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The Present-day Sociolinguistic Status of Scots:
A sociolinguistic Investigation through a Questionnaire Analysis

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this dissertation is to analyse the present-day socio-linguistic background of Scotland, with a particular focus on Scots. I chose this topic because Scotland played a significant role in my life and my growth as a person after studying at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow as part of the Erasmus+ program. Living there, I got to experience the beautifully diverse language scene, meeting people not only from all over Scotland or the United Kingdom, but also from all over the world. However, in my experience with Scottish languages, Scots always played a marginal role, as opposed to Gaelic or English, which were much more prominent. While discussing the status of Scots, I had the impression that it was never given the recognition it deserved and was always classified as a dialect of English. My goal with this dissertation is to analyze the reasons behind the dismissal of Scots and shine some much-needed light on a language that played such a big role in shaping the Scottish identity. The first chapter will analyse the linguistic and historical roots of Scots, its cultural significance, and the different dialectal variations. At its core, this chapter seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of the multifaceted nature of Scots, tracing its origins from the Anglian invasion in the sixth century, and the subsequent Viking invasion, to its contemporary manifestations, following Hugh MacDiarmid's Scottish Renaissance in the early 1900s, in an attempt to reconstruct the importance of a Scottish language for the ideal of "Scottishness". Furthermore, this chapter navigates the labyrinthine landscape of Scots dialects, unravelling the regional nuances and linguistic diversity that characterize the language across different geographical areas.

The second chapter will introduce the empirical investigation I conducted, working as a bridge between the analysis of literature pertinent to the origins and the status as a language of Scots and the analysis and discussion of the findings of a specific survey I administered to a selected pool of participants. This section will start by assessing the current use of Scots in Scotland, supported by data gathered from the 2011 Scotland Census. Furthermore, it will

introduce the methodology and design of the survey, setting the foundations for the exploration of Scots language vitality and its societal implications in subsequent analyses.

The third and final chapter will delve into the findings of the empirical study that was conducted to paint a more accurate picture of the linguistic composition of Scotland, filling the gap left by the lack of official data on the use of Scots after 2011. Firstly, this section will present the participant pool, analysing the demographic part of the questionnaire. By analysing the personal profiles of the participants, I will provide context for interpreting survey findings and discerning patterns across different age groups, geographical regions, and socio-cultural backgrounds. The findings obtained through the survey and based on the participants' own experience with Scots will then be presented and discussed.

1. WHAT IS SCOTS

1.1 THE FEATURES OF SCOTS AS ITS OWN LANGUAGE

More often than not, Scots has not been considered an independent language by English speakers, and has been relegated to being a dialect or even a corrupted form of English. But this is not the case. Scots is, in fact, a language of its own, that has deep roots in the Germanic language family, just as much as English does, and that gathers under its umbrella a wide number of regional dialects.

Scots is a Germanic language that was widely spoken in the Lowlands and the North-Western Isles of Shetland and Orkney, as opposed to Scottish Gaelic, which is a Celtic language that is mostly spoken in the Highland region and the Isle of Skye, in the North-East of the country. Today, just as much as in the past, Scots has an extremely important role in Scottish culture. With its deep roots and rich heritage, it is an essential tool in the shaping of a Scottish national identity.

Scots was once the language of the Scottish Kings. As such, not only was it held with the highest regard and used in official documents and ceremonies, but it was also the language of literary works of the highest level, with Robert Burns being its most famous exponent. His song *Auld Lang Syne* is still sung today during the typical Scottish dance parties, ceilidhs, on social events and on New Year's Eve. Although mostly rewritten in current English, it is well known both in Scotland and in the English speaking world in general. *Auld Lang Syne*, which roughly translates to "long long ago", appears in literary works well before Burns' times, signalling the deep roots and profound traditions of Scots as a language, literary and non-literary.

It is natural to wonder, then, why Scots is often neglected of its status as a language if it had such an impact in shaping Scottish culture. The answer, once again, lies in the history of Scotland and in its conflicts with the English. With the unification of the Parliaments in 1707, the use of Scots in laws and official matters was discouraged in favour of English, considered a "more dignified" language. Consequently, Scots was a language left for the playgrounds and the pubs, and it ended up occupying "the back lanes of Scottish life rather than the main street" (Douglas, 1994).

As Dr. Douglas stated in her speech at the Robert Gordon University's Heritage Conference in 1994, Scots has been ignored as a language and regarded as nothing more than a dialect because of social and political prejudices that started the moment Scots was dropped as the language for official matters and laws. To those who argue that if Scots really was a language, then a "Standard Scots" would exist, Douglas (1994) responds suggesting that if Scots was taught in school the way British Standard English (BSE) is, used in media on a regular basis and treated as an acceptable way of expressing one's self, then a "Standard Scