.2021

comments by Philp and Purves, both of them leading lights of the Scots Language Society at the time, are heeded by the committee, while an appeal to the popularity of Irvine Welsh's "simple and direct contemporary Scots" (Ibid.: 16) is not. The language ideology anthropological canon contends that there is no such thing as neutrality in attempts at standardisation. In this case, that is not simply true by default; linguistic authorities are drawing upon and reiterating the hierarchical iconisation of spellings.

5.3.2 Scots Warks Guide

Scots Warks is a project created by the SLC as a response to questions around literacy thrown up by the Wikipedia scandal. It provides advice for Wikipedia editors, but it also serves as a general guide to writing expository prose in Scots. The SLC is a resource centre and the primary organisation for promoting Scots. It has become influential following its move online, operating via the SLC website and Facebook group. Its varied contributors and members (which include activists and linguists) endeavour to promote Scots in an inclusive and unbiased manner; its board members are even at pains not to politicise the organisation. It is independent of the Scottish Government, but occasionally receives funding from it, as was the case for *Scots Warks*, which received attention in Scottish newspapers. Working collaboratively with a range of prominent writers from different regions, the project has two outputs: a Scots showcase of discussions and performances in video format, and a sixty-page writing guide (SLC 2021a). The purpose of the latter is to provide guidance for when "writing is to communicate information, rather than to engage in artistic expression" (Ibid.: 4). The showcase offers discussions and performances by influential speakers and writers, who comment on Scots and/or provide examples of it.

The *Scots Warks* writing guide begins with a *Quick start guide* and *Introduction*. These sections frame the guidance by attributing historical authority to Scots writing ("[f]or over seven hundred years Scots speakers have written in Scots") with a discourse of pride and defiance of

hegemonic power ("Scots language *is* valid and real"; "[t]he prejudice that surrounds Scots can only be tackled by making sure our language and voices are visible"; "[w]e can only rid ourselves of that imposter syndrome by writing in our own language as often as we can").

Given the guide's purpose, Wikipedia editors seeking clear norms may be dismayed to find that *Scots Warks* refers them to Scots Wikipedia's own "expected standard". Nevertheless, acknowledging a central problem reported by editors – that confidence in writing abilities is low – several language-specific sections follow, with the indication that they will help readers "decode Scots spelling and grammar"; "[w]e do have well known spellings that are favoured [...] [t]his guide should help you navigate these differences". But specific orthographic guidance is scarce. Instead, the section on spelling written by playwright Martin Travers relies on repeated assertions that dictionaries provide correct spellings based on "traditional" past forms. Dictionary spellings are highly variable, yet two and a half pages are dedicated to convincing the reader to spell correctly, with intermittent reminders throughout the chapter.

In a subsection of the spelling chapter entitled *Why be a vandal when you can be a guardian?* (Ibid.: 15-17), Travers concedes that it is difficult, even "baffling" for native speakers to fulfil the conditions of correctness in Scots. Despite these difficulties, there is an assumption that correct spelling is something which can be learned, and which the author (having learned it) is predisposed to impart: "[m]astering spelling is one of the tricky parts of Scots and can be a wee bit confusing". Moreover, a set of standards (in addition to regional standards) is not only assumed, but a firm standard language ideology is associated with both revitalisation and the languageness of Scots. Standard language verbal hygiene ("follow the rules") is imbued with evaluative statements referring to "love", "beauty", and "respect": "[i]f you love any language you need to treat it with respect. The best way to respect a language is to try your best to follow the rules of that language". Similar evaluative statements occur throughout the broader document. But if "respect" and "rules" are aligned in this formulation, so are lack of respect and

error, with ‘error’ emerging from individualistic, innovative, and phonetically intuitive writing. Whether by anonymity or authenticity-as-a-project, the guide has set out to de-legitimate the ‘natural’ in its written form.

> So, what are these rules?
>
> By ‘correct’ we mean that the spelling already exists in one of the published Scots dictionaries or can be shown to be a widely accepted regional variation of the word. **Every word that you will ever want to write down in Scots has been written down before.** You should always try to use one of the traditionally accepted spellings of the word you want to use. Writing in Scots is not about re-inventing the wheel – it is about keeping the traditional forms of the language alive.
>
> (Emphasis in original text)

But most Scots writers (including Travers) are not comfortable with high level of variability available to the writer by simply consulting those spellings which have been “written down before”. This criterion, which Travers has emphasised in bold text, is not illuminating in and of itself. The problem with AG’s edits were not that they used innovative spellings which had no precedent in Scots writing. In fact, AG’s critics did not focus on his spellings. Discussions among Wikipedia editors (see section 5.4) indicate that the spellings offered by the Scots dictionaries, which AG himself used, are too variable. Reporting on the Wikipedia editing experience (Ibid.: 47-48), it was even noted in a *Scots Warks* case study that the use of the DSL in the first editathon presented some problems when items could not be searched in the dictionary. Neologisms unaccounted for in Scots dictionaries have fast been emerging as the language adapts for everyday written communication. In sum, the rhetorical strategies used in the guide place pressure on the editor, emphasising repeatedly the unqualified legitimating power of a traditional literacy, without resolving the fact that that power is out of reach. This point will be explored below.

Another suggested metric is: “if something doesn’t *sound* right, it probably isn’t” (Ibid.: 48, emphasis in original text), indicating a preference for phonetic spelling. In the example given, the author changed *Wast* to *West* when editing an article about their own region (the West

Coast) based on their own pronunciation, further suggesting that *if it sounds right, it is*. This principle of individual agency and authenticity based on oral knowledge is opposed to the Lallans tendency to write less phonetically; elsewhere in *Scots Warks* (see below), recommendations are made that have nothing to do with sound or that move further away from sound, and there is a broader practice of regulating Scots so as to discourage phonetic spellings.

The *Spelling* chapter also discusses 'eye dialect', with Tom Leonard given as an example. The sentiment is clear: "[d]o not use eye dialect when writing formally in Scots". Exactly what this means is not clear. Eye dialect spellings are defined in the text as those which, "always pronounced in the same way as the widely accepted spellings for the words", signal "that a speaker's regular use of language is nonstandard or dialectal", although we cannot know exactly what this means given the plurality of views regarding both the bounds of Scots and whether it has something of a standard spelling system. 'Eye dialect' is said to give off the undesirable impression of emplaced, authentic spoken language: spellings which "reflect a certain form of speech". But it is unlikely that Wikipedia editors would be able to infer the equivalences Travers intends to make between "form[s] of speech" and "dialectal" versus "standard". Not only does Travers speak of ten regional Scots standards, the distinction between these 'standards' (which are, in the first instance, variable systems) and "dialectal" spelling is at the least blurred, at the most non-existent. The author appears to be searching for the distinctions and structures required of an anonymous language but is unwilling and unable to provide them in a landscape of diversity, variability, and authenticity.

Only one example is given:

Head = Standard English

Heid = Scots

Heed = Eye Dialect

This formulation is immediately problematic since the editor who consults Scots dictionaries will find *heed* listed as an 'established' alternative to *heid*. The eye dialect proscription can therefore run counter to the foremost criterion of Scots spelling, which is to defer to the authority of those dictionaries. This is quite significant, as readers may apply the rule systematically to other common and contested spellings: *deid* [dead], *leid* [language], and so on. Added to these complications is the fact that <ee> is used consistently in the Scots version of the *Scots Warks* writing guide itself. In chapter 4 of this thesis, differing impressions of the indexicality of <ee> were reported. What Travers appears to be suggesting is that spellings which form part of the imagined paradigm of eye dialect – which he identifies later as specifically Tom Leonard's purely symbolic spellings – are the ones that are ultimately to be avoided. It is the impression of orality and particularity which are undesirable. In the *Editing* chapter of *Scots Warks*, this is reiterated in Emma Grae's framing of the urban *-y* ending (e.g., *widny* [wouldn't]) as 'English' (Ibid.: 40), and the equivalent traditional endings as 'Scots' (*widnae; widna*).

I note here parenthetically that 'eye dialect' has at least three meanings in the Scots movement, all of which have the potential to refer to innovative urban writing. The typical one, as imagined by Krapp (1925), refers to any deviations from the majority standard (English)[89] with no phonetic change. This would technically include Lallans spellings such as *throu* [through], *mune* [moon], or *finisht* [finished]. The second views Scots spellings as belonging to a different category to English ones. Adopted here in *Scots Warks*, it takes an imagined Lallans model as the standard, thereby rendering other non-phonetic deviations from it 'eye dialect'. Thirdly, some Scots writers use 'eye dialect' in quite a contrasting way, to target those features seen in urban literature precisely for their phonetic quality.

[89] This is the typical definition of eye dialect in scholarly debates on the phenomenon (cf. Macaulay 1991 on the transcription of Scottish speech) and is how the *RRSSC* defines the concept: "the practice o representin illeiteracy bi misspellin English words in dialogue or narrative e'en tho thay'r sayed the same in staundard English" [the practice of representing illiteracy by misspelling English words in dialogue or narrative even though they're said the same in Standard English] (Scots Spellin Comatee n.d.: 38). Although Krapp discussed eye dialect in reference to the portrayal of literary characters as 'uneducated', both the *RRSSC* and *Scots Warks* discuss eye dialect in the context of a non-literary, informative register.

In the discussion of eye dialect in *Scots Warks*, we also see the troubled linguistic reasoning that often accompanies language ideologies. In an aside, it is suggested that the <ee> spelling may be confused with the Standard English abstract verb *heed*. Somewhat surprisingly, this is the only argument from across all the data that echoes efforts to establish a link between single spelling alternatives and communicability in English (cf. Horobin 2013: 229-230; Cameron 1995: 25). As with such attempts in English, we can often dismiss claims that homograph-homophones which are used commonly can cause significant confusion. When *heed* is used as a concrete noun (*head* in Standard English) it can be easily distinguished from verbs. As a verb, Standard English *head* and *heed* have rather opposite meanings – for instance, when used in the contexts of *head/heed the ball* or *head/heed the research team*. In English, speakers navigate many similar examples without trouble (e.g., *rock* (v.) or *work out*). Furthermore, the 'correct' use of 'established' spellings taken from the Scots version of the guidance which would create similar situations (e.g., *pit* for the Standard English *put*) have here been ignored.

Beyond a handful of spellings, we simply do not have a notion of what is "widely accepted" in Scots and, with the existence of these top-down projects lending themselves to this fact, the application of the eye dialect concept is circular in much the same way as the *RRSSC's* 'familiarity'. More so than the *RRSSC*, *Scots Warks* offers Scots speakers agency by urging them to follow their 'voices' in writing, despite the many bids for 'correct' writing that can discourage 'voices'. Where the institutional bodies deny their own authority in prescribing standards, this discursive paradox recurs at the ideological level as a tension between standard language ideology and postmodern diversity and the democratisation of power – both of which are described as things of "beauty" (SLC 2021a: 7; 16).

Specific features are recommended in the guide. Iconic Scots orthographic conventions are employed not as features serving to represent distinct phonemes, but specifically as pan-dialectal or symbolic features (Ibid.: 64). Of note from the *Spelling* section and within the guide

more broadly is the “important and correct” silent <ch> grapheme and a recognition of the omission of and negative attitudes towards the apologetic apostrophe (Ibid.: 32). Without being explicitly prescriptive, *Scots Warks* still recommends against the apostrophe in subtler ways (to the extent that it does not provide counterarguments on the matter and the Scots version of the guide itself does not use the apostrophe).

In the guide’s appendix, *Common spelling conventions* (pp.62-3), Dempster lists *vyce* [voice] among the “most common” traditional spellings of the diphthong /ɔɪ/, along with *toy*, *boy*, and *noise*. This spelling, as well as *guid* [good] for /gid/ and /gʉd/, does not follow any intuitive vowel-spelling convention that a Scots speaker educated in English would recognise. Such speakers will have matched these conventions to their own speech, for instance <ea> in *heard* to represent /ɛ/, but the above two examples are departures from the English system, and it is precisely for this reason they are said to constitute aspects of a uniquely Scots orthography. Beyond this dataset it can be (and is) argued that *guid* serves to represent the less common Scots pronunciations /gɪd/ and /gwid/, but, as a ‘standard’ feature, other speakers with more common Scots accents must accept this single spelling as a new convention. No phonetic argument presents itself for the Middle Scots <y> in *vyce* or *mynd* [remember], which appears to be a conscious and purely orthographic deviation from English sound-spelling conventions based on its extended use in Scotland.

As part of the *Scots Warks* showcase, Michael Dempster released a thirty-minute video[90] on the subject of Scots literacy via the SLC YouTube channel; it is included here as a more personal, subjective expression of some of the same themes explored so far in the *Scots Warks* guidance, and as a precursor to more of Dempster’s work, discussed in section 5.3.3. This video, in which Dempster’s narration in Scots is accompanied by subtitles, also presents an opportunity to compare the speech and spelling of one of the central authorities in the Scots movement. As

[90] https://www.scotslanguage.com/articles/node/id/1122
Accessed 10.02.2022

we might now expect, some of the Lallans spellings do not correspond to pronunciation according to the English orthographic system. Many of these pronunciations are found in Scottish Standard English, or something very close to it. They are represented as: *richt* for *right* (/rʌi/ or /rʌiʔ/), *makkin* for *making* (/mɛʔɪn/), *eneuch* for *enough* (/ənʌf/), *onie* for *any* (/ɛni/), *lowp* for *leap* (/lip/), *thaim* for *them* (/ðɛm/ or unstressed /ðəm/), and *anither* for *another* (/ənʌðər/), to name just a few. Some of these – *onie*, *lowp*, *thaim*, *makkin*, *eneuch* – are more phonetically distant than the Standard English spelling.

Both in Dempster's video and in his list of spelling conventions, it seems there is clear symbolic value in visually striking spellings that originate in older texts – spellings which, modelled by a figure of authority and building on community norms, help to create distinctiveness where it might not be found in speech. The video finishes with a description of Dempster's personal 'journey' with Scots literacy, which addresses the question of relying, or not relying, on English literacy as a Scots speaker. The purpose of constructing and following a unique Scots literacy is rooted in Dempster's view of Scots serving to affirm the speaker's identity:

> "Whit's the pynt in readin this stuff when ye kin lairn oniehin ye want fae readin English?" Wiel, it's the same as onie writin, ye'll fun oot whit fowk thit talk like yersel sees as important eneuch tae gie the dignity o writin doon in their ain language. Bi writin fir wir ain sels, an fir wan anither in wir ain language, we kin mibbe lairn hou tae unnerstaun wirsels, an hou tae unnerstaun wan anither.
>
> ["What's the point in reading this stuff when you can learn anything you want from reading English?" Well, it's the same as any writing, you'll find out what people that talk like yourself see as important enough to give the dignity of writing down their own language. By writing for our own selves, and for one another in our own language, we can maybe learn how to understand ourselves, and how to understand one another.]
>
> (*Dignity*: 29:00)

Within the context of this thesis, this requires a qualification: the evidence suggests that writing in Scots, and doing so with a particular set of norms, is not merely a documentation of a pre-existing 'language', but a practice which forges that language.

The initial question posed by Dempster in *Dignity* confronts the issue of anonymity. If literacy serves a referential function, then accessing and sharing knowledge will occur most effectively via English. Dempster's answer is ultimately one relating to the authentic and particular elements of a minority language, which can be 'owned', and whose owners can access something essential about their "selves" via the "dignity" of literacy. Literacy is also, then, a means of cultivating authenticity; it is authenticity as a project. While it might be expected that the *Scots Warks* writing guide use more sober discourse as a descriptive text, I have shown that it nevertheless marks Scots literacy with the same emotional and particular value. The expression of authenticity in *Dignity* echoes the sentiments of "love" and "respect" in the guide. There is only an implied link between "dignity" and Lallans. The guide, however, makes two references to its own recommendations as a solution to "imposter syndrome" (SLC 2021a: 6; 8). In this discourse, *other* ideologies of authenticity are erased; the feeling that Scots writing appears "fake" or "contrived" is not explained by the antiquated orthography and lexis of Lallans, but by speakers' apparent sense of inferiority and insecurity: the 'cultural cringe'. This, I contend, is a means of eliminating inconveniences to the ideological structure.

5.3.3 YouTube Tutorials

Dr. Michael Dempster's *Scots Language & Scots Accents*[91] language course comprises around ten hours of tuition over eight episodes and is available for free on YouTube. Dempster is the current director of the SLC and was posted as Scots Scriever 2018-2020 – Creative Scotland and the National Library of Scotland's resident creative writer and representative for the promotion of Scots. For the purposes of this analysis, the first two episodes provide the relevant data on orthography. The videos are frequently referenced as the primary language guide in editathons and were created to aid Wikipedia volunteers. They are advertised by the SLC and pinned to the

[91] *The Scots language an accent – web version 1.0* https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmk3hiyUEgWl7Qa9pBGN3r94ahQiSXJ2U
Accessed 18.01.2022

top of Dempster's X page. Three of the key stated aims of the video series are: to improve literacy in a "thousand-year-old language", to encourage Scots usage in all domains, and to help remove the stigma attached to Scots speech. Dempster intends to do so in a way that is "not prescriptive", but a "descriptive" account of how Scots is used in song, speech, and writing – including tweets – thereby aligning himself with a commonplace descriptivist stance within linguistics. In this sense, Dempster is aware of spellings that are not traditional, and does not make overt judgments about them, describing Tom Leonard's orthography as "100% valid".

Dempster's first video acts as a general introduction to the language. Scots-English cognates are listed, for which the Scots pronunciations are said to predate those represented by the Standard English spelling: thus, the adapted spellings seem to be justified by the longevity of the corresponding pronunciation. As such, *hoose* [house] or *watter* [water] are said to exist as legitimate and unique Scots words – a signal that the writer is not writing in English, but a separate language. The phonetic quality of these spellings makes them more "natural", with the added benefit of a "greater historical provenance". The historical argument is also given to conceptualise cognates which use the Standard English spelling – such as *girl* or *text* – as Scots. The lexical items presented do not always correspond to speech. Regarding *ilka* [each], Dempster has "never heard" the word spoken, but includes it as a feature of Scots literacy. While *each* and *ilka* originated as the same word in Old and Middle Scots, *ilka* cannot be said to accurately obey any established sound-spelling conventions in its representation of /itʃ/.

The second episode of the series contains a brief discussion of spelling conventions, which can also be found in Dempster's section of the *Scots Warks* guide: *Common Spelling Conventions*. Consonants are "basically the same" as in English, and the segment on consonants is mostly a tutorial on English spelling, with an awareness that Standard English spelling can be represented by Scottish consonants such as /ɾ/ and /ʍ/. The low-frequency /x/, however, is again

represented by <ch>. English conventions are also used for pronunciation respellings – *nummer* [number].

More discussion is offered on the topic of vowel spellings, where the main issue of variability lies. Dempster reminds us of his descriptive approach, advising that orthographic variability of vowel spellings is not a "big deal". But unlike his previous acceptance of Tom Leonard's spellings, this time it seems there is a warning against the use of English spelling conventions "to spell Scots words where there's a traditional Scots spelling of that word [...] that goes back hundreds and hundreds of years" (1:05:36). Minor allusions to normativity, a modernist language ideology, and standardisation are introduced. He attributes the prevalence of English spelling to the fact that "we're not taught the Scots spelling system". For the time being, variability of "three or four" spellings is presented as a fact of life, until education allows "historical spelling conventions" to "exist".

A system is put forward, in which traditional spellings are offered alongside Standard English ones:



Table 8: Dempster's traditional spelling conventions for Scots vowels

There are distinct Scots conventions, such as the traditional <ui> to represent /ø/ and /ɪ/, but the system is more complex than Table 8 suggests. <ui> can also represent the more common use of /ʉ/ in these positions. This, in turn, makes the status of other spellings that can represent /ʉ/ unclear: the sound-spelling conventions of *full/pull* and *down* are not accounted for, and certain innovative spellings could appear very odd or cause confusion if spelling alternatives from the table are applied – *louk* [look], *fuille* [full], *full* [fool], *puil* [pull], or *pull* [pool]. A traditional Scots spelling of *done* (/dʌn/) is *duin*, despite the fact that the vowel /ʌ/ is not said to be represented by <ui> here; conversely, *down* could also be spelled innovatively as *duin*, according to the table. Many other innovative possibilities occur, including *thoa* [though] or *pewr* [pure].

I am treating this table as if it had been presented as a complete Scots orthography, which it was not; but it serves to show that, particularly within a deep orthography like that of English or Scots, access to authoritative spellings requires a knowledge of further criteria and agreed conventions. These do exist to a lesser extent, but it seems the aversion to prescriptivism impedes overt norm-enforcement. Hence, some of the spellings I have suggested (*louk*, *fuille*, etc.) would never occur to a Scots writer – partly because they rely on their knowledge of English conventions where norms have not been established or cannot be interpreted, but also because they are likely to subscribe to the criterion of precedent in authoritative Scots texts. Some well-known urban spellings coincide with Table 8, such as *ae* [of] or *oan* [on], though they are not included by Dempster and their status remains unclear. The contested Scots endings *-ae* and *-y* (representing /i/, as in *gonnae/gonny* [going to]) are not represented.

None of this is a criticism of Dempster, who makes no pretence of being able to encapsulate Scots spellings or orthography. The issue is that a straightforward sound-spelling system is nevertheless spoken of, as if it were accessible, teachable, or even known. It is none of these things, and editors will likely revert to their knowledge of English, to the *ad hoc* use of spellings from the dictionaries' lists, or to the commonly used Lallans spellings should they know

them. Furthermore, even though Dempster sets the Scots system against a complete reliance on English conventions, only one element of it – <ch> to represent the low-frequency /x/ – is necessarily different to the Standard English system; as such, for all other sounds the English conventions can always be used within the Scots system, unless further constraints are applied. While these constraints are not specifically linguistic in the videos, there is more than a tacit suggestion that older spellings are preferable – those that "go back hunners and hunners of years".

5.4 Bottom-up texts

Bottom-up Wikipedia guidance – texts produced by the community of editors and administrators – exists independently to that of the top-down texts. The term *bottom-up* is used by way of distinction from institutional Scots authorities; it is not used here to denote a community's converging of usage without directives or named authorities. The texts analysed here do represent a form of authority, but differ from the texts in section 5.3 precisely because they are open sources of democratic norm-making in which the community of editors participate. Given editors' expectation of written norms and the SLC's reluctance to make overt linguistic prescriptions, preferring instead to justify the languageness of Scots and speakers' rights in using Scots, perhaps it was expected that consensus would be sought within the Wikipedia community. In the case of spelling, the democratic process was successful for a handful of words. However, the bottom-up guidance is otherwise similar in substance to the typically tentative discussions on spelling seen so far in this chapter: they are discourse-heavy guides that approach words, graphemes, and digraphs minimally, variably, and mostly on a case-by-case basis.

The Scots Wikipedia administration makes attempts at guiding writers via a handful of discussion pages, Wikipedia entries, and dedicated language guides. These same pages also

constitute a useful source of ideological data. Commentary on orthographic features in one language guide, one discussion page, and one Wikipedia entry is analysed below. These three sources are frequently cited as editorial linguistic guidelines in the Wikimedia discussion, on 'editathon' pages, and within the three texts themselves. Therefore, they form a core body of reference for Wikipedia editors alongside smaller auxiliary texts, which are also included here.

5.4.1 Spellin an grammar

In a short guide to spelling and grammar,[92] only one specific feature is mentioned – the preference for omitting the apologetic apostrophe in a way that encourages the view of Scots as a 'debased' form of English. Beyond this single feature, the administrators are primarily concerned with echoing many of the sentiments seen in previous attempts at approaching standardisation, and which are popular, if not explicitly prescribed, among many language advocates today, such as a preference for pan-dialectal norms (i.e., Lallans). The advocacy of traditional spellings and has remained more or less the same on this page since the article's creation in 2012 by an anonymous user, though it has been regularly monitored (and edited twenty-two times by eight separate editors since the scandal).

Spellin an grammar [*Spelling and grammar*] also includes a condemnation of strategy documents published in Scots by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Northern Ireland: "meaninless, menseless mince wi heich seembolic vailyie that's o nae uiss whitsomeiver" [meaningless, improper rubbish with high symbolic value that is of no use whatsoever]. These same documents appear in an analysis by linguist John Kirk (2013), who dismisses the language as a form of contrived Scots created for non-literary genres. The orthography in these civil service documents is striking for its heavy use of the apologetic

[92] https://sco.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Spellin_an_grammar
Accessed 09.11.2021

apostrophe, and idiosyncratic diacritical marks: <ä>, <ï>, and <è>.[93] It is "implausible, artificial, and counter-intuitive", with "no basis in authentic speech" and representative not of "a language separate in its own right but as a variant of English" (Ibid.), yet contriving to distance itself from it. In other words, it is neither authentic nor appropriate for non-literary writing. Reactions to *ad hoc* approaches to standardisation on Wikipedia, both here and in the case of SSS, discussed earlier in this chapter, are similar to the extent that traditional forms as well as a recognisable degree of representation of contemporary spoken forms are expected.

The guide offers several resources for the Wikipedia editor but, above all, supports the model set out by the *RRSSC* for "narrative an [and] expository prose", which it recommends throughout. The motives for doing so are laid out clearly in a subsection entitled *raisons* [reasons] *for this policy*. I have glossed and listed them here:

- In order to do away with arguments over the right spellings of words
- The RRSSC has been put together by people who know what they are doing for the most part
- If Scots prose is to get anywhere in Scots education, prose writers must rally round a standard. Most people writing for the Scots Wikipedia have chosen to rally round this one.
- "Anything goes" [...] leads to pointless arguments. It might lead to accusations of bias towards one dialect or another at some point. Another point is that we must have uniform spelling if we want to be a proper encyclopaedia.
- Our aim should be to make a few encyclopaedia articles with as little distraction as we can

The *RRSSC* is being put forward as a practical solution to the headache of variability – a claim that the Comatee itself makes. Designed by experts, it is said to be the best of various models available, already used by Wikipedia editors, and an operable guide. If everyone agrees to use it, then there would be no impediment to building the encyclopaedia – so the page claims. This

[93] I consider analysis of these features by Kirk (2013) to be overly simplistic, and their significance remains unknown (although specific uses can be ruled out – e.g., diaeresis, since <ï> appears in *bïg* [big] and *dïsk* [disk]).
https://web.archive.org/web/20121030162307/http://www.dardni.gov.uk/09.10.199_dard_business_plan_ulster_scots.pdf
https://web.archive.org/web/20131025115638/http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/moirastationus.pdf
Accessed 09.11.2021

appeal is understandable: the lengthy discussions in the Wikimedia response to the scandal attest to a genuine frustration at the lack of clear norms.

There is a clear attempt here to situate Scots in a single and centralised place, where writers of all dialects are represented (or *not* represented in equal part). And since that place cannot be shared with Standard English, Wikipedians favour a "non-regional" model with a basis in older, traditional Scots spellings (Scots Spellin Comatee n.d.: 18), which is intended to act as a standard. But, while the *RRSSC* is recommended to the Wikipedia community only, for whom it might be easier to agree on a common set of norms, the *just get on with it* attitude overlooks the problems of variability, representation, and consensus when it makes reference, explicitly and by default, to Scots and Scotland more broadly. *Spellin an grammar* communicates a broader pro-standard attitude (apparently not the prevailing view among language advocates online [Costa 2017]), asserting that a rigid standard is necessary for education and the construction of a "proper" encyclopaedia. Furthermore, despite recognising that the *RRSSC* is just one option of many, recommended for the sake of pragmatism, the pro-standard discourse assumes the existence of fixed written norms in a broader sense: "none of us were taught Scots spelling, so we cannot be expected to get it right."

This firm standard language ideology does not find cause to respond to the problem of anonymity (i.e., that using Standard English is the easiest and most effective way to be understood in Scotland, where we can expect a Scots-speaker to be fully literate in English and, as the administrators point out here and elsewhere, not educated in Scots writing). The use of English as a reference point when defining disputed lexical items in the editors' discussion board *Spellin fettle* (see section 5.4.2), and logistical discussions on various pages written entirely in English speak to the assumption that it is the most practical common language for natives and non-natives alike. But standard language ideologies tend to be doxic. In *Spellin an grammar* it is axiomatic that Scots needs distinct spellings, and so to achieve their stated goals the

administrators simply petition the use of Lallans spellings “that hae a guid history o uiss” [that have a good history of use], and which are “easy tae read an can be soondit oot bi readers in their ain dialect” [easy to read and can be sounded out by readers in their own dialect].

The *RRSSC's* transparent norms have not become the sole Wikipedia authority, and there are a number of plausible reasons for this – for instance, editors' ambivalence about standardisation and prescription, reluctance to read the *RRSSC* in full and to learn its vowel rules and wordlists, or desire to include regional 'voices'. The *RRSSC's* highly detailed vowel rules are difficult to apply, not only requiring a good knowledge of linguistics, Scots texts, and pre-existing “familiar” spellings, but also the ability to cross-reference rules with their exceptions and lengthy common wordlists in order to be followed; unsurprisingly, not all of these rules are followed in *Spellin an grammar* itself.[94] It is likely due to these difficulties that other sites of verbal hygiene have emerged, which I will explore below.

5.4.2 Spellin fettle

Spellin fettle[95] [*Fixing spelling*] is a relatively organised discussion page dedicated to centralising orthographic disputes, where editors are redirected from numerous community pages. The product of a proposal in the Wikimedia discussion following the scandal, it is arranged by contested orthographic variables of interest (*tae dae* [to do]) and variables that have been/are being debated (*puckle fettle* [small fixes] for sole lexical items and *muckle fettle* [big fixes] for systematic changes). If there is clear, ongoing disagreement, this is where those features stay (with justifications and evidence for given viewpoints attached). Spellings move to the *settled* area only if there is a clear consensus – typically, when some affirmation is made which meets no opposition, such as “surely nae [no] quarrel here?”, “dinnae see how onybody cuid oppose this” [don't see how anybody could oppose this], or simply “duin” [done].

[94] For example, preference is given to the seemingly more popular *aw*, rather than *aa* [all].
[95] https://sco.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Spellin_Fettle
Accessed 01.11.2021

Given the limitations of Scots dictionaries as far as neologism is concerned, items such as *telly* [television] benefit from this type of community discussion. Various sources for spelling verification are suggested, such as Dr. Michael Dempster's YouTube course and work by Andy Eagle. The legitimacy of orthographic variants has even been evaluated based on hypothesised Proto-Germanic reconstructions. But the evidence given for settled disputes is dominated by the authority of the DSL and the number of occurrences of a select spelling in its corpora. Once resolved, the *Spellin fettle* debates can help editors in updating entries or creating new ones using the approved spellings, with some opting to use an AutoWikiBrowser (AWB) – semi-automated software that facilitates rapid editing of minor edits, with an open-access template.[96]

Given the explicit aim to "pit richt" [put right] "wrang spellins" [wrong spellings], what can we understand from the specific orthographic features prescribed in *settled* disputes? While administrators may seek to rely on the DSL, this dictionary often gives long lists of spelling alternatives and a clear rationale for settling on a single variant is rare. The DSL also lists many instances of Standard English spellings for contested variables, and contributors often feel they must favour a variant which does not adhere to Standard English convention. For the *hing on top o yer neck* [thing on top of your neck], preference was given to *heid* over *head* after two comments on the traditional <ei> spelling:

> Surely nae [no] quarrel here?
>
> [The DSL] corpus does have a fair few hits for "head" in Scots [...], so it's probably not a huge deal either way. I definitely do strongly prefer "heid" though, and I'd encourage any new articles to use it instead.

These comments point to the fact of iconic Scots spellings such as <ei> having become 'established' or even 'standard' for many writers; they are understood as correct and justifications of their correctness are either not required, or – in the case of *Scots Warks* – draw on troubled, *ad hoc* reasoning if a justification is felt to be necessary.

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[96] https://sco.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:AutoWikiBrowser/Typos
Accessed 10.11.2021

This is a common trend in *Spellin fettle*, in which the *settled* category organises 'established' spellings in a democratic process, and with a level of specificity not offered by the top-down texts. In the case of *wirds* and *words*, the administrators recognised that the Standard English variant was a "primary spelling" in both the Concise Scots Dictionary and the DSL. But phonetic reasoning that argues the case for *wirds* over *words* and *wurds* is accepted by users in the discussion, based on the claim that /wɪrd/ is Scots and /wʌrd/ is not. The open-mid unrounded back vowel is more common in urban speech (Stuart-Smith 2008) and elsewhere in Scotland. It would, in my opinion, be easily accepted by an informed panel of Scots advocates or speakers as a Scots vowel – the same vowel used by Dempster in *Dignity*. So, *wurd* would be at least as appropriate a phonetic representation as *wird*, the former applying the convention of using <u> to represent /ʌ/ (e.g., *bus*), and the latter using <i> to represent /ʌ/ in Scotland (e.g., *bird*). But this may lead to an undesirable association of <u> with both the eye dialect spelling in English to represent /ɜ/ and the Scots convention of using <u> to represent the lowered Glesga vowel /ʌ̈/. Although in *Spellin fettle* the uniquely Scottish vowel /ɪ/ is argued, *wird* generally seems to be an inherently more prestigious spelling. The use of <u> is considered "unnecessar" [unnecessary] by the *RRSSC* (p.57; section D18.3) and <i> for /ʌ/ is the spelling chosen in the subtitles of *Dignity*.

Another *settled* spelling is the Lallans *throu*, rather than *through*. The decision to give preference to a purely symbolic spelling is given without evidence, only a simple affirmation of "[s]hairly nae threap here" [surely no quarrel here]. This is a historical spelling that, in common usage, persisted slightly longer in Scotland than in England, but is now seen among Scots writers online, in poetry, *Scots Warks*, and the *RRSSC*, although the silent digraph <gh> is not systematically excluded as an orthographic feature in *muckle fettle*. As a taken-for-granted feature, there is little discourse surrounding *throu*. It is reasonable to infer that it is another case of 'easy wins' that appeal to writers as a straightforward case which incorporates intelligibility, historicity, and distinctiveness. *Throu* has a history of frequent usage in authoritative Scots texts

and presents no functional issues, being semantically unambiguous, phonetically transparent, and unbiased towards a particular dialect of Scots.

While overt attitudes are difficult to infer in the *Spellin fettle* data, we can deduce from these examples that nonstandard variants with some degree of precedent are approved self-evidently when their Standard English counterparts cannot be ruled out by clear linguistic reasoning. This position is reinforced when the administration states “nae threap” [no quarrel], or uses evidence and rationales selectively to suit whichever variant is being advocated. Thus, the editors who consult the page, using it to make large-scale changes, are presented with a selection of spellings approved by the community without consistent reasons for adhering to certain spellings and not others, but with the tacit understanding that Lallans is preferable to both Standard English and ‘bad Scots’.

5.4.3 Scots Leid

The *Scots Leid*[97] [*Scots Language*] Wikipedia entry is distinguished from the previous two texts is its attempt to describe Scots in the broadest sense, similar to descriptions of standardised languages on the English-language Wikipedia. While it is not an administrators’ page, there is a parallel discussion among administrators (*Talk: Scots Language*)[98] which guides descriptions and conceptualisations of Scots. Since this involves a commitment to put forward, for public consumption, specific linguistic features that mark the boundaries of ‘Scots’, the information provided here naturally offers itself up to scrutiny: in a language so variable and so ambiguously defined, why feature *x*? Why boundary *y*?

[97] https://sco.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scots_leid
Accessed 11.11.2021
[98] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk%3AScots_language
Accessed: 24.11.2021

Under the subsection *Scrievid Scots* [Written Scots], the traditional <ch> and Standard English <gh> are both given as digraphs of the voiceless velar fricative /x/, although <gh> is consistently replaced by <ch> in the text where it represents either /x/ or a silent digraph, with the exception of *Edinburgh*. Vowels are, as always, more complex. *Scots Leid* provides an entirely different vowel spelling system to the *RRSSC*'s based on Aitken's (1984a; 1984b) description of Scots vowels, albeit one which also requires specialised linguistic knowledge to put into practice. Lallans spellings are given with reference to specific phonemes, with alternative orthographic features offered only for "voices", for instance in the case of the traditional <ui>: it is "the ordinair leeterar speelin o [Aitken's] vouel 7" [the ordinary literary spelling of Aitken's vowel 7], which is "aften speelt *ee* in (Doric) byleid writin" [often spelled *ee* in (Doric) dialect writing]. The only mention of 'phonetic' dialect spellings, however, is in reference to the Glesga <oa>. An idiosyncratic diacritic appears systematically in the text as <ì> (to represent /i/), with no mention of diacritics in the corresponding description of vowel spellings.

The use of the apologetic apostrophe is again considered unacceptable, and we are reminded that Scots spellings predate the standardisation of English. In this case, *Scots Leid*, which is recommended reading in *Spellin an grammar*, is not simply prescriptive by default, as authoritative language descriptions are. It seeks to regulate a punctuation mark not by descriptive reference to common usage, but by justifying the omission of the apologetic apostrophe with: "[s]ikna letters niver wer missin en Scots at aw" [such letters were never missing in Scots at all]. The advice is determined by historical fact. Perhaps not coincidentally, the relevant paragraph contains *o't* [of it] and *caa'd* [called], which are explained in the *Apologetic Apostrophe* entry.[99] Dedicated to the matter, it offers more of the same reasoning: *taen* is preferable to *ta'en* or *taken* because /k/ and <k> have been omitted in Scotland since at least the 14th Century. But an apostrophe in select short forms that stand in for longer Scots forms (*eneu'* for *eneuch* [enough]),

[99] https://sco.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apologetic_apostrophe
Accessed 16.11.2021

and some past forms that would otherwise contain an awkward cluster of three vowels (*caa'd* instead of *caaed* [called]), are acceptable.

But, as with the *RRSSC*, the examples and arguments given in the *Scots Leid* and *Apologetic Apostrophe* are difficult to understand. The full list of acceptable and unacceptable apostrophe usage makes it impossible to tell which graphemes are missing from English, and which from Scots. For instance, *a'body* [everybody] is ruled out on the basis that the first syllable of *awbody* is a cognate of Standard English *all*. But shortened forms of *even*, *leave*, and *New Year's Day* (*e'en*, *lea'*, and *ne'er's day*) are considered legitimate abbreviations of Scots words. The sticking point is, again, the delineation of English and Scots; since this dividing line cannot be drawn easily, the meaning of 'apologetic' is obscure. Whatever the reasons may be for categorising English-Scots cognates as they have been in *Scots Leid* and *Apologetic Apostrophe*, if clear rationales can be given at all, they are hardly intuitive to the average Scots speaker interested in developing their writing skills.

We can be justified in reading *awbody* as Scots, and *leave* as English – not, as the Wikipedia entry suggests, the other way round. In Selfe's PhD thesis on the apologetic apostrophe, it is noted how, in these same Wikipedia entries, "[a]postrophised forms, in an argument recalling [David] Purves and [Billy] Kay, are implied to be antithetical to Scottishness" (Selfe 2021: 24). The *Apologetic Apostrophe* entry, in its attempt to show as anomalous the usage of the apostrophe in 'high' literature, states that "Robert Burns, awtho a Scot his ain sel, wis the maist weel-kent uiser o the apologetic apostrophe" [Robert Burns, although a Scot himself, was the most well-known use of the apologetic apostrophe]. This description, in which Burns uses the apostrophe *despite* his identity, is emblematic of broader attitudes to the apostrophe described by Selfe which mobilise the idea of cultural shame, or 'cringe'.

5.5 Discussion: “follow the rules” – what rules?

An analysis of linguistic features approved for use on Wikipedia shows the following consistency in the relevant authorities’ advice. *Yes* indicates that a given feature is recommended to use:

	Spellin an grammar	*Spellin fettle*	*Scots Leid*	*RRSSC*	*Scots Warks*	*YouTube lessons*
<ch> (silent or /x/)	Not mentioned (but used)	Not mentioned (but used)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Avoidance of apologetic apostrophe	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not mentioned (but suggested by Dempster elsewhere)
(Other) purely symbolic Lallans spellings	Not mentioned (but used)	Yes	Not mentioned (but used)	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 9: Summary of orthographic norms largely consistent across guiding texts

Vowels, where the greatest variability in Scots orthography lies, are either discussed in terms of a handful of standalone spellings, or tentative attempts are made to supply the reader with a complete system. The latter are difficult to operationalise for the lay editor; others may simultaneously expect this type of orthographic standardisation while finding it too inauthentic to use themselves. Furthermore, vowel spelling systems do not coincide with one another or their corresponding texts: *Spellin an grammar* fails to coincide with its favoured *RRSSC*, while *Scots Leid* deviates from its own recommendations, as does the *RRSSC* on minor points. It is hard to make a broad assessment of consistency of usage in *Scots Warks* given its aversion to prescribing specific spellings, but its emphatic recommendation against <ee> appears to be at odds with the consistent use of this same feature in the Scots-language version of the guidance. In general, the texts fall back on literary tradition in the cases of <ui> and <ei>, and elsewhere focus on select spellings of common words.

To meet the social requirement of tightly regulated norms for expository prose, taken together, the guides' recommendations are too variable and too hesitant in their prescriptions; the authors of the guides do not tend to see themselves as possessing the authority to make such prescriptions. In the more recent guides, only a fragment of Scots orthography is covered concretely, and there is obscurity and variation within them. In terms of concrete advice, it could be argued that all but <ch> is left to the editor to deduce, decipher, and/or decide on with clarity. Yet the desire for such clarity is widespread, evident in the general dissatisfaction with an 'anything goes' approach to Scots spelling and with an over-reliance on English conventions; there is an expectation on behalf of Wikipedia editors that these guides do indeed operate as authorities on standard norms. Furthermore, it is the same sense that high register norms are necessary that lead the authors of the guides to advocate preconceived notions of 'standard', 'familiar', or 'established'.

Scots Wikipedia editors are faced with a heterogeneity of rationales, views on standardisation, and views on authority (i.e., who can prescribe written forms and whether these forms should be prescribed at all). The Scots Spellin Comatee – which provided the clearest set of orthographic norms, put forward by major figures of authority in Scots – still recognised its own varied and divergent views on creating a standard and the particulars of it. Four of the nine members were dissatisfied with the *RRSSC*, distancing themselves from the project in 1998. The view is often taken by language advocates and scholars specialising in Scots that a lack of standardisation constrains the language status of Scots.[100] Yet, the view is simultaneously taken that standardisation provided by central authorities is inappropriate for a contemporary democratic minority language. Both the commitment to a standard language ideology and the reluctance to identify a Scots standard were stark in the *Scots Warks* document. Ambivalence and heterogeneity are also bottom-up matters: despite its practical outlook and decision to use the

[100] See Millar's (2017b) review of Bann & Corbett (2015), in which language status is described as "the level of linguistic standardisation achieved by a language in marked dissimilarity to an essentially unstandardised vernacular".

RRSSC as a model, the Scots Wikipedia community has multiple sites of discussion for orthographic norms.

This impasse – in which top-down texts and supra-regional standardisation provide a legitimating authority that runs counter to diversity and authenticity – is essentially the same paradox discussed in the previous chapters. Accordingly, some of the same consequences and goal-oriented strategies emerge. But they are transformed somewhat by the written genre in question. Popular responses to the scandal relied on ideas of 'natural' authenticity: articles could be 'faked', Scots speakers would be able to 'fix' them intuitively, and even Scottish themes ought to take priority. Yet Scots Wikipedia is a diversity project predicated on the concept of anonymity and consequently asks to be written 'correctly' and 'neutrally'. This situation demands a form of verbal hygiene which speaks for every Scots Wikipedia editor, making the appeal to internal diversity more difficult than in literature. Conversely, the presentation of 'neutral' norms as doxic is made somewhat easier. The guides rely to a large extent on a tacit understanding that certain traditional spellings correspond to the 'neutral' concepts mentioned earlier ('established', and so on). The most consistent of these norms serve little or no phonetic purpose, existing as easily understood symbols which differ from English and have a basis in historic Scots texts. There is a subtle normativity which favours the same Lallans norms observable in the broader Scots movement.

To allow this normativity to co-exist with an acceptance of variability and hesitancy towards prescriptivism requires discursive strategies. For instance, both named and implied norms are recommended tentatively: they are rarely identified as unequivocally standard features yet qualified with long passages of discourse. The treatment of standardisation in the data reflects a similarly cautious approach in the general discourse of the Scots movement where, for instance, in the collaborative Future of Scots symposium, a cross-section of important institutional Scots figures suggested that 'standardisation' might be better phrased as

“regularisation” or, echoing the *RRSSC’s* descriptor, “a sensible way to write” (Future of Scots 2023: 7). This was a less “threatening” (Ibid.) way of presenting singularity and a means of managing the conflicting expectation of norms on the one hand and the reluctance to provide them on the other.

Scots speakers cannot simply write in ways they might have seen in any Scots text, regardless of the fact that these texts might be common in literature or on social media. Particularly problematic are those which, less connected to language advocacy, rely on more phonetic spellings. Taken together, the data show discursive evidence of taken-for-granted concepts such as *ordinary*, *proper*, *neutral*, *established*, or *central* set against *odd*, *slang*, *dialectal*, and *hyperphonetic*. I intend to show that these categories attribute and reinforce notions of prestige, anonymity, and correctness to some specific Lallans features discussed in the analysis, while excluding others. Further, the relatively few features discussed in this differentiation are emblematic of the much more widely understood concepts of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ Scots, even if these concepts are not named in the process.

This is an ideological practice and, therefore, we can expect some inconsistency and conflict in the way in which rationales are drawn upon. This is normal in verbal hygiene, where commonplace narratives about language serve to “tidy up the messiness of linguistic phenomena and package them neatly in forms that make sense; they do not have to be consistent with one another to fulfil this function” (Cameron 1995: 214). In this case, metadiscourse ‘packages’ language in multiple ways.

For instance, let us consider the relationship between phonetic accuracy and Lallans spellings (in bold) used with a notable degree of consistency in the guiding texts. A close sound-spelling relationship could justify *d**eu**k* [duck] or *wa**tt**er* [water], albeit in reference to infrequent pronunciations: for instance, /dʒøk/. But the value of this relationship is erased in *v**y**ce* [voice] or ***ilka*** [each], or applied selectively (as in the case of *w**i**rd* [word]), or even viewed as undesirable

when discouraging ‘phonetic’ spellings such as ***oa****n* [on]. In this type of *ad hoc* rationalisation, linkages between rationales and linguistic forms may be made as self-justifications, rather than as scientific explanations; I have observed the same pro-Lallans inconsistency in phonetic reasoning regarding <ui> among Scots activists on the social media platform X (Pottinger 2020). These practices are ultimately aimed at producing convincing anonymous norms rooted in a tradition of prestigious spellings, and are particularly evident in the *RRSSC*, *Scots Warks*, and *Spellin fettle*. When the sound-spelling relationship is not a primary concern, the preference for purely symbolic etymological Lallans spellings such as *throu* or the silent <ch> are either self-evident or explained aesthetically – as something which inherently gives Scots an apt appearance. The same might be said of purely symbolic past tense *-t* endings, which provide no phonemic change but disrupt a morphological pattern in which *-ed* marks past tense with three predictable allophones. Three sentiments are consistently expressed that distinguish spellings such as these, and indeed all Lallans spellings, from their alternatives: they are ‘traditional’ in modern literature, have a historical basis, and do not attract stigma.

These sentiments are related to two principles of modernist language ideology: (1) that Standard English is to be avoided and (2) a greater degree of standardisation in Scots is desirable. Some fluent Scots speakers editing Wikipedia are clearly not confident in their writing, and it seems that the standard language ideology prevalent in the United Kingdom makes them uncomfortable with orthographic variability. Despite their eagerness to begin editing, a normative process is seen by Wikipedians as necessary; unlike many amateur writers of fiction, various editors with various levels of exposure to Scots feel that something of a standard is necessary for expository prose. The *RRSSC* states: “[t]he syntax an vocabular o onie dialect or register o Scots cuid be expressed uisin the same orthography” [the syntax and vocabulary of any dialect or register of Scots could be expressed using the same orthography]. As I have suggested, in a purely practical sense Standard English orthography would be the most recognisable pan-dialectal Scots standard for those already educated in Standard English, yet this is anathema to the construction

of Scots-as-a-language. It is unsurprising that Scots writers think it important to move towards their own standard, or at least away from an orthography that makes writing seem less 'Scots' and more 'English'. Both <ui> and <oo> (e.g., in *guid* and *good*) can be used as diaphonemic Scots digraphs, yet it is the former which is adopted for this reason of diaphonology; the historicity and distinctiveness of <ui> is mostly taken for granted. Hence, spellings such as *heid* and *throu* were put forward without explanation in *Spellin fettle*, and approved by virtue of their *not being English*, thereby acting as elements of an anti-standard (Sebba 1998) with historical precedent. In *Dignity*, Dempster comments directly on the availability of English to the literate Scots speaker, suggesting that an alternative, uniquely Scots way of writing is a community endeavour which helps to explore and develop personal and collective identity (i.e., that of the Scots speaker). Insofar as this way of writing is an intended standard, this discourse suggests singularity and anonymity as a means to plurality and authenticity.

In the data, this sense of collective self-realisation manifested in one particularly unambiguous case of prescriptivism, which is not related to literary precedent but to the perceived symbolism of orthographic convention. The apologetic apostrophe is clearly proscribed in Scots writing – a feature which the guiding texts unanimously discourage. It is a purely symbolic feature, which does not impede communication, and which has a history of use in Scots texts authored by some of the most celebrated writers (therefore fitting the criteria of precedent in prestigious literature, but not that of having been 'established' in contemporary Scots). Across all texts, the linguistic rationales and explanations of correct usage for this feature are unclear and/or contradictory, and – whichever way one approaches the matter – a strict understanding of correct usage cannot be inferred. Given the high number of cognates, it is difficult to know when the apostrophe stands in for graphemes that were "never missing" from Scots, but, unanimously, this is the story being told.

It is important to note that these problematic linguistic descriptions of the apostrophe do not correspond to most contemporary Lallans usage. Writers appear to simply omit the apostrophe intuitively in every case except for past forms that would otherwise contain three consecutive vowel letters, while at the same time preserving some Standard English conventions of punctuation (cf. p.98). The more revealing question in this case is: why have the Scots Wikipedia administration and Scots committees and institutions proscribed the apostrophe without expressing the usual awareness of variability and democratic decision-making? Symbolically, the matter is straightforward and consistent for all: the use of the apologetic apostrophe appears to index Englishness by existing in reference to Standard English, drawing attention to the fact that something has been left out, and thereby serving "for tae gie the impression that Scots is nocht but orra Inglis" [to give the impression that Scots is nothing but odd English] (*Apologetic Apostrophe* entry).

In this case, the creation of a discrete language justifies norm-enforcement because it is underlain by a narrative of horizontal empowerment. This discourse provides a means of overlooking the fact that Scots is often understood as *the language of Robert Burns* (Brooks & Hern 2020) and his contemporaries, who used the apostrophe to accommodate an English-speaking readership. While the use of the apostrophe does have a basis in genuine attempts by these 18th- and 19th-century writers to make their writing more accessible (something that the guiding texts, most explicitly the *RRSSC*, encourage in other ways by instructing on "readability"), the relevance of all this to contemporary Scots writing is questionable. Critics of Scots are unlikely to see a symbolic difference,[101] as the guiding texts do, between *he'rt* and *e'en*, or *o'* and *sumb'dy*, and consequently will not be moved to stigmatise one and not the other. As I suggested in the discussion of the apostrophe in chapter 3, I also think it is questionable whether a spelling such as *pleyin* [playing] would attract more stigma if it bore an apostrophe; Selfe (2021) argues that fears of stigma related to the apostrophe are excessively centred on the creation of difference and a

[101] I myself cannot see the difference.

discourse of shame. But proscription of the apostrophe provides a norm which, relatively simple in practice and unrelated to matters of variation by class or region, strives for a means of distinguishing Scots from English. It is the most salient case of verbal hygiene, with anxieties about stigma and the associated desire for language status being the driving forces behind regulation. It is stated frequently that this status needs to be elevated and stigma mitigated, both in general and regarding specific spellings. And it is precisely this sentiment, after all, that motivated the negative reaction to AG's Wikipedia edits (Harrison 2020).

'Eye dialect' is a term which seems to have been taken up in the Scots movement due to its function in English literature to depict characters as uneducated. Again, this relates to stigma and status, and the regulation of features that are seen to damage Scots. The issue appears similar to that of the apologetic apostrophe: occasional linguistic features are strongly discouraged without satisfactorily providing a means of identifying eye dialect more broadly. This is because it is a concept reliant on an orthographic standard that does not ostensibly exist in Scots. One must look closely to infer norms: the *Scots Warks* discussion of eye dialect referred euphemistically to 'good Scots' in a document opposed to prescriptivism. The 'standard' upon which eye dialect is based refers to a set of norms cultivated via exposure to 'good writing', which has been set against 'naturally' authentic writing "used to reflect a certain form of speech" (SLC 2021a: 19).

It is within these inferences and assumptions that writers are asked to be "guardians" and not "vandals", to "treat [Scots] with respect" because "Scots is not a corrupt dialect" and "[a] correctly spelled sentence in Scots is a thing of beauty". Spellings exist which "[help] to keep the traditional forms of the language alive" (Ibid.) – but they must be sought. As was the case in the previous chapter, anonymity and authenticity-as-a-project have again become intertwined here. That these antiquated spellings become a symbol of history and tradition is unsurprising, and arguments were made similar to those used to defend the historical value of etymological

spellings in English, which emphasise the "linguistic richness of the language and its varied history, thereby maintaining a closer relationship with texts of the past" (Horobin 2013: 249). It follows that purely symbolic spellings such as *throu*, *micht*, or *vyce*, among others, which have their origins in Middle Scots but continued to be used in Scotland for a time, have been revived due to this distinguishing factor and to support the case that Scots is a language of its own. The form has been selected to match the sentiment – it is something that has been around for "hundreds and hundreds" of years. This is a matter of (perceived) social stigma: the *RRSSC* recognises an argument that eye dialect is only really a concern due to non-Scots speakers' perceptions.

What I have so far intended to show in this discussion is that, in guidance for writing expository prose, where the pressures of the 'paradox of diversity' are amplified, a significant strategic response in the guiding texts analysed in this chapter is to speak euphemistically about hierarchical spellings (although I have also shown that prescriptivism can be sanctioned when it is viewed as performing the role of a larger societal diversity). In responding to the vexed question of making prescriptions, linguistic advice in the guides often amounts to Costa's estimation of the orthographic-ideological landscape of Scots Wikipedia: it is a "game […] whose rules are more complicated than the absence of a standard would have new players believe" (Costa 2017: 50). In this sense, the recommendation of Scots Warks to 'follow the rules' without naming them is revealing. But, in another sense, it is well known that these rules are simply not codified as they are in standardised languages – therefore, although norms are spoken about in a similar way to standard language metadiscourses, they are also not named because they cannot always be named with confidence. An apt interpretation of the situation lies somewhere in between these two observations. In any case, insofar as explicit and implicit normativity exists, we can also expect there to be evidence of erasure *vis-à-vis* ideologies of heterogeneity and 'natural' authenticity.

The kind of 'proper' Scots suggested is set in opposition to 'slang', for which the Scots Wikipedia entry[102] was heavily edited by Scots speakers after the scandal. It is described as "a kin o neologism" [kind of neologism] via the "byordinar" [irregular] use of language among a particular "social group" (referring here to marginalised subcultures). However, the recommended use of traditional spellings and specifically *not* "slang" ones in *Spellin an grammar* would seem unnecessary if 'slang' was not more commonly understood within Scots as a generally undesirable form of Scottish orthography. This is described as "deviatin awa frae the ordinar uiss o a leed" [deviating away from the ordinary use of a language],[103] where 'ordinary' parallels the 'neutral' qualities of anonymity, and is differentiated from the undesirable consequences of attempting to authentically represent the Scots writer's 'voice' with "hyperphonetic" or 'odd' spellings. But specific examples of the kind of common orthography that might be seen as vulgar or damaging are avoided once again.

Across the data, these examples of 'bad' language are rare, most likely because prescriptivism and stigmatisation of urban working-class speech are unwelcome in the Scots movement. Yet, what examples there are do seem to echo Aitken's (1982) description of Bad Scots as a set of urban varieties that have been stigmatised since the emergence of 19th-century classist fears following urbanisation. That these varieties are somehow 'debased' and 'depraved' is an attitude that seems to have gone relatively uncontested among the majority of spelling committee members in the 1990s – all of them connected to Scots-language advocacy and prestigious, institutional styles of Lallans writing. More contemporary attitudes, including that of the spelling committee's more tolerant secretary John Law,[104] still recognise that the phonetic urban styles do not coincide with the expository style preferred by the Scots movement.

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[102] https://sco.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slang
Accessed 24.11.2021

[103] Ibid.

[104] Cf. comments on Irvine Welsh, James Kelman, and Tom Leonard in this interview with John Law about the development of the *Lallans* journal: https://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=768
Accessed 26.01.2022

‘Bad Scots’ might be updated for the current context to include present-day spellings in Scotland: as I have described (Pottinger 2022), *ae* or *a* [of], rather than *o*, is an example of an innovative spelling among younger, urban writers. Although spellings such as *oan* [on] and *wurd* [word] are often described as “phonetic” or “hyperphonetic”, it is not just the phonetic nature of the often-humorous urban styles that is the problem, hence the selectivity of using pronunciation as a rationale. After all, the Shetlandic *dat* [that] or the Doric *fit* [what] are often given as examples of legitimate regional variation (although, in other ways, they are also subject to erasure). There is also significant resistance to purely symbolic innovations such as *iz* [is]. It is the context in which urban writing has been used, continues to be used, and, crucially, its cultural associations that appear to make Scots advocates uncomfortable.

At this stage it is useful to remember that the motives for proposing norms are essentially practical, offering tools for editors and for the broader Scots cause in a society where orthographic standards are expected to exist for these purposes. Both editors and activists are goal-oriented, and, on the one hand, the appeals to Lallans spellings are seen as the best way of directly and indirectly offsetting stigmatisation for a diversity of speakers. Yet, on the other hand, the discourse used to achieve this has relied on a degree of iconisation that aligns a ‘good’ use of Scots with the history of the nation and even “beauty” itself.

Looking at the reasons for orthographic proscriptions, *through* is deemed too English, *heed* too ‘unaesthetic’, *oan* too innovative and phonetic, and *o’er* too apologetic. Together with the emphasis on history and traditional literature, to the spelling authorities these variants oppose the notion of Scots as old, dignified, educated, literate, serious, and – therefore – a separate language. The approved spellings in the data – which include *micht*, *throu*, *vyce*, *ilka*, *o*, *oer*, *heid*, *on*, *guid*, *finisht*, or *wirds* – are, in different ways and for different (sometimes conflicting) reasons, icons to the extent that Scots is itself presented as possessing these same characteristics: old, dignified, educated, literate, and serious. This occasionally serves the same

function of authenticity-as-a-project reported in chapter 4, existing alongside a discourse of anonymity in Lallans that rejects authenticity – which claims that "there's naethin special [...] naethin unjoukably guid, bad, gleg or glaikit, aboot Scots – or aboot thaim whae speik or hae spak it" [there's nothing special ... nothing undeniably good, bad, smart or stupid, about Scots – about those who speak it or have spoken it] Douglas (2022: 3). Within the context of Lallans and the Scots movement, this indicates a contradiction only in rhetoric, for they are two sides of the same verbal hygiene coin. Where the problem lies in relation to the broader cause of Scots language advocacy, which seeks to validate everyday speakers and increase their number, is that anonymisation necessitates decontextualisation. There is relatively little awareness of this problem. For phonetic writers, the entire purpose of not writing in Standard English is to contextualise language within the 'voice' of the urban working classes; that is what makes it "special". Similarly, when speakers view their own dialect as emplaced – as belonging to their social group and its specific, identifiable practices – we can expect some scepticism toward the abstractions of institutional Scots projects.

In this process, two lines are drawn: one that separates the norms of expository prose from English, and another that separates them from other nonstandard spellings. This falls within the trinary system previously mentioned: Good Scots, Bad Scots, and Standard English. In giving orthographic advice, writing styles other than Lallans are broadly erased from the Wikipedia editing process. In the case of AG and the creator of an *ad hoc* orthographic standard for Wikipedia, this erasure was not subtle. This practice risks negatively iconising other writing styles. Innovative urban styles – those met with humour or ridicule by many outsiders to the Scots movement – regardless of whether they are used in spontaneous online text-production (Scottish Twitter), or popular literature (*Trainspotting*) and poetry (Tom Leonard), are described in guiding texts as 'odd', 'irregular', or 'depraved' and, in the most extreme viewpoints, they and their authors are deemed uneducated and vulgar, even 'vandals'.

Taken together, the regular reference to the prestige of historical spellings, the suggestion of collective identity, the framing of traditional spellings as a central or neutral "voice from nowhere" (Gal & Woolard 1995), the erasure of Glesga's concrete and abstract elements, when met with the editors' search for an unmarked or 'high' form of Scots writing, strongly suggest that Lallans features ought to fulfil this function. And this ideological practice, rooted in the typical Western standard language ideology, is possible with a plausible deniability of hegemony: the guides have not been explicitly prescriptive. It does not seem possible, however, without contradiction or discourse-heavy guidance, as it is fundamentally opposed to the vision of a decentralised and variable Scots typical of the activist mentality within a liberal cultural zeitgeist. As ever, the conflicts within these verbal hygiene practices reflect opposing social forces: the postmodern cultural-political trend towards democratic diversity and the modernist expectation of exclusive, 'high' norms for expository prose. As in the previous chapter, the function of these verbal hygiene practices is not, for the most part, to consciously consolidate power, but to challenge a greater power – English – and, in doing so, forward the project of raising the language status of Scots.

5.6 Concluding comments

Across the guiding texts and often within them, editors do not emerge with a clear sense of how to spell. Editors are regularly directed to orthographic precedent, but, as the *RRSSC* recognises, this is not a workable criterion on its own and can easily cause confusion. Confusion also emerges from the fact that more concrete advice tends to be very limited, and not applied consistently across and within guiding texts. These difficulties are the result of a general dissonance between an underlying desire to conform – or have other writers conform – to a set of norms and an overt aversion to prescriptivism. This is not surprising: I have heard it said countless times that (a

degree of) standardisation is viewed in the Scots-language community both positively and negatively. It is also unsurprising given the association of language regulation with regional bias and classism in the Scots context.

However, there is some consistency in the advice and rationales offered across the texts, which is rooted in concern for the status of the Scots language and, accordingly, a preference for orthographic variants documented in older texts. Furthermore, engagement with authoritative Scots texts does appear to lead Scots writers to converge on inferring the same forms from the guides' suggestion that some spellings are well-known or 'established' as something of a standard. The guides do not need to state explicitly what those norms are but can instead indicate that writers ought to go and find them themselves. In this case study, what drives the concern for language status was not always obvious, although there were clear suggestions that the legitimacy of the Wikipedia platform can help to validate Scottish and Scots-speaker identity.

It is difficult to assess the success of these guiding texts in establishing norms. Scots projects that have previously attempted to do so have been treated as failures, but there is a great desire to bring linguistic cohesion and prestige to the language – occurring, importantly, alongside a growing body of output – and this may or may not outweigh the forces upholding high orthographic variability. As it stands, editors appear to have heeded – or were already in agreement with – the workable and consistent advice in their output for the January 2022 mass editing event. Nevertheless, the fact that this advice is scant, but the discourse(s) of correctness are plentiful, reminds us that only an ideological perspective can provide a complete picture. The following chapter looks more closely at the process of iconisation, revealing a complex relationship between form and ideological function.

6 The Case of Social Media

In this thesis I have observed that, via the iconisation of historical spellings and the type of lexis employed predominantly in writing, literacy has been crucial to the construction, (re)production, instruction, and learning of 'Scots' in its archetypal form. Web 2.0 has made these Scots literacy practices readily available to the general public, with the latest resurgence in output of Scots writing and in activism coinciding with the expansion of mass literacy via Facebook, X, Instagram, and TikTok. In a survey of Scots writers conducted by the SLC (2021b), respondents said that they engaged with Scots writing more via social media than any other medium. From its place almost exclusively in poetry, with occasional use in prose and letter-writing, Scots is now used in everyday communication within some social circles.

In this chapter, I consider the key questions of this thesis within a third genre of writing – CMC – and across a variety of online texts and encounters. This constitutes a third site of ideological contestation, where Scots writers act in a global space often presumed to be dominated by English and populated by antagonists. I offer a comparison of four small datasets to inform on the broader ideological and linguistic picture. After a background discussion of minority-language CMC and multilingual[105] metadiscourses online, I introduce the concept of 'Scottish Twitter'. These innovative phonetic tweets are compared with those of Scots activists, who returned ideological questionnaires. The findings support the association of Lallans with the typical objectives of language activism, and pseudo-phonetic spelling with representation of the authentic urban 'voice'. Following this is an X comment thread in which pro-Scots attitudes are exchanged; in contrast to the 'apolitical' efforts of many language activists, this reveals a 'hard' nationalism set within political discourse following the independence and Brexit referenda. The final dataset is taken from the Instagram account of the Scots movement's most popular figure,

[105] Where *multilingual* is used in the broad sense (cf. Martin-Jones & Jones [2000] and chapter 2 of this thesis): i.e., that authors have more than one language variety available to them, rather than simply that they draw upon both of these varieties in a single text.

poet Len Pennie, whose followers and commenters reach far beyond the inner circles of Scots activism. The deterritorialised encounters within the comment threads of Pennie's posts lead to a wider interaction with outsider ideologies; many outsiders, who are less practiced in popular Scottish metadiscourses, make essentialising iconic associations between language and culture informed by mass media representations and simplistic assumptions regarding national identity.

The key questions addressed are:

- How are Lallans and urban 'phonetic' Scots represented on social media?
    - What linguistic forms do they take?
    - What ideological functions do these forms serve for:
        - the author?
        - other 'insiders' to the Scots movement?
        - to 'outsiders'?

In answering these questions, I found that, within the generally positive response to Scots online and support for the Scots movement, there are varied and competing visions of what Scots is and what it ought to do. For some, the question is one of national sovereignty. For activists connected to the contemporary Scots institutions, there was an association of Lallans with those discourses which we may, at this point, understand to be commonplace beliefs within the movement – 'Scots is a language', 'Scots is validating', or 'Scots is not about politics'. Although outsiders to the movement and media reports are keen to support these narratives, they appear to have interpreted them with a different understanding of language and culture, which nevertheless relies on a degree of ideological erasure and mystification of the relationship between spoken and written language. What these different ideologies have in common is the effect of simplifying a more complicated reality.

6.1 Minority languages online

User-generated internet spaces have typically been viewed through a lens of 'globalisation' – an imagined process of cultural and linguistic homogenisation resulting from global interactions, which are normally conducted in English. Consequently, the typical understanding of the language of digital media "is that of a centripetal force whose effect on language in the community can only be imagined as a pull towards homogenization" (Androutsopoulos 2016: 283). Specifically with regards to Scots spelling, Bann & Corbett have argued that Web 2.0 communication with global audiences "constrains the impulse to retain individual and community identity" (2015: 146). Findings by Shoemark et al. (2017a; 2017b), which show a correlation between broad audiences and English usage among Scots writers on X, may appear to support this view.

However, there is evidence that social media platforms facilitate the construction of identities and ideologies of Scots. In the same research, Shoemark et al. (2017b: 1241) also found that "social media has given rise to a new genre of casual, communicative writing that is potentially visible to large and diverse audiences, providing both a platform and an impetus to express one's identity through the use of written language". This impetus is certainly evident in the digital Scots language movement, and throughout the analogue 20th-century movement (cf. chapter 3), for whom the awareness of globalising forces can motivate reactions to them.

These reactive assertions of identity constitute an observed trend in more nuanced theories of globalisation. In particular, Hjarvard's (2008) account of *mediatisation* describes a complex relationship between cultural identity and digital media, which can be differentiating at the vernacular or individual level, and homogenising at the global and national level. While this thesis is not set within theories of globalisation and CMC, this complex view of literacy practices – which has also been called *glocalisation*, borrowing from a marketing term in the context of hybrid practices in Greek [Koutsogiannis & Mitsikopoulou 2007]) – applies to minority-language speakers who use local writing practices to participate in the rapid and international flow of

information and ideas. For some Scots speakers, the online space is precisely where individual and community identity can be expressed via Scots writing for the first time, even though they may feel compelled to use Standard English in other areas of digital life. Speakers of Low German – a code with a comparable sociolinguistic history and set of literacy practices – have also used global platforms such as Facebook for vernacular writing, celebrating "linguistic heritage, humour, and language play" (Reershemius 2017: 45) despite the lack of an orthographic standard. The internet creates new opportunities for multilingual encounters and the literacy-as-a-practice model has been adopted to describe this (Barton & Lee 2013). As this chapter will suggest, deterritorialised digital interactions can be used to express language ideologies that are indexically and historically tied to physical space.

6.1.1 Web 2.0 spaces and multilingual metadiscourses

Bann & Corbett have suggested that, since variable Scots spellings do not present communicative issues, and that relatively unregulated online spaces do not seem conducive to consensus, Scots orthographic norms are unlikely to become more established (2015: 143). Of course, there has been evidence so far that all manner of Scots writers are indeed accepting of all manner of Scots writing, but this is partly a product of the culturally tolerant liberal zeitgeist. Bann & Corbett's prediction may be correct or it may be incorrect – it is difficult to measure any change in homogeneity since the transition online – but it is worth recalling the perception among Scots communities of practice online of a developing set of 'consensus norms'. As the output of Scots writing has grown online, perhaps agreement on these norms has also; Scragg (1974: 28) argues that poverty of output can be a defining constraint on the development of standards. Regardless, the question more pertinent to the present case relates to the premises of Bann & Corbett's prediction and the verbal hygiene impulse online.

The first premise regarding communicability appears to either ignore the extralinguistic elements of standard language ideology or consider them insufficiently significant. Communicative issues (or the lack thereof) are rarely discussed in the standardising verbal hygiene of orthography (and, when they are, they are often exaggerated for ideological ends). Rather, this thesis foregrounds the role of ideological paradoxes in complicating the standardisation process. The second premise is that online spaces are relatively unregulated. By no means, however, does the uptake of norms have to occur following a formal consultation with a committee of experts; norms for unstandardised minority languages can indeed be encouraged and learned online (and dedicated offline committees of Scots experts have previously failed – see chapter 3). "[S]ocial media are increasingly influential in setting the grassroots verbal hygiene agenda: they are hotbeds of peer-to-peer language policing" (Cameron 2023: 27), where the norms of both overt prestige (Standard English) and covert prestige (youth 'internet language') are regulated online (Bogetić 2016). But norms – particularly those of unstandardised languages seeking official status – can also be more formally 'taught' on social media: Heyd & Mair's (2014) study of the Nairaland forum found it to be a 'classroom' for people from a variety of social contexts, which acts as both a repository of knowledge of Nigerian Pidgin, as well as a place to ask about and practice features of the language, either with the intention of facilitating offline usage, or of learning and participating in online usage as an end unto itself.

Internet fora provide a democratic platform for knowledge exchange and are, therefore, an exemplary site of NLS research which, as Mills (2010: 254) has described in reference primarily to pedagogy, "highlights the destabilizing of traditional loci of authoritative knowledge and expertise and the centrality of peer collaboration, mentoring, and voluntary support to members of online communities." The previous chapter of this thesis highlighted the tension between traditional and peer-based or individual authority. Writers of nonstandard CMC may seek to take control of their learning in "a shift from traditional authority to an epistemology of shared knowledge and expertise. In online social sites, institutional authorities, such as parents and

teachers, do not establish writing standards and protocols, nor are they positioned as instructional experts" (Ibid.). It is perhaps for this reason that they may appear to be more unregulated than they are.

The destabilisation of top-down knowledge on the one hand, and the process of peer-to-peer regulation on the other, makes internet texts such as comment threads useful "sites of metadiscourse" (Squires 2010) precisely because they are user-generated. Bottom-up metadiscourses – which were more difficult to access prior to Web 2.0, when the available ideological data was dominated by mass media representations – are written and published in great quantity.[106] The construction and contestation of ideologies can be analysed at the level of individuals' original data, directly informing on vernacular literacy practices.

User-generated online texts, which make up most of the linguistic and metadiscursive data in this chapter, also have the advantage of having not been produced under the gaze of the researcher. For Scots activists on X, I have taken an approach recommended by Barton & Lee (2013) and Deumert & Lexander (2013) which combines this type of online data with more traditional 'offline' methods in the form of questionnaires and follow-up correspondence with respondents; "qualitative and broadly ethnographic approaches are necessary to understand the complex meaning-making processes by which [multilingual digital literacy] texts are created" (Ibid.: 529). In this way, for those closest to the Scots movement, who use Lallans consistently, unprompted language use was gathered via tweets, while ideological data targeted at specific linguistic features and concepts was collected via questionnaires. Demographic data was also collected.

When considering interpersonal digital networks, we ought, again, to cast a critical eye on 'globalisation'. The people brought together by a forum – which can be a private group centred on a language variety, such as the Scots Language Forum on Facebook – form an online

[106] Cf. Barton & Lee (2013: 109) and Jones & Schieffelin (2009) on the shift from mass media representations of linguistic practices to user-generated metadiscourses online.

community which is both global and local. On the one hand, the internet is a defining resource of a 'globalised' world, in which "[p]eople's memberships of 'communities' are increasingly complex, more contextualized, and less well predicted by socio-structural facts" (Coupland 2003a: 426). Individuals are reorganised into geographically ambiguous online communities where they often remain partially or entirely anonymous; hence, Wikipedia editors faced difficulties verifying 'authentic' speakers, eventually relying on a system of self-assessment. For language-users who "come together around mutual engagement in some endeavour" (Eckert & McConnel-Ginet 1992: 490) – in the case of this chapter, the X 'insiders', their endeavour being the development and practice of Scots itself, almost always written – it is appropriate to view them as 'communities of practice'. This is a common framework when approaching online communities and is compatible with a view of literacy and identity as sets of practices (Swann et al. 2004: 44).

But at the same time, digital iterations of 'community of practice' ought not to overlook demographic factors: it is the sense of belonging to physical space and a shared Scottish experience that predominantly motivate these local expressions of identity (which happen to make use of a global tool – the internet – to organise and manifest themselves). Scots writing is intrinsically tied to various spoken dialects that are acquired offline. Within Scots activist communities online, individuals are often known to one another, some of them are close friends in the physical world, others not. Elsewhere, in the Instagram comment threads, 'outsiders' have greater levels of anonymity, are more international, and their roles and positions of authority are less well defined.

6.1.2 Ethical considerations

Before proceeding, I offer a discussion of the chosen ethical approach to publicly available social media data. Approval from the University of Oxford's Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) was not deemed necessary; rather, I followed a careful application of

CUREC's guide to best practice for internet-mediated research (CUREC 2021), incorporating authoritative sources therein and others from the present field of study.

I acknowledge that social media users are not necessarily aware of the availability of their published content for academic research (Williams, Burnap & Sloan 2017)[107] and considerations were made regarding their identities. The quoted Instagram comments are not searchable and were made on the profile of a public figure with around 545,000 followers. They also constitute a dataset too large for reasonably obtaining informed consent from users, many of whom will have private accounts. Hence, in line with the CUREC guidance, the users have been anonymised without seeking consent (e.g., p.3 and pp.8-9 of CUREC 2021). I have also anonymised the X users for whom I have included demographic and detailed ideological data via questionnaires, for which they have provided informed consent. Their tweets were not quoted since these could theoretically be searched and attributed to active accounts. This leaves the question of some quoted tweets in the X comment thread, which were included in the interest of providing original data. In the first instance, this exchange of comments, taking place in the spring of 2020, can no longer be found on X and the authors no longer identified. If for some reason it should become publicly available once more, I still believe the approach to be ethical for the following reasons.

The author of the original tweet, with over 5,000 followers, can be considered a minor public figure who posts for a relatively broad audience. Those commenting on the tweet were anonymised in line with the expectation of a significant majority of everyday X users reported in Williams et al. (2017). In the same survey, a slightly smaller majority expected to be contacted for opt-in consent. However, direct contact was not made available with any of the commenters.[108] Therefore, a decision was to be made as to whether I might proceed without opt-in consent.

[107] Along with further references cited here, consultation of this source is recommended in the CUREC guidance.

[108] The users of these accounts had all opted to turn off the direct messaging feature, except for one. According to X's security settings at the time of writing, even if direct messaging is turned on, two accounts are required to follow one another before direct messaging can occur. Despite prompting, this situation was not possible.

Under the guidance of a research body closely related to this field of scholarship – the British Association of Applied Linguistics (BAAL) – I take the understanding that an appropriate approach to social media research ethics operates on a case-by-case basis (BAAL 2021: sections 2.2 and 2.9). In this instance, I decided to quote the X comments anonymously, as a comparable case study in the BAAL guidelines chose to do. Above all, this is because the risk of harm was considered low. *Harm* or *damage* is a primary ethical consideration of both the American Anthropological Association and the Linguistic Society of America (cf. also Markham & Buchanan [2015: 610] on the principle of harm in relation to informed consent).

After considering CUREC's guidance on navigating the culture of an online community (CUREC 2021: 13), I believe I have interpreted the meaning of the users' comments with sufficient accuracy, and I do not suggest that they are prejudiced or delusional. The interpretation of their attitudes in the X comment thread also considered the broader context of their X profiles, where they broadcast those same attitudes openly (and often proudly) in their own tweets and profile 'bios'. The topic – Scottish national culture, which is not considered to be sensitive – is one that they debate regularly online. Having already received some attention online with 27 retweets, the X thread received only one instance of ideological opposition, which was not considered to be harmful. If others are wont to pursue these profiles and cause their users harm, they are more likely to do so as a result of following the relevant debates online than by reading this thesis and, should the X comments become public, using search tools to find and pursue certain accounts. Nevertheless, the ongoing and reflexive nature of this type of research ethics demands that these questions be revisited when disseminating this data in other contexts.

6.2 Scots usage online

The varieties of writing which appear on websites and social media pages are similar to those which had previously been established in print – albeit with neologisms, acronyms, abbreviations, or graphology associated with English 'internet language', which seem to be used exclusively in conjunction with the phonetic urban style. The orthographic and lexical split described in this thesis appears to extend to online spaces. Dr Michael Dempster made a distinction between traditional and 'phonetic' written Scots online at a conference talk[109] in early 2020, in which both were conceptualised as 'the Scots language'. Rather than constituting a distinctly Scots form of 'Netspeak' or 'text language', as they are sometimes described, 'phonetic' spellings – which predate the rapid expansion of CMC, but which have been popularised by it – attempt to capture the author's speech. Dempster's suggestion is convincing: that instant messaging and social media have popularised the phonetic style outside of literature, whether this usage was directly influenced by the same orthographic style in urban literature, or whether the online spellings and those of Leonard or Welsh coincide in their intuitive interpretation of sound-spelling conventions. Dempster shows, also, how both Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 have provided a platform for instructive and artistic Lallans texts. Of the relatively few linguistic analyses of these two styles of Scots writing, Dempster's is that which most accurately reflects my findings (see section 6.2.1).

Traditional	**Phonetic**
cannae/canna	canny
gaun 'ae	gonny
want tae	wanty
gie's	geez
teuchter	chookter
o	ay/ae
got	goat

Table 10: Traditional vs. 'phonetic' spellings online. ©Dr. Michael Dempster 2020

Within the last ten years, a particular association between humour and nonstandard Scottish CMC of the phonetic type has developed via a genre of Scottish tweets, simply

[109] Cyberscots, *The Edinburgh Language Event*, February 29th-March 1st 2020. Full video available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CSkggGiR8_s
Accessed 28.01.2022

understood as ‘Scottish Twitter’. Collections of these can be viewed on the X pages @ScottishPeople_ and @ScottishPatterr, and by following the hashtag #ScottishPeopleTwitter. Screenshots of these tweets are also compiled and circulated on other social media platforms. These tweets are humorous and bear some indication that they are Scottish, sometimes via cultural references, but very often through pronunciation respellings or relatively transparent Scots lexis (*wean* [child], *wee* [small], *aye* [yes], and so on). According to Mitchell (2019), Scottish Twitter was brought into wider recognition in the UK by a *BuzzFeed* article which described these tweets as “the wildest place on the internet” (Bailey 2015). The first quoted tweet on this and other media reports reads: “maw bought aldi shower gel that smells like fairy liquid so I’ve been cutting about all day smelling like a fucking plate” [mum bought aldi shower gel that smells like fairy liquid so I’ve been going around all day smelling like a fucking plate]. This same tweet appears in the introduction to an article in the popular culture magazine *The Face* (Livingston 2019), which celebrates “the Scots language”. Another popular example is: “Ye ever wanty just wrap yersel up in tin foil nice and cosy and then just fucking get right inty the microwave and blow yersel up tae fuck” [Do you ever want to wrap yourself up in tin foil nice and cosy and then just fucking get right into the microwave and fucking blow yourself up]. Dempster’s ‘phonetic’ spelling category is based on similar examples from Scottish Twitter, about which he is positive, celebrating their humour and the supposed increase in awareness of ‘the Scots language’ that has occurred as a result.

Describing these tweets as “wild” – a qualifier used apparently to mean that the humour is eccentric, expletive-ridden, sarcastic, and endearingly abrasive – speaks to the context to which this orthographic style is mostly limited. Dempster also repeatedly describes them as “mad”, while the relatively well-informed article in *The Face*, which is wholly positive about X as a grassroots platform for asserting identity and validating Scots, refers to these tweets’ “sweary, hysterical, sometimes incomprehensible glory”. Despite the consistent references to ‘the Scots language’, neither of the two popular Scottish Twitter users interviewed by *The Face* referred to ‘Scots’, both of them offering responses similar to poet Raymond Wilson in chapter 4 of this

thesis – that phonetic orthography is used to capture a particular way of speaking, for a particular effect, rather than contributing to the (re-)construction of a discrete language:

> "It's how I talk in real life and Twitter is a pretty casual site, so I guess that's how it came about so naturally for most people," he says. "It gives it more of a personal feel, as if other Scottish folk [people] can read it and relate, or hear the accent, which usually makes it funnier. Plus, the overall brief, conversational tone just adds more emphasis. It's as if you're just talking loads of shite [shit] with your pals."
>
> (Livingston 2019)

6.2.1 A linguistic comparison of the 'Scots movement' and 'Scottish Twitter'.

In the spring of 2020, I collected data from two groups of six writers of Scots on X (Pottinger 2020), which I present here as more detailed evidence of the Lallans/urban phonetic divide on social media. The first of these – the 'Scots Network' group – were Scots activists and/or those engaged with Scots institutions, whom I found via the official X pages of the Scots Language Society (@LairnScots and @scotslanguage). The second – the 'Scottish Twitter' group – were users featured on the Scottish Twitter page (@ScottishPeople_) who regularly tweeted using nonstandard spellings. Incidentally, the members of this apparently younger group had all set their location to Glasgow or the bordering town of Paisley.

The main linguistic purpose of the study was to determine whether, in their ten most recent tweets, users chose either innovative pronunciation respellings or 'purely symbolic' spellings that were not, in an obvious way, more appropriate than Standard English for representing everyday varieties of Scots speech. In a sense, this is a means of reverse engineering the findings of this thesis so far, in which Lallans features have been identified in the first instance, with their proximity to speech and ideological significance considered afterwards. For this dataset, I began by counting non-phonetic nonstandard spellings, which is a category very likely to bear symbolic meaning (Sebba 2007). I then investigated whether these were selected for their historicity, and specifically a historicity preferred in order to raise the status of Scots.

The matter is addressed in the third columns of the Tables 11 and 12, below, broadly labelled 'possible non-phonetic spellings' since they range from the obviously graphemic *finisht* or *throu*, to those which the author may or may not associate with an archaic or uncommon pronunciation: *chynge* and /tʃaɪndʒ/. The phonetic variability of vowels throughout Scotland is another factor to consider. These ambiguities were mitigated by asking the Scots Network group, who were more geographically dispersed, whether these spelling choices had been made with pronunciation in mind (see questionnaire responses in section 6.3.1). The percentage of nonstandard spellings was also considered, as well as lexical items that are not generally interpretable[110] by a non-Scots speaker.

X Handle (Anon.)	**Scots vs English variants**[111]	**Possible non-phonetic spellings**	**Distinct lexis**	**Occupation**	**Age**	**Stated location of origin**
@Rhuriadh^ Paterson	6/10 tweets 34/184 items (18.47%)	guid schuil	ken bleester	Teacher	54	Perth
@Anne^Lamont	10/10 tweets 34/50 items (68%)	wyte	greet stey thon	Teacher	50	Aberdeenshire
@Lachlan^Leslie	7/10 tweets 44/181 items (24.3%)	schuil mune	muckle braw	Writer	61	Clydebank, Dunbartonshire
@Jamie^McBride	10/10 tweets 90/163 items (55.21%)	guid traive**ll**s mon**ie** buke luikin throu Yuil	braw	Linguist	N/A	Scotland, not specified
@Jim^Hastings	9/10 tweets 131/328 items (39.94%)	spikker finisht chynge wirds efternu**i**n bi uised	braw stoater scrieve chiel	Writer	39	Hamilton/ Glasgow
@Robert^Danielli	7/10 tweets 19/207 items (9.17%)	buik pruifin **puir**ith	braw hoolie smirr baffies	Writer/ poet	54	Ayrshire

[110] These items, or their orthographic alternatives, were listed in the DSL and also listed as exclusively 'Scottish' or 'obsolete' in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED).

[111] This column shows: (1) the number of tweets containing Scots features, (2) the total number of Scots tokens for all tweets, and (3) the percentage of Scots vs. English variants.

Table 11: Non-phonetic forms and distinct lexis in the 'Scots Network' group

The distinct lexis is mostly Lallans, as are the possible non-phonetic spellings. Furthermore, there were common Lallans spellings and lexis in the data which do not appear in Table 11, such as <ei>, <ch> to represent the moribund /x/, and *gar* (for *make*, listed as 'rare' in the OED, with quotations chiefly from Scottish texts). These were absent from the Scottish Twitter group (below), for whom the results suggest a rather different picture. The ages and occupations of these writers could not be inferred, although their profile pictures suggested a younger contingent:

X Handle (Anon.)	**Scots vs English variants**	**Possible non-phonetic spellings**	**Distinct lexis**	**Stated location of origin/residence**
@Frankie^Laidlaw	7/10 tweets 37/312 (11.85%)	0	0	Glasgow
@Stuart^Grey	4/10 tweets 8/220 items (3.63%)	0	0	Glasgow
@Martin^Logan	8/10 tweets 23/141 items (16.31%)	0	clatty	Glasgow/ Munich
@Gordon^Imlach	9/10 tweets 26/244 items (10.65%)	0	0	Glasgow
@Billy^Nichols	5/10 tweets 7/89 items (7.86%)	0	0	Paisley
@Gabby^Redpath	9/10 tweets 25/254 items (9.84%)	0	wean	Glasgow

Table 12: Non-phonetic forms and distinct lexis in the 'Scottish Twitter' group

All nonstandard spellings in this second group seemed to be phonetic. Many of them were also innovative (i.e., not recorded in historical sources; see also 'Innovative Scots' spellings in Bann & Corbett 2015): *awrite* [alright], *magine* [imagine], *gee* [give], and so on. Spellings such as *heed* were preferred over the Lallans *heid*. Some innovative phonetic features appeared in the Scots Network dataset (e.g., *doon* [down], rather than *doun*) and some of it was distinctly Glesga (*burd* [bird]). But no Lallans features were found in the Scottish Twitter dataset, where the innovative negative marker *-ny* (also found in the CMC of Glaswegian pre-teens [Ryan 2014]),

other -*y* endings, and respellings of *of* (*a* and *ae*) seen in Glesga literature were always preferred to their Lallans alternatives (*-nae/-na*; *o*). The inverse was true for the Scots Network group:

Variant of *of*	**Scottish Twitter Group (tokens)**	**Scots Network Group (tokens)**
a	9	0
ae	6	0
o	0	17

Table 13: A comparison of variants of 'of' *occurring in urban vs. traditional Scots tweets*

The frequency and distinctiveness of lexis used by the Scots Network users was denser than that of the Scottish Twitter users. None of the lexis from Aitken's (1984b) list of 'Ideal Scots' words (see column 1 in Table 4) were found in the Scottish Twitter group, while *brae*, *bairn*, *ken*, and *gey* appeared in the Scots Network dataset. Of the 21 ideal Scots spellings that have Standard English cognates (Aitken's second column), 9 appeared in the Scots Network group, and only 2 in the Scottish Twitter group. This shows a greater use of the 'abstracted', 'at-risk', 'proper' lexis which is typically the preserve traditional writing. Within my own conceptualisation of distinct Scots lexis – items listed in the DSL and also listed as exclusively 'Scottish' or 'obsolete' in the OED – many more appeared among Scots Network users, while the two items in the Scottish Twitter group are recent Glesga words: *clatty* [dirty] and *wean* [child] (the latter is dubbed a "slang" neologism in Macafee 2003: 57).

Finally, Scottish Twitter users never punctuated first-person contractions with apostrophes or capitalisations (*av* [I've], *am* [I'm], *ad* [I'd], and so on), unless the contraction appeared at the beginning of a sentence (where it is likely to be automatically capitalised by correcting software). Scots Network users did so in a great majority of cases, spelling the contractions as *Ah'm* [I'm], *A've* [I've], and so on. While I have not found research or scholarly discussion on this element of punctuation within Scots, it would appear that the Scots Network users take care to produce language that adheres to some of the Standard English written norms which index intelligence and correctness. This is a matter explored in the questionnaire responses in section 6.3.1.

Overall, the Lallans usage appears to be more distant from the everyday spoken Scots of the Central Belt, while phonetic spellings appear to be used to 'capture a voice'. These findings point towards those of the previous two chapters: Scots activism is associated with Lallans, while less dense, phonetic orthography is associated with younger Glaswegians who are apparently uninterested in the Scots language. To understand this picture more completely, this same study collected ideological data via questionnaires, to which I now turn.

6.3 Ideological functions, part 1: 'insider' perspectives on X

6.3.1 'Offline' perspectives from a survey of X users

The sample of authors from the X study (Pottinger 2020) was also selected based on willingness to complete an attitudinal questionnaire. Five of the six Scots Network returned questionnaires, but no Scottish Twitter users could be found who were willing to do so. If we can infer from this that enthusiasm to participate in the study is related to a sense of authority, awareness, or self-identification relating to Scots, and that the inverse is true, then the linguistic-ideological relationship associated with the two writing norms (i.e., that 'Scots' has greater personal and societal importance for Lallans writers than it has for urban phonetic spellers) is supported by the wider context of this thesis. I cannot state with any more confidence the attitudes of Scottish Twitter users since they did not return any questionnaires – an important limitation of this analysis – and their tweet data contained no metalinguistic discourse, while the attitudes of the Scots Network users further suggest a link between prestigious forms of Scots and the desire to raise the status of 'the language'. Follow-up questions were asked via email or X's instant messaging platform to clarify responses and to prompt respondents on specific spellings they had used in tweets.

As with writers and authorities associated with Scots-language institutions elsewhere in this thesis, the Scots Network writers (all of them also involved in those institutions) reported that their written Scots is denser or closer to the Lallans ideal than their spoken Scots is. Through their professions as writers, poets, and teachers, they are expected to be familiar with the current conventions of Lallans. The questionnaire asked: 'do your tweets represent the way you speak?'

> @Gregoire^Savino:[112] I dinnae speik full-braid Lallans [I don't speak full/broad Lallans], though I often write in it. For me, Lallans remains a written tongue (used in my poetry and occasionally on Twitter) just like formal English, confined to my professional —academic — writing.
>
> @Anne^Lamont: There is no standard spelling for Scots, but I believe a standard will be reached if folk conform to 'conventions' so I try to do this on Twitter more.
>
> @Jim^Hastings: whereas I speak (mostly) Glasgow Scots, the Scots I tweet in is a bit more of a pan-dialect effort, with bits and pieces of vocabulary from all over the country – I often write Scots words that I wouldn't always think to use in normal conversation.
>
> @Rhuriadh^Paterson: A scrieve mair Scots than A spik, but A do spik Scots as a teacher [I write more Scots than I speak, but I do speak Scots as a teacher]

To differing extents, at some point all respondents stated that their Scots tweets were not simply representations of speech. This is reflected in the higher number of spellings that did not seem to be pronunciation respellings. Three participants answered a question about the decision to choose the Lallans spelling <ui> (e.g., *schuil* [school]). All suggested that <ui> had some phonetic basis, but also that it reflected a pronunciation other than their own (@Anne^Lamont: "it is another case of spelling not reflecting pronunciation") and they suggested they might use the spelling for reasons of formality or to work towards standardisation.

When asked specifically about motives for using purely symbolic Lallans features – those containing graphemes, digraphs, or full words signalling no phonetic difference from Standard English spellings (e.g., *mon**ie*** [man**y**], *mune* [moon], or traive**ll**s [travel**s**])[113] – the answers given

[112] This answer is taken from a pilot questionnaire returned by a literary scholar and poet in his late 20s, who tweets occasionally in Scots.

[113] These spellings are supported by historical corpora. For instance, the *-t* past tense and past participle endings (e.g., *finisht* [finished]) were common in Early Modern English/Scots (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2006: 256).

stated that they were motivated by historicity and the avoidance of stigma, which reinforced the *languageness* of Scots.

> @Robert^Danielli: Traditional spelling in Scots literature, going back some time in the language…
>
> @Jim^Hastings: I don't write with a view to representing my own Scots pronunciations accurately, any more than I would in English. The reason is that writing in that kind of phonetic way reinforces the notion that Scots isn't really a 'proper' language, just an idiosyncratic way of speaking English.

Some respondents offered Scots dictionaries as an orthographic model. These attitudes appear to be based on conventional notions of literacy and orality, as they relate to legitimacy. @Anne^Lamont, too, lamented the fact that phonetic orthography which deviates from the "conventions" can attract damaging stereotypes. Her own Lallans use bore associations that have been well established in this thesis: Scots-language educational institutions, prestige ("if I really want to impress"), greater degrees of standardisation, and additional effort ("it is still a fact that writing is easier for me in English – I have never been formally taught Scots"). All the while, when moving away from her institutional roles, she maintained Doric pronunciation spellings to communicate with Doric readers.

In a similar way to British Creole writers (Sebba 1998), it seems that symbolic spellings signal these writers' texts as *not English*. However, unlike British Creole, the 'standard' conventions among Scots activists and literary authors are a resource which, supported by lexicographical and historical resources, can take Scots beyond the status of 'dialect'. All respondents mentioned the elevation of Scots as 'a language', and there were suggestions that this could be achieved by avoiding stigmatised phonetic variants and "slang". Respondents also suggested that the use of Lallans could improve their Scots literacy, develop a Scots-language community of practice online, and further establish a set of central written conventions in Scots.

Related to this may be the rather clear distinction between this group of writers and the Scottish Twitter group in their use of punctuation – another feature unrelated to speech. There

were specific worries in this respect – @Robert^Danielli commented: "[t]he capitalisation and apostrophe are now universally IDed as denoting first person pronoun possession. The lower case phoneticisms could easily be read confusingly as their English meanings of am & all. It's lazy. No standardisation includes such lax grammar". Given the more universal association of punctuation with formality, intelligence, and correctness, and some specific recommendations to follow the rules of Standard English in this respect (e.g., Eagle 2022; 2020), we can infer that the Scots Network punctuation usage is taken to be more representative of 'good' Scots.

However, when shown typical examples of Scottish Twitter tweets, the Scots Network participants were also keen to include them in their conceptualisations of 'Scots'. There is yet more evidence here of tolerance and anti-prescriptivism.

> @Jim^Hastings: I don't think how other people use language is really anybody else's business, and Scots speakers are so incessantly stigmatised on the basis of how they speak that the last thing they need is somebody like me coming along and pulling them up on how they write as well.

But given the ever-present paradoxes of authority and of authenticity in Scots writing, there is, in this rather typical response, a typical hesitancy. While he was committed to the above view, @Jim^Hastings also acknowledged: "[t]here's an argument, of course, the [Scottish Twitter tweets] tend to reinforce unhelpful stereotypes about the Scots language – that it's slang, or should be used principally for the purposes of comedy". Cautions were issued against the apologetic apostrophe and phonetic spelling. The phonetic urban style was understood as an unambiguous representation of 'natural' authenticity which indexes particular and sometimes undesirable social symbols. @Anne^Lamont, who took a similar stance against "criticising" other writers, admitted: "I frequently cringe at the poor grammar […] The inconsistent, phonetic spelling worries me […] The often complete lack of punctuation troubles me […] They perpetuate the myth that Scots is bad English, used only by ill-educated, sweary people." @Robert^Danielli, viewing Scottish Twitter tweets as "[d]emeaning racial stereotypes unrepresentative of both

people & language", conceptualised them as "essentially Scots English, as perhaps spoken or written by many young people".

In the questionnaire data, the usual model of modernist differentiation reappears: Lallans is cultivated through – and is an icon of – education, while the humour of Scottish Twitter derives from the emplaced nature of the language used in the tweets. Overall, there was an awareness that the association of phonetic urban Scots with humour, despite the celebration of this humour among some respondents, "does little if anything" to elevate the status of a minority language, "and may well have the opposite effect" (Sebba 2007: 105). Yet, at the same time, most respondents did not want to position themselves as authorities on 'proper Scots', despite their authoritative positions in the movement (as @Jim^Hastings puts it, "somebody like me").

Much like the findings in chapters 4 and 5, the desire to elevate the status of Scots clashed with the rejection of an overbearing, central linguistic authority. The advocacy of a broadly recognisable style of Scots writing is at odds with the preference for Lallans archaisms, with this tension again pivoting on the speech/writing gap and the desire to 'strike the balance' between 'richness' and accessibility:

> @Rhuriadh^Paterson: …A'll tak in wirds A've seen in poetry, texts, dictionaries. For example, A'll use ettlin fer trying, filk mibbe wouldna be used by modren spikkers.
>
> […I'll take words I've seen in poetry, texts, dictionaries. For example, I'll use *ettlin* for *trying*, which might not be used by modern speakers.]

But, elsewhere in the questionnaire:

> A see some o the translations deen, they're deen in a Scots naebdy spiks, and that taks it ower far tae me. It needs tae luik… like fowk spik…
>
> [I see some of the translations done, they're done in a Scots nobody speaks, and that takes it too far for me. It needs to look… like how people speak…]

As ever, it is worth searching for the 'deeper' drivers of this ideological picture; why does it matter, in the first instance, that the status of Scots is raised? At this stage, we might hypothesise that Scots writers of various kinds have personal experience of having their speech

stigmatised. The Scots Network writers spoke mostly in terms of other people who might benefit from their advocacy or teaching, whom they wish to "encourage" to write in Scots, thereby minimising further harm to their "self-esteem". This concern for the lay speaker, based on an ideology of diversity, drives loose and inclusive definitions of Scots (@Jim^Hastings: "[i]f someone identifies as a writer or a speaker of Scots, that's the whole ball game, for me") and celebrates all forms of Scots writing as "brave". But it also motivates what seems to Scots activists, authors, and educators the most effective means of counteracting Scots speakers' experience of being "incessantly stigmatised" – the use of Lallans (cf. fig. 4, chapter 4).

Related to this is the questionnaire respondents' keen awareness of the hegemony of English. Although they generally accommodated the researcher, broader audiences on X, and the linguistic expectations of 'serious' topics by writing in Standard English, the obligation to do so was recognised as the effect of hegemony. @Anne^Lamont expressed a desire to fill out the questionnaire in Scots but feared giving off a "rude or obtuse" air. For @Rhuriadh^Paterson, the use of Scots in all contexts was a means of redressing: he stated that, of the languages he knows, "I feel empowered tae use ony an ilka een finiver A see fit" [I feel empowered to use any and every one whenever I see fit], and that it his "job" to allow children to question the diglossic regulation of Scots by register.

6.3.2 'Online' perspectives from an X thread

To supplement the questionnaire data, pre-existing metalinguistic discourses published online were also collected. By entering the Lallans word *scrieve* [write] into X's search function, a comment thread discussing Scots literacy practices was identified in which there was a degree of ideological consistency among Scots-language insiders, who made up 12 of all 15 commenters. These insiders were identified by their familiarity with and use of Scots, as well as their relationship with the Scots movement – most of the users follow and are followed by well-known

Scots figures and organisations. The dataset comprises 1 tweet and the 42 comments and subcomments it attracted. The original tweet received 157 likes and was retweeted 27 times. Lallans elements are used throughout the author's comments (*scrieve*, <ch>, <ui>, *-it* past tense ending, *o* [of], *leid* [language], *sic* [such], *liken tae* [like *adj*.], *howp* [hope]), alongside the innovative spellings (<oa>; <oo>) that have been adopted by some modern Lallans writers.

The tweet was written by user A, a graphic artist whose work, sometimes written in Lallans, aims to bring a sense of "worth" to "Scottish culture", because Scottish people have been taught to "dismiss, dislike, or even deny" it.[114] The tweet reads:

> Did ye ken that if ye scrieve in the Scots oan here, there are a legion o self-haters ready tae jump tae their keyboards an be dicks aboot it? O course ye did. It's the twitter.
>
> [Did you know that if you write in Scots on here, there's a legion of self-haters ready to jump to their keyboards and be dicks about it? Of course you did. It's twitter.]

Critics of Scots (i.e., those who are "be[ing] dicks") are described as "self-haters". The interactions that follow reveal this to mean that, much like some of the pro-Scots discourses discussed in chapter 3, Scottish people who dislike the notion of a Scots language do so due to an internalised form of colonialism. 5 of the 9 initial replies to the tweet express something along these lines: "meanwhile, many new Scots who lack "the cringe" are more than happy to learn both Scots and Gaelic to make up for those self-hating twats". In one exchange, "the cringe" is associated with an allegedly feigned lack of comprehension of Scots and the denial of its languageness:

> B: And anyone who says they can't understand [Scots] is a dick.
> A: See also "It's not a proper language."
> B: <sighs> I will never understand the cringe.
> A: Naw. Mind, even nou, at times, I hae tae work at no feelin it. Totally ingrained.
> [No. But then, even now, at times, I have to work at not feeling it. Totally ingrained.]

The phenomenon of the 'cultural cringe' may typically be described as a cultural inferiority complex reported in postcolonial societies such as Brazil. In relation to Scots, cringe has been observed, in less stark terms than in this X thread, as a damaging manifestation of

[114] Taken from the artist's website. The quotation has been adapted and the citation withheld in order to better preserve anonymity.

hegemonic culture (English) within the Scots speaker (Niven 1998; Unger 2013). However, there is a conflation of different attitudes towards Scots – different ways of expressing what it means to be a Scots speaker – under a singular understanding of cultural cringe. For instance, in the above discourse of national pride, "cringe" is not viewed with the nuance of poet Raymond Wilson's use of the term. In the interview data collected from creative writers for chapter 4, Wilson framed negative reactions to commercialised, exaggerated, or gimmicky representations of Scottish culture as justifiably cringe-worthy, while others relating to a feeling of cultural inferiority were not, and ought to be overcome. The former referred to Lallans, the latter to speechlike Glesga. Yet the admission in the final comment by the author of the tweet (above) further frames resistance to the Scots movement as a sinister, "totally ingrained" colonial attitude, rather than a lack of identification with archetypal displays of Scottish culture and Scots writing. Similarly, in an interview with John Law[115] – editor of *Lallans* and co-founder of the SLRC (now SLC) – "cringe" is aligned with the accusation of nationalism, while the prospect of Lallans being "put on" is discarded (and therefore so is the possibility that cringe could be a reaction to inauthenticity). I view this simplified portrayal of both identity and language as the *no true Scotsman* argumentation described in chapter 3 of this thesis, which serves ideological interests by erasing scepticism.

But, evidently, not just any negative reaction to depictions of Scottish culture is unjustified in the eyes of Scots activism. As I have discussed, Modernist Scots-language writers thoroughly dismissed Kailyard literature. To the extent that they are attempts at validating identity, I do not see such a great distinction between this response and the reactions of Tom Leonard or James Kelman to the activism of the 20th century, or between the phonetic urban writers of today and their Lallans counterparts. None appear to be timid in their resistance to the hegemony of English. But what separates some writers from others is their divergent views of

[115] https://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/document/?documentid=768
Accessed: 13.07.2024

linguistic authenticity – that is, different ways of using a written form to represent the identity of the social group. The findings of this thesis seem to indicate that it is, to a large extent, a difference in *linguistic* ideologies. Whether phonetic writers' expectation of the 'natural' is in itself a manifestation of the hegemonic culture is, without further evidence, a subjective and moot debate (and, for my part, among the various ideologies found in this thesis I do not think it is a unique case of internalised stigma). Sceptics are not required to subscribe to ideological model(s) of Scots activism as proof of their moral worth. To extrapolate Millar's important observation regarding the categorisation of Scots, the Scottish cultural cringe, too, "has been created [...] not only by an Anglicized political elite, but also by a cadre of language activists whose use of Scots distances them from the usage and experience of native speakers" (2005: 51).

The initial suggestion in the comment thread that Scottish lay people can understand Scots, and therefore that lack of comprehension can only result from feigned misunderstanding, draws on a strategy not yet encountered in this thesis thus far. It appears to relate to the criticism that, by emphasising its archaisms, Scots (and, by association in this case, 'Scottish culture') is damagingly framed as redundant and contrived, perhaps in a similar way to the phonetic authors in chapter 4, or, more emphatically, Tom Leonard. The author of the original tweet aligns this with a denial of Scots's 'language' status. However, as we have seen throughout this thesis, elsewhere such archaisms are employed precisely for the purposes of constructing languageness via *Abstand*. The 'best' forms of Scots are indeed older literary forms not transparent to the average Scottish person, as a later exchange in the comment thread recognises:

> C: Ach awa! They juist leeze thirsels back and belly on a guid collieshangie. [Get away! They're just out to please themselves head to toe with a good row.]
>
> A: Bouin tae yer michty Scots use richt there! [Bowing to your mighty Scots use right there!]
>
> C: Ye cannae gang wrang wi the collogue in RLS and Wattie Scott tae get a richt grip o the leid. [You can't go wrong with the dialogue in Robert Louis Stevenson and Walter 'Wattie' Scott to get a good grip of the language].

In fact, in this case, success and authority in Scots writing seem to derive from opacity itself, rather than a genuine mastery of literary Scots forms; in consultation with two linguists specialising in Scots, one of them an important Scots lexicographer, the exact meaning of the first comment could not be derived (and, therefore, the gloss provided above is a best guess).

Here, the author appears to be using an idiosyncratic, unidiomatic form of Synthetic Scots (i.e., indiscriminately pulling together historical features and neologisms in an *ad hoc* manner). For instance, *leeze* is most likely a variant of *lief is*, from the idiom *lief is me* [dear is to me]. However, the DSL notes that this only has a history of use in the first person, and that there are "various erroneous usages, due to misunderstanding of the orig. construction".[116] A likelihood in this case is that the author had imagined a common origin with *please*. Similarly, *back and belly* appears to have little to no idiomatic basis in Scots or English, and the author appears to be searching for a nonstandard alternative to *all over* or *entirely*. Additionally, as a noun, *collogue* does not seem to have been used to mean *dialogue*, which we can assume is the intended meaning here since Stevenson and Scott reserved the vast majority of their Scots for dialogue.

This appears to be a textbook case of 'overdoing' Scots, which, as we have encountered, is a widely discouraged practice. But, in this case, the author of the original tweet "bow[s]" to this "mighty Scots", likely assuming that greater degrees of *Abstand* indicate mastery. It is highly unlikely that he recognises the language of user C, particularly given his prior admission of modest competence in Scots, which he is "anely juist beginnin tae unnerstand" [only just beginning to understand]. The author confesses to being at the preliminary stages of understanding his "ain leid" [own language]. That this view of language is possible indicates a detachment from the 'natural': again, a learning process is apparently required in order to achieve self-realisation by accessing the 'richest' and 'best' domains of Scots literacy.

[116] https://dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/lief
Accessed: 06.11.2023

Perhaps it is for this reason that he associates distance from everyday spoken Scots in the Central Belt, in an abstract sense, with authority and authenticity-as-a-project, although the specific conventions of this 'high' form of Scots remain relatively vague. There are two objections to the author's spellings, one from a strict Lallans perspective, the other from an urban phonetic one. The author responds, three times in total, by acknowledging the variability of Scots, even celebrating it as a "wunnerfu thing" [wonderful thing]. But, in doing so, he suggests there is a learning process involved: "there's nae yin codified version o Scots, so it can be a challenge tae translate" [there's no single codified version of Scots, so it can be a challenge to translate]. As a learners' guide, he recommends Andy Eagle's website, whose resources are based on a relatively narrow set of 18th-century Lallans spellings.

Responding to the conceptualisation of a learnable Scots literacy as requiring care and effort to master, one anti-Scots commenter frames this effort as petty: "this tweet took you at least twice as long to write as it would if you had used proper English" and "no need to over-ride the spell checker".[117] The use of Scots online is viewed as unnecessary. The author of the tweet responds: "ah didnae want tae uise English, ah wantit tae uise Scots. And naw it didnae. Thanks for provin ma point, tho" [I didn't want to use English, I wanted to use Scots. And no it didn't. Thanks for proving my point, though]. Since he does not write in particularly dense Scots, this is not necessarily a direct contradiction of his earlier comment that he is "only just beginning to understand" Scots. Nevertheless, as a means of 'hitting back' at the commenter, his presentation of Scots as 'natural' rather than effortful does appear to be at odds with framings of 'good' Scots elsewhere in the ideological data.

In sum, by employing conflicted and ideologically interested rhetoric, Scots literacy is framed variably and selectively as something recognisable and 'natural' to all Scots, but also as something accessible only to those with a mastery of historical forms (the irony being that those forms were misused in this case). Particularly when this X thread is viewed as a whole, in which

[117] This account was suspended by X at some point after 2020. The data, which can no longer be attributed to an X account, was collected beforehand.

the majority of commenters share a similar ideological stance, the consistent application of concepts such as authenticity, *Abstand*, tradition, and so on are starkly secondary to the underlying ideology of cultural and political sovereignty. This is a departure from the institutional trend. The author of the original tweet appears to move easily between these framings as and when different arguments supporting the Scots-as-a-language position call for it; indeed, an appeal to postcolonial rights is the trump card for counterarguments to linguistic reasoning.

In this particular group of insiders, Scots is aligned with the type of cultural holism seen among 20th-century Scots activists, set within a contemporary wave of nationalist sentiment. The relatively narrow loss of the pro-independence campaign in the Scottish referendum in 2014 was followed by the 2016 British vote in favour of leaving the European Union (EU) by around 52%. Since the great majority of 'leave' voters were distributed throughout England, the decision to leave the EU was seen by many pro-independence Scots as an affront to Scottish cultural and political agency (and therefore provided cause for a second referendum on independence). The deployment of a narrative in which Scottish Scots sceptics are "self-hating", the alignment of political and cultural pride with both Scots and Gaelic, and an investigation of commenters' X profiles confirms a prevalent 'hard' nationalist position. Of the commenters, 5/12 Scots-language insiders declared a pro-independence stance in their X bios, three of whom denigrated anti-Scots viewpoints. 11/26 of those who retweeted the original tweet support the *Yes* vote for independence or the pro-independence political party Alba in their bios. 8 more make some reference to Scottish pride, while the remaining 7 offer no immediate view on nationalist politics. This interpretation must, however, be taken with caution; this represents a very small sample and it is worth repeating that nationalist 'hardliners' represent a small subsection of the Scots movement, most of whom – particularly those closely tied to Scots publishing, education, and institutions – would likely disapprove of such reductive and politicised attitudes. Nevertheless, the existence of these attitudes and their prevalence in the dataset cannot be ignored.

6.4 Ideological functions, part 2: ‘outsider’ perspectives in Instagram threads

Within the same X comment thread, there was one unambiguous outsider: “I’m American, interested in and enchanted by all things Scottish. I love figuring out what you’re saying, and learning a few words in the process.” The first sentence provides a complement to the other commenters’ ideologies of national holism, in which ‘Scots’ represents Scottish culture, and vice versa. To love one is to love the other, but also, as some insiders made clear, to hate one is to hate the other. The ‘love’ element in this equation seems to appeal to this American commenter, who wishes to engage with and consume a held notion of Scotland. In this section, which offers a complementary analysis of outsiders’ perspectives, this type of caledophilia is explored in more detail alongside other responses to the dissemination of Scots online.

In a similar fashion to the X comment thread, this analysis investigates how internet users publicly discuss and position Scots through metalinguistic discourses on social media. The data comprised of 522 comments taken from the first four ‘Scotstober’ Instagram posts by popular Scots activist, poet, and personality Len Pennie. Scotstober is an initiative set up by the SLC in which social media users are encouraged to use a given Scots word, normally in a written text, for each day of October. Pennie’s contributions, which take the form of instructional videos with example sentences, were uploaded to Instagram throughout October 2023 and attributed to both Len Pennie’s account (@misspunnypennie; over 500,000 followers)[118] and that of the SLC (@scotslanguage; over 2,000 followers). Both are public accounts.

Except for the example sentences containing the target language, each post is mostly spoken and written in SSE. Like the vast majority of Pennie’s videos, these were in a mixed media format that show Pennie speaking to the camera with subtitles underneath. The subtitles appear to be edited (i.e., not automated) since the example sentences or words in the videos are often

[118] All figures relating to this dataset are as of 15.11.2023.

spelled with Lallans features, sometimes also written with IPA phonetic transcription. In a similar way to Emma Grae (chapter 4), Pennie now combines phonetic conventions with learned Lallans spellings in her published work (e.g., Pennie 2024), whereas her earlier YouTube videos from 2020 contained fewer deviations from Standard English, and even included 'apologetic' apostrophes. In this analysis, Instagram was selected for its apparently greater popularity and broader reach than other social media platforms: the four Instagram posts contained an average of 131 comments and 8,256 likes per post, while the same videos uploaded to both X and TikTok received significantly fewer likes and comments. This is generally true for all of Pennie's videos, some of which have received a much greater response on Instagram than the videos included in this dataset.

Since the online Scots-language content which has the broadest reach tends to be of this mixed media type, a similar data source existing solely as written text was not available. Nevertheless, comments on the videos indicate that audiences engage with the target language of each video as a piece of written text, as well as speech. In addition, the mixed media format allows for an analysis of the speech/writing intersection, which has been an important facet of interpreting ideologies so far in this thesis and provides insight into a contemporary digital reality: that metalinguistic discourses "are articulated collaboratively and multimodally" (Barton & Lee 2013: 112). Nothing is inferred about the identity of the Instagram commenters beyond what is expressed in the comments. Given that this analysis uses direct quotation, this is an ethical advantage, however, it presents a difficulty to the extent that commenters' knowledge of Scots cannot always be speculated upon. Again, I have relied on discursive data within the comments to inform on this matter.

Pennie positions herself as a Scots educator, with the ability to write, teach, and answer questions on Scots, although she does not seem to correct others' usage. In the Instagram videos, linguistic terminology works to legitimate knowledge and reinforce her position of authority,

which – while advocating “fun with the Scots language, that’s the only rule” – is also achieved by her alignment with Scots-language institutions. Using the first-person plural pronoun, Scotstober is described as an initiative “where we encourage Scots speakers, Scots learners, and anybody else who wants to give Scots a go”. The SLC, which is the primary resource centre for Scots, must have agreed for these instructive posts to appear on their page. In each post, Pennie slows down her speech on the first and second repetition of the example sentence and tells the audience: “doesn't (/dɪzni/) matter if you don't (/dɪni/) get it right the first time”. Within this framing, her models are “right”. But this comment also fosters a supportive environment that many commenters appreciated, co-constructing Pennie’s authority in their responses.

Some commenters showed signs of participating in the “web as a classroom” for minority languages (Heyd & Mair 2014), specifically in literacy: “[Scotstober] sounds like the perfect "challenge" to combine with my calligraphy”. There are limits, however, to the effectiveness of language learning via Pennie’s posts: commenters using the target language mostly parroted or made minor changes to the example sentences. One commenter appeared not to consider remote learning a possibility: “I’d only love to learn the language. But living in Ireland, I can’t even find a place to learn gaeilge [Irish Gaelic] ”. Pennie’s authority overlaps with her unambiguous Scot-as-a-language stance. In keeping with institutional discursive strategies, in the day 3 post she uses etymological reasoning and historicity to indicate that *bangster* is a Scots word unrelated to the English *gangster*.

The popularity of Pennie’s Instagram posts suggests an audience far beyond that of an online Scots-language community of practice – and far beyond Scotland. This prediction was confirmed upon analysis of the data, in which the number of comments that discussed Scots, were written in Scots, or that displayed a basic knowledge of Scots was relatively low. There was one exchange that appeared to belong to a Scots-language community:

A: [user B tagged] are ye daein Scotstober? [are you doing Scotstober?]

> B: I love iss!! Didnae ken aboot it … or the word ‘fain’ … Ats new ane tae me. Cheers Quine!! [I love this!! I didn’t know about it … or the word ‘fain’ … That’s a new one to me. Thanks Quine!!]

Additionally, there were some responses obviously written with a working knowledge of Scots conventions, sometimes displaying the typical sentiments of a Scots activist: “I also went through a Scottish education system that did it's best to eradicate oor ain leid [our own language]”. Otherwise, users often seemed to be either novices or ‘outsiders’ of some kind. In the first instance, many commented with basic questions about Gaelic, which Pennie is asked in every post. Despite Pennie’s clear and frequent conceptualisations of Scots, and corrective feedback from herself or other Instagram users, a significant number still assumed that Scots and Gaelic are the same:

> I just wanted to say that I love your videos and that you and your accent are bòidheach (I hope that I didn’t misspell it but in case I did mean beautiful let me know if I used the correct Gaelic spelling or not)

Much of the metalinguistic commentary sought to establish links between the day’s Scotstober word and the commenter’s language variety: German, Dutch, Swedish, and Irish, North American, or Lancashire English. For a significant number, Scotstober words represented a touching reminder of older Scottish relatives. Elsewhere, the presence of members of the Scottish diaspora was salient, particularly from North America, Australia, and New Zealand, all of them responding in English but enthusiastic about positive representations of Scottish identity and culture.

> I may be an Australian, but I'm Scottish by blood … God bless Scotland!
>
> This is making me feel my Scottish roots. Clan Stevenson descendant here.
>
> I love these so much! I'm only 7% Scottish, not a lot but enough to be excited about! I live in and grew up in America and I have red curly hair so growing up I was constantly being asked if I had an Irish background, which I do, but as soon as Brave came out, now people ask me if I'm Scottish. So now I'm going to use these videos to improve my Scottish vocab to impress/surprise people

Frequently, a desire to embody or reclaim Scottishness and “Scottish roots” was expressed. In the final quote above, engagement with Scots in this way follows on from the popularity of the 2012

animated film *Brave*, which is filled with stereotypical Scottish symbols and motifs. In an effort to align themselves with Scottish identity, some of those that claimed Scottish heritage expressed a desire to learn Scots and the Scotstober words, despite the fact that *fain* [pleased], *gey* [very], *aye* [always], or *stammergastit* [flabbergasted] cannot be considered common lexical items in Scotland, as one of the apparently knowledgeable Scots commenters noted: "Ats new ane tae me" [that's a new one to me]. In other words, some seemed to assume that adopting the Scotstober words would align them with Scottish national culture by virtue of those words' distinction from English.

Beyond those claiming Scottish heritage, expressions of caledophilia signalled an outsiders' view of Scots as an icon of authentic national culture. These were common, with commenters often leaving blue hearts and Saltire emojis in their messages. These were sometimes accompanied by expressions of reverence: "[t]he Scots- none better, few equal"; "[i]s it possible to be officially converted from American to Scottish? Len has sold me." These sentiments were frequently made in reference to Pennie's SSE "accent" – "I could just listen to you talk for the rest of my life. Sincerely, someone with an awful Australian accent "; "I could listen to you read the phone book"; and several other comments referencing Scottish accents in popular culture. These accents were indexed as "cute", "adorable", "hot", or "beautiful". Similar sentiments were found in comment threads responding to YouTube extracts of films (including *Brave*) that feature Scottish characters; Cutler reports that "playful dialect performances and metalinguistic commentary are part of the enregistering process, further fixing viewers' associations between Scottish accents and particular social attributes" (Cutler 2016: 75), such as social and sexual attractiveness. Several comments acknowledged the role of Instagram in disseminating these indexical links: "I love when the Scots word of the day is in my feed"; "[t]he regular Scottish language updates are a welcome regular feature to brighten my day ". Overall, this type of response appeared to reinforce the status of Scots as an authentic accent or dialect of English.

These comments were all written in English. However, nonstandard comments were not infrequent among those who did not seem practiced in Scots. They practiced the Scotstober words, often self-consciously, by miming the structure in Pennie's example sentences, or by using the target word in an otherwise Standard English sentence. There were also instances of parody or kitsch imitation ("och aye bonnie fine lassie"), as well as word play ("how you doon?"). Humorous orthographic dialect performances of a similar type to that reported by Cutler (2016), using capitalisation and prosodic spellings, occurred in some of the numerous references to Groundskeeper Willie – a culturally and linguistically exaggerated Scottish character from the American TV cartoon *The Simpsons* (who is, in one comment, shown to be selling haggis in a GIF).

These responses, alongside further references to stereotypical representations of Scottishness, such as ruggedness in the film *Braveheart* or attractiveness in the TV show *Outlander*, serve as a reminder that commenters' ideologies and literacies are *situated*. That is, they are partially constructed by international mass media representations and discourses of Scottish language. This was the case despite the fact that none of the TV and film characters mentioned speak Scots. In at least one reply, Pennie seemed to enjoy these references nevertheless. These representations are also commercialised in advertising. The same exaggerated symbolism which Antony Flew drew upon in his *no true Scotsman* fallacy, discussed the introduction to this thesis, are relevant to Scots: the American-owned Scott's Porage Oats, which continues to feature its iconically brawny Scottish character wearing a kilt and putting a shot, has begun to include passages in Scots on the packaging. I have encountered negative responses to this online from the perspective of the Scots speaker, viewing the language as both inaccurate and inauthentic based on specific linguistic analysis and the fact that the porridge company is not Scottish.

Overall, there were far more positive comments than negative ones. In fact, by far the greatest discursive theme among commenters was the desire to express support and admiration

for Pennie and her enterprise, suggesting that most do not wish to consciously stigmatise Scots. Many commenters sought to engage with the framing of 'Scots' in the videos. Pennie herself takes a clear Scots-as-a-language stance, referring to "the Scots language", "Scots learners", and "Scots speakers". In her replies to commenters, she is more explicit: "Scots and irish are unrelated languages". In keeping with the linguistic trends observed so far in this thesis, this position is aligned with the modelling of denser Lallans (in bold): "A'm **aye giy fain** tae see ye" [I am always very glad to see you].

For the most part, there is no resistance to Pennie's conceptualisation, with responses often referring to Scots in highly abstract terms or offering linguistic anecdotes. On day 3, for instance, the word *bangster* is described by Pennie as etymologically distinct from *gangster*, and the distinctiveness of Scots from English is once again emphasised. The comments are populated by titbits relating to etymology, false cognates, and false friends. However, there is also some active reinforcement when commenters reference Scots as a 'language' or position it separately to English or Gaelic. At times, this positioning was achieved when learning Scots was spoken of as one might discuss learning a second language: "[t]his truly made our day! My daughter and I just started learning Scots together".

Reinforcement of Pennie's stance is related to the authority conferred upon her. Unsurprisingly, given the 'outsider' status of many commenters, all manner of questions appeared in relation to Scots, to the extent that some users argued over whether these requests were excessive. Mostly, questions were posed in reference to the nature of Scots and its relationship with other varieties in Scotland and across the world. Less frequently, there were specific questions relating to lexis, syntax, and orthography:

> D: What is the function of the giy before fain? Is it just like "very"?
>
> @misspunnypennie: Yes! An intensifier like very or really
>
> E: [user A tagged] thank you for asking, i had the same question.

A quotation given earlier, in which a commenter asked to have their Gaelic spelling checked, is a rather stark example of the assumed linguistic authority of Pennie. Emphasising limited linguistic and cultural knowledge of Scots and presenting oneself as modest further serve the ideological function of positioning her as an expert; questions were often qualified with self-deprecating statements such as: “I'm embarrassed to ask this, i should probably know…”; “Why do i have to ask this?”; “This may be a silly question, but…”.

In addition, language forms modelled by Pennie were mostly uncontested, much less so than in ‘insider’ discourses: “[t]hanks for all your videos and teaching us how to speak proper”. Commenters accepted and repeated the forms, including when an uncommon spelling was used (*giy* rather than *gey* [very]). Instances of resistance to Pennie’s authority or positioning of Scots were rare, and mostly challenged by herself and other commenters, both when they were flippant (“the sentence is gibberish to me unfortunately”) and when they were more informed. In the following example, one user seemed to suggest that Scots is not a discrete language. No comments followed Pennie’s reply:

> F: With all respect, Scots is a derivative of Northumbrian dialect. There are still many words that are the same, e.g. bairn.
> @misspunnypennie: Did you think I was unaware of the origins of Scots? I've done many posts on the relationship between Scots and English, and it is a relationship I embrace, not deny. Being a derivative of something does not mean that's where the language development stopped.

“Paying attention to how talking about one’s knowledge, or lack of knowledge, of a language can serve meaningful social purposes when participating in Web 2.0 spaces” (Barton & Lee 2013: 110). In this case, discourses of knowledge are a negotiation of linguistic and ideological authority in which Pennie mostly prevails.

Since commenters felt mostly positive towards Pennie, were keen to index Scottishness, and assumed Pennie’s authority as an expert or educator of Scots, they would seem to have little reason to scrutinise her idea of what Scots is, or the correctness of the target language. While some asked for the ‘correct’ singular spellings or pronunciations of individual Scots words they

had heard, commenters were only partially interested in the details of that target language – arguably less so than the indexing of Scots and SSE as a whole. Of the negative reactions, some were motivated by apparent misogyny[119] or predicated on the commenter's own knowledge of Scots. The outsiders' passivity contrasts somewhat with insider perspectives, where authority and correctness are difficult questions that appear rarely in the Instagram data: "A aweys spelt it "gey" wi an e" [I always spelt it *gey* with an <e>].

Given the clear link in the data between Scots and an abstract, holistic, exaggerated form of Scottishness, and despite the fact that within Scotland and within the Scots movement this link is widely problematic, Pennie's linguistic authority closely relates to an authenticity of identity tied to physical space. In the same way that overseas commenters who claim Scottish heritage emphasise their limited knowledge of Scots, they are also sometimes bashful about the tenuousness of their connection to Scotland. Contrastingly, Pennie is told: "Your a fine ambassadora for your heritage ". This relationship between physical space (i.e., those having grown up in Scotland), Scottish themes and culture, and authentic use of Scots echoes the attempts of Wikipedians to identify appropriate Scots-language editors and themes in chapter 5.

6.5 Conclusion: no simple story of Scots online

In a *Wall Street Journal* article (Hookway 2021) shared widely within the Scots movement, which was published during the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow, the author seeks to offer a balanced

[119] While the role of misogyny does not seem central to the relationship between usage and ideology in Scots, or to the construction of Scots-language ideologies, I note here that, of those users who do not receive Pennie's posts in the spirit of instruction and activism with which they are intended, some frequently express misogyny. Pennie's temporary departure from X was, by all accounts, a result of this type of abuse. Scots-language activist and folk singer Iona Fyfe, who is frequently subject to similar instances of abuse, has commented on the matter: "they don't go after the men, though […] So is it because [Pennie] is young, pretty and has red hair? Absolutely it is" (Hookway 2021). By this account, since there seems to be asymmetrical access to authority based on gender, misogyny is one driver of the delegitimisation of Scots online. An analysis of this dynamic in its own right, and of the reported instances of other types of identity-based abuse directed at Scots writers, would be a welcome complement to this thesis.

explanation of the emergence of Scots online. There is, as there was in most of the data collected for this chapter, a mostly positive framing of Scots online and of the enterprise of social media 'influencers' such as Len Pennie. Scots is given 'language' status and, despite an arguably damaging taxonomy of "Glasgow slang", Glesga is considered part of a 'Scots language' that is often unintelligible to the outsiders for whom the article is intended. The article accurately recognises the primary driver of Scots activism as the validation of everyday Scots speech; the Scots Network respondents to this chapter's ideological questionnaire suggested that there are inherently positive and progressive rewards to developing one's Scots literacy – increased feelings of empowerment and high self-esteem for those who have had their speech denigrated. Critics of Scots are mentioned twice in the article: firstly represented as parochial and prejudiced, then as hard-line unionists cynical about "identity politics" and nationalism following Brexit. There is evidence to support the existence of both of these critical trends, which are invoked here to echo the situation as described by activists. But this description provides an incomplete picture.

I include the *Wall Street Journal* piece in these concluding comments not only to provide a final piece of summative data, but to show why more detailed scholarly analysis has been necessary for a situation in which verbal hygiene practices are complex and relatively complicated. In its attempt to succinctly assess ideological drivers of Scots online, the article ends up telling its own oversimplified 'story of Scots', falling short is in its deployment of metalinguistic discourse to support the cause of the Scots movement. Most importantly, it frequently conflates Lallans and Glesga, as well as Scots writing and Scots speech, in such a way that important ideological differences remain unexplored. For example, one critic of the Scots movement is quoted:

> "The more nationalists try to force our identity as 'real Scots,' by pushing words that are only part of our identity, reviving dead words and even making up words," he says, "the more ordinary people will feel they can't use the Scots words they grew up with, lest they be tagged as grievance-ridden nationalists."

While this particular critic has a staunch unionist bent, his criticism accurately identifies the same linguistic and ideological practices observed in the X comment thread. And while those most central to the Scots movement strive to divorce language and national identity, the revival and reattribution of “dead words” and historical spellings is common practice *when writing in Lallans*. This critic feels there is no place for ‘natural’ language or hybridity. Yet, the riposte given in Hookway’s article references *everyday spoken Scots*: “’It's just how a lot of us speak. It's the linguistic reality of Scotland today,’ said Michael Dempster”.

The rationalisations provided echo some of those found in this chapter which contribute to a problematic interaction between ideologies of Scots. Polarising visions of national identity are upheld via troubled metalinguistic analyses, much like in the X comment thread, where ‘hard’ nationalists were selective in their linguistic ideologies to the point of contradiction. A salient contradiction was between ‘natural’ and contrived Scots. The article’s reductive linguistic discussion is also an example of how the impulse to be supportive of minority culture and language can, in the uncritical conferral of authority upon Scots-language activists, lead to an unfaithful understanding of their views and language use. In the case of the Instagram comment thread, outsiders to the Scots movement make positive holistic associations between Scots, Gaelic, Scotland, and stereotypical cultural symbolism. However, across the case studies of this thesis, the closer I have moved to the institutions leading the Scots movement, the fewer overt expressions of national culture I have found.

There are also two important omissions in the article that, incidentally or by design, are inconvenient to a positive framing of Scots online. The first is the perennial problem of ‘civic nationalist Scots’. The typical combination of employing Lallans for the development of a Scots literacy while attempting to decentralise the regulation of linguistic forms not only creates conflict but can ignore those Scots speakers and writers to whom Lallans does not speak. Beyond polarised discussions around nationalism, innovative urban styles of Scottish writing online seem to correlate somewhat with an indifference to or alienation from institutional representations of

Scots. This sense of alienation is suggested in the linguistic part of the unionist's argument, quoted above. An important limitation to this chapter is the relatively small amount of metalinguistic data in this respect, which proved difficult to collect online; further research into the attitudes of young Scottish people towards Lallans would greatly inform the debate.

The second omission is humour, a matter which the article in *The Face* embraces, celebrating Scottish Twitter as an expression of national culture and a means of raising awareness of 'the Scots language'. In my view, this celebration is wishfully manufactured, subsuming an undesirable and inconvenient consequence of authenticity into the celebration of a minority language project. Many other articles and online discussions do not associate the language of Scottish Twitter with 'Scots', and I have not seen evidence that the authors of the tweets themselves make this association; there is some suggestion that they do not. The questionnaire data provided by Scots activists does not look upon this humour favourably, showing concern for its potential to damage the status of Scots. It is precisely this anxiety around the perceived negative consequences of an ideology of 'natural' authenticity which drives a great deal of verbal hygiene. Finally, parodies in Instagram comments – belonging to a different linguistic category, but similarly humorous – did not show evidence of engagement with Scots as a minority language project, often referencing mass media representations of TV and film characters who do not themselves speak Scots. None of this is to say that Scottish Twitter does not have – and I hypothesise that, for its authors, it is likely to have – some value in asserting and validating a certain type of working-class urban identity, perhaps even a national one. It does, however, support the thesis that Lallans and rural dialects prevail as the archetypal forms of 'Scots' and 'the Scots language', despite attempts at more inclusive definitions.

In sum, there is no simple 'story' that can be told of Scots online. On a case-by-case basis, we may find specific attitudes and linguistic trends associated with specific groups – those associated with liberal-minded Scots activists being perhaps the clearest. But in the commonplace

impulse to ‘tidy up’ usage and attitudes at a greater level of generality, one inevitably runs the risk of misunderstanding and misrepresenting the intentions and beliefs of both Scots writers and their critics. Ironically, the manifestation of these intentions and beliefs are themselves attempts to tell stories of Scots; for activists, that it is a distinct language, that it comes with a proud tradition, but also that it is the property of all manner of Scots speakers of different backgrounds. In the interplay between insiders and outsiders and their respective sub-groups on democratic social media platforms, these ideologies vary depending on one’s conception of national politics, of the nation of Scotland, and of minority-language identity, negating one another in their respective attempts to reduce the phenomena.

7 ‘A’ is for authority: anonymity, authenticity, *Ausbau,* and *Abstand*.

The Scots movement finds itself facing a trade-off of authority which results from oppositions between the modernist conceptualisation of a legitimate ‘language’ and the ability of ‘natural’ authenticity to index speaker identity. On the one hand, a progressive liberal attitude of diversity so characteristic of minority-language activism seeks to collapse the distinctions of legitimacy represented by the ‘axis of modernity’: each speaker and writer has as great a claim to legitimacy as any other person, no matter which form of Scots they produce. Scots authorities, it is suggested, should not pursue homogeneity at the expense of the movement’s goal of empowerment by minimising the agency of speakers and writers. The negative experiences of those speakers and writers historically have, in the current political zeitgeist, contributed to this attitude of diversity, which believes that Scots speakers ought not to accept the hegemony of English by existing in opposition to it as incomplete, lesser social actors. Yet, to the *de rigueur* desire to elevate the status of Scots to that of a ‘language’ for these same purposes, it is precisely the dominant configuration of standard language ideology within the modernist axis which appeals, and the differentiated configuration of illegitimacy which causes anxiety. Within the modernist framework there is an assumption that the continuation of the tradition of Scots literacy is necessary, and that this ought to be distinct from both Standard English and everyday Scots speech. This can, appropriately, be achieved via legitimating historical forms, which mimic classical etymological spelling systems such as those of English or French.

Scots must manage not only this trade-off between singularity and plurality, as it seems European minority languages in general inevitably must, but it seems to be further burdened by conflict due to the fact of its ambiguous linguistic bounds and proximity to English, the dominant language, in the majority of spoken forms. This appears to give the Scots movement further cause to seek distinctiveness, or *Abstand*, and it finds recourse specifically in the arena of literacy,

where graphemic symbolism and linguistic revivalism can be exploited. However, everyday spoken Scots, particularly the popular urban varieties – which are widely recognisable, but characteristically unlike the received understanding of Scots as a language rooted in pre-industrial forms – are especially problematic in this respect. Hence, there is an impulse to move away from 'natural' forms of language. In the modernist configuration, the ideological differences between features of Lallans and features of written Glesga become, via fractal recursion, a difference in the received notions of literacy and orality, respectively. Conversely, the postmodern impulse is to remedy past subordination of Glesga by including it as a "100% valid" written dialect of 'the Scots language'. As metadiscursive double consciousness creates shifting notions of legitimacy to satisfy both of these opposed impulses, down to the definition of 'Scots' itself, the commitment to intra-group diversity is only partial, as is the persistence of the concept of 'bad Scots'.

Within Scots activism, metadiscourses and written forms are mobilised to construct languageness, which serves as an indirect means of achieving the movement's ultimate goal of having everyday Scots speakers of all types validated. Through the lens of verbal hygiene, discursive patterns were revealed in which the ideological conflicts within this practice are either veiled by rhetorical strategies, or an alternative 'third way' is sought which might overcome, for instance, the 'realism versus idealism' described by Scots lexicographers. This attempt to reconcile two opposed phenomena has been missing from discussions of Scots, which tend to portray a more overtly binary situation characterised by the practices of the late 20th century.

One such 'third way' is the attempt to strike a balance between the authority of naturalist authenticity expected by speakers (who, if they are to have their spoken Scots validated, feel they must be able to identify with and recognise the 'voice on the page') and that of both anonymity and *Abstand*, intertwined as they are with the ideology of authenticity as a project. All of these latter functions find expression in Lallans, precisely because it is relatively distant from both Standard English and undesirable phonetic or pseudo-phonetic written forms. Ultimately it seems

that, so long as Lallans remains an ideal within the Scots movement for these reasons, commonly-held notions of 'natural' authenticity outside the movement – among lay Scottish people, phonetic writers, internet users, and in news reports – will continue to provide a source of tension. This constitutes a more complex contemporary ideological split.

Nevertheless, spellings that are both traditional and transparent to the average Scottish reader are considered "easy wins", which the Scots movement hopes will successfully strike the balance by satisfying the conditions of both distinctiveness and familiarity. These include, among others: <ui>, <ch>, some *-t* past markers, <y>, and select spellings such as *throu*. They indicate either no sound changes for the reader or are of ambiguous phonetic status. The virtues of these spellings are often taken for granted within the Scots movement, either requiring no argument in their favour, or presented as self-evident.

A discourse of authenticity-as-a-project surrounds preferred spellings and lexis: that they are "rich", old, literary, and traditional to Scotland and Scottish history, and that cultivation of these forms constitutes a form of self-realisation. This appears alongside discourses of anonymity, which advocate those same linguistic forms because they are supposedly pan-dialectal, appropriate for expository prose, and neutral. If there is a contradiction between these discourses, they may still be viewed as two sides of the same verbal hygiene coin in their attempts to elevate the status of Scots literacy and abstract it somewhat from speech. Although the spellings I have identified here form the backbone of the current Scots 'standard', they are few in number. Writers must still attempt to navigate 'the balance' in every grapheme and lexical choice, which results in common practices that are not so "easy", such as the use of *ilka* either for /itʃ/ or its "never heard" phonetic representation as /ɪlkə/.

So, it is unclear whether this 'third way', which is the preferred model of Scots literacy, can be found and the possibility of doing so is doubted by some outside the mainstream movement. Hence, a significant obstacle will be to convince speakers that written Scots can

appropriately fulfil referential functions and be used in the full range of registers alongside English – some research has indicated that many people do not think it can. The evidently doxic assumption that they ought to be convinced implies a form of erasure which resides in the modernist impulse to construct a 'language'. Typically, neither the intransigent 'old school' nor the attentive 'new school' of Scots activism accept scepticism in this respect, whether by recourse to the metadiscursive double consciousness mentioned earlier, or to simplified and presumptuous mobilisations of shame or 'cultural cringe'. This is what I have referred to as a *no true Scotsman* strategy: a rhetorical means of ignoring or transforming elements which do not fit the "interpretive structure" (Irvine & Gal 2000: 38). The sceptics' discourse of authenticity as the 'essential' voice is erased and replaced by one of authenticity as a revivalist project, or one of anonymity. Furthermore, supporters of the movement, both inside and outside of it, do not always share its 'apolitical', civic vision, displaying instead nationalist and essentialist perspectives that have been disowned by the movement.

Related to this is the difficult issue of standardisation, in which individual and central authority are in conflict. Tenets of diversity – variation and the democratisation of power – appear to be in constant tension with the hierarchical modernist conception of what a powerful language 'is' and what it ought to 'do'. This can be seen in the SLC's conflicted attitude to its own authority and an endless circularity in which neither the virtues of standardisation nor of variation can be renounced. Again, metadiscourses attempted to find a way around this: activists spoke of 'community' or 'consensus norms', or 'sensible writing' rather than 'standard'. When 'standard' was used, Scots authorities were adamant that the specific norms were mere suggestions. However, the very idea of expanding the literacy of a minority language to displace the corresponding majority language in the full range of written genres and registers is predicated on anonymity and the perceived requirement of an authoritative standard. There is no assurance here that the fundamental conflict has been overcome, and the impasses persist.

In providing these observations, this thesis has made necessary contributions to knowledge. It provides a thorough treatment of the problems which the Scots movement faces, and seeks to overcome, by adopting a language ideology approach. Such movements are, after all, established on ideological grounds. Specifically, Scots is presented as a new case study for an emerging focus in sociolinguistics on how minority-language movements approach the conflicts of diversity in the contemporary world. This thesis has scrutinised the narratives and assumptions of the metadiscourses therein, which pervade minority-language activism more broadly. It has considered the practices which are erased by these narratives and assumptions – not in order to render minority-language activism a failure, but to accurately assess the problems it faces and unwittingly perpetuates. In sociolinguistic research into minority-language activism there is some reluctance to consider these problems.

Hence, this study contributes to a developing field of investigation into the underlying motivations for normativity, at a granular level. Some prior research has alluded to verbal hygiene within Scots literacy, but the cultural drivers and the specific linguistic features to which it relates have not been adequately described. It has become abundantly clear that assessing the trajectory of minority languages must view a given variety as a product of its own – highly specified – linguistic and social context, and case-specific detail is often the tone of contemporary comparative approaches (and the *raison d'être* of those building a broader theory of language ecology [cf. Vandenbussche, Trudgill, & Jahr 2013: 11-12]). This study of Scots complements collected volumes, monographs, and articles which have developed the field of minority-language standardisation (e.g., Deumert & Vandenbussche's [2003] and Linn & McLelland's [2002] edited books, which incorporate minority varieties, including Scots, into the many Germanic varieties covered).

This study also contributes to a body of research which views literacy as a social practice situated in both dominant and vernacular forces. This project shows literacy to play a particularly

marked role for a non-dominant cultural group, since it is believed to help achieve forms of legitimacy and distinctiveness that spoken language cannot. The minority-language project in question relies on literacy for the pursuit of its goals.

The questions raised by this thesis could be clarified by further research. For activists, applied linguists, and sociolinguists, further attitudinal data from phonetic writers and lay speakers would be welcome. In particular, Costa's (2024) language ontology framework may inform with greater nuance on why many Scottish people have not been more motivated by the approach of Scots activism. There ought not to be an assumption that speakers do not understand how and why their language variety constitutes a 'language' rather than a 'dialect' or 'slang'; they may understand "too well" (Ibid.: 18) and disagree with the narratives of language authorities. The fixation on 'language' in this thesis is closely related to stigma. So, it would also be useful to better understand the attitudes of non-speakers; I have found that some discourses of stigma within the Scots movement do not coincide with the fact that most 'outsider' attitudes towards Scots which I have encountered seem to be positive (if often misinformed). Activists and advocates themselves have suggested that the perception of stigma may be overly acute (Future of Scots 2023), but there ought not to be an assumption that this would render the Scots movement any less valid in its principles.

In either case – for non-speakers and speakers outside the movement, whose attitudes are an important concern for activists – it may be useful to question the assumed links between stigma, languageness, and the ultimate goal of the Scots movement. For instance, will attitudes and uptake improve sufficiently once Scots achieves languageness (in the collective mind) and once a corresponding tradition of literacy based on the modernist model has been better established? Can self-realisation be achieved without a corresponding body of expository prose, or even without language status? Does stigma truly have a causal relationship with the regulation of, say, the apologetic apostrophe? And can the movement have its objectives met by a greater

commitment to a polynomic Scots, or a more radical approach to the value of taxonomy? All of these questions have already been asked quietly, but – as counterarguments to the ideological narrative – they are often silenced or ignored.

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Appendices

Appendix A: 'Standard' and 'Authentic' Choices in Written Scots (from Pottinger 2022; 2020)

Lallans 'standard' forms	**Examples**
<aa>[120]	*aa*, *aabdy* [all, everybody]
<i> (and not <u>)	*wird*, *wirk* [word, work]
<ch>	*micht*, *nicht*, *richt* [might, night, right]
<ui> or <uCe>	*guid*, *luik*, *mune* [good, look, moon]
<ei> (and not <ea> or <ee>)	*heid*, *deid* [head, dead]
<y>	*vyce*, *mynd* [voice, mind]
-it past marker	*illustratit*, *adaptit*, *treatit* [illustrated, adapted, treated]
'Purely symbolic' traditional spellings	*finisht*, *throu*, *traive**ll**s* [finished, through, trave**l**s]
Select spellings	*wi*, *een/ane*, *twa*, *wey/pey*, *mair*, *bi* [with, one, two, word, way/pay, more, by]
Moribund or archaic lexis	*aye*, *ilka*, *een*, *gin*, *gey*, *gar*, *mynd*, [always, each, eyes, if, very, make, remember]

Authentic 'spoken' forms (predominantly Glasgow area)	**Examples**
<aw>	aw, awrite [all, alright]
<u> (and not <i> or <o>)	*durty*, *wurd*, *burd* [dirty, word, bird]
<oa>	*oan*, *Scoats*, *hoat* [on, Scots, hot]
<z>	*yooz*, *holidayz*, *boayz* [you (pl.), holidays, boys]
Respellings of *o* [*of*]	*a*, *ae*, *ay*. As enclitic in: *lohta*, *sortae* [lot of, sort of]
-ny/-nay negative markers and other *–(a)y* spellings	*way*, *widnay*, *wullny*, *tay*, *gony* [with, wouldn't, won't, to, gonna]
'Purely symbolic' innovative spellings	*wan*, *magine*, *kin* [one, imagine, can (unstressed)], <z>
Other regional pronunciation spellings	Doric *f-* for *wh-*, *skweel* [school], *braa* [great]
Contemporary vernacular lexis	*aye*, *clatty*, *wean* [yes, dirty, child]

[120] Also indexical of, and originating in, northern regional spellings.

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

Information Sheet: Spelling choices and attitudes to language among Scottish writers

Central University Research Ethics Committee Approval Reference: **R84436/RE001**

Introductory paragraph

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. You can email me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether you wish to take part.

Why is this research being conducted?

In this project I am researching how Scottish writers of fiction use language. I look at different writing styles and ask why those styles might have been used. I will be asking writers to comment on their own spelling choices and to answer a few questions about modern/contemporary Scots literature. I hope to offer to an understanding of the many different ways in which Scottish writers of fiction approach language beyond Standard English.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been identified as a known writer who uses Scots or a Scottish dialect in fiction. Of those contacted, there is variety in terms of age (over 18), race, gender, region, and class. There will be a maximum of 13 participants.

Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. Even if you do, you can still withdraw from the study without giving a reason by advising us of this decision **by 01/09/23.** If you are concerned about data security, please see Q.8 below.

What will happen to me if I take part in the research?

A consent form will be emailed to you for you to complete

The interview will take place online, or in person if you prefer and a face-to-face meeting is feasible

It will take up to 90 minutes

I will ask you about your writing in a particular text; why you chose not to write in Standard English or whether you followed any guidance when doing this. I will also ask you for your thoughts on writing styles in Scots literature.

The interview will be loosely structured and you are encouraged to speak freely on these topics. I am only interested in your commentary – there are no wrong answers!

With your consent, I would like to take an audio recording to have an accurate record of our conversation

You may stop the interview at any time

What are the possible disadvantages in taking part?

This research is not considered to be sensitive and it is unlikely that there will be disadvantages or risks. However, you will be identified; as a known writer of fiction I will be using your real name. It is important to be aware that anyone reading the resulting doctoral thesis or an academic publication based on it, or attending a conference where this research is presented, will see your name.

Are there any benefits in taking part?

While interviewees are not paid, it is hoped that this project will contribute to important research into written language in Scotland – why writing exists in different forms, how it has changed, how it relates to power imbalances, and how it can serve as an expression of identity. Your commentary and literary work will enter this body of research. You may also decide it is beneficial to receive a small report on my findings.

What information will be collected and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research objectives?

The interviews will be recorded and transcribed. If you want, you can request to review the transcript and I will send it to you securely. Please be aware that except where there are factual errors you may not change the transcript, but you might decide after seeing it that you want to withdraw from the study (see Q.4 above). In this case, all data will be deleted immediately.

Otherwise, the procedure will be as follows: recordings will exist solely in a secure location on a password-protected laptop. Once transcripts have been checked, the recordings will be deleted. Transcripts and consent forms will only be accessible to me and my research supervisor: they will

be kept securely on the laptop for three years after the PhD is completed. All data will then be deleted.

I am looking to collect this data so that I can study your comments in the context of your work and discuss that work in the context of Scottish literature.

Will the research be published? Could I be identified from any publications or other research outputs?

The findings from the research will be written up in a doctoral thesis and may also appear in academic publications or conference presentations. In these outputs, we would like your permission to use direct quotations and to attribute them to you by the name you publish under.

A copy of my thesis will be deposited both in print and online in the Oxford University Research Archive where it will be publicly available to facilitate its use in future research.

Data Protection

The University of Oxford is the data controller with respect to your personal data, and as such will determine how your personal data is used in the study. The University will process your personal data for the purpose of the research outlined above. Research is a task that is performed in the public interest. Further information about your rights with respect to your personal data is available at https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/individual-rights.

Who has reviewed this study?

This study has received ethics approval from a subcommittee of the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee.

Who do I contact if I have a concern about the research or I wish to complain?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, please contact me, my supervisor, or the University:

Hamish Pottinger (PhD student)

hamish.pottinger@trinity.ox.ac.uk

Deborah Cameron (Supervisor)

deborah.cameron@worc.ox.ac.uk

Oxford University tel.: 01865 270000

We will do our best to answer your query. We will acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how it will be dealt with.

If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford, who will seek to resolve the matter as soon as possible:

The Chair, Social Sciences & Humanities Interdivisional Research Ethics Committee;
Email: ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk; Address: Research Services, University of Oxford, Boundary Brook House, Churchill Drive, Headington, Oxford OX3 7GB

Further Information and Contact Details

If you would like to discuss the research with someone beforehand (or if you have questions afterwards), please contact me or my supervisor using the details above.

Consent to take part in: Spelling choices and attitudes to language among Scottish writers

Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) approval reference: **R84436/RE001**

Purpose of Study: to interview Scottish authors of fiction on their language choices and their views on Scots literature.

	Please initial each box if you agree with the statement
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above research. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any point **before 01/09/23**, without giving any reason.	

I understand who will have access to personal data provided, how the data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the project.	
I understand that I will be identifiable from any publications, lectures, or conference talks.	
I consent to being audio recorded.	
I understand how audio recordings will be used in research outputs.	
I agree to the use of direct quotations, attributed to me by my name or penname (if applicable), in research outputs.	
I give permission for you to contact me again to clarify information.	
I understand how to raise a concern or make a complaint.	
I agree to take part.	

This question is optional	**Please answer YES or NO**
I would like to receive a small report on the findings of this research.	

Appendix C: Poems by Raymond Wilson

Erskine Bridge Boys

God bless the Erskine Bridge Boys,
May they never dread
Again.
The train-track drunken ditch boys.
Never staggered home
Again.
When yer past the point ae provin' self
Ye can't be satisfied
By burd nor drug nor stagnant wealth.
Feel half as if ye heavy tried,
Half as if yer lazy.
Both are as exhaustin.
Now yer on the bridge to Paisley,
Fingers scalin' steel, feels frostin'.
"Just remember what you're grateful for!"
Fuckin' state ae you.
Just reminds ye you're ungrateful more.
Pathetic waster You.
Feelin' shite for feelin' shite,
Feelin' shite for feelin'.
These feelin's might no be quite right
But feelin's no ever dealin
Wae the problems –
You're a winner!
You're jist Dan the Man!
Greetin' willnae get ye dinner,
Talkin's no a plan.
So where's the plan tae get peace ae mind?
It's no in dodgy thinkin,
That yer a burden tae yer maw in bind,
It's no wae goan n' sinkin'
In tae a couch an' clearly seein'
You Have No Direction.
Not a talented nor a passionate bein'.
Not a graftin' person.
Ye didnae find it bein' wae her,
Ye didnae find it beggin' Sleep,
Ye didnae find it to occur
When ye tried tae delve pure deep
Ye didnae find it on the way,
Ye didnae find it there inside.
So God I pray,
I proper pray,
You boys have found it in the Clyde.

Yer Man Jealousy

A durty bastard,
Is jealousy.
He would steal a
man's talent,
Withoot tending,
To his own.

That auld guy,
Doon the pub hinkin,
He's the sole bastion,
Ae free speech,
As jealousy,
Pronounced: "He's no as good,
As aw yous say he is."

He wouldnae read a book,
For fear it's too good.
Or care tae ask,
"How's you?",
In case yous were weller.

Wouldnae tap his ain source though,
Wouldnae grind away,
Maybe in laziness,
Or mibbe,
He believes,
That he can BE no sweller.

Mibbe he's frought that when he starts,
He'll see too much to do.
That the more outside,
He stauns himself,
The less there is compared to.

A bitter word,
Against the better,
"Aye but he's a dick."
"He tries too hard."
While, with unfounded thinking, tells himself:
"It's fine, I'll be more than him, one day."

See, he,
Yer man jealousy,
It the only true talent, clearly.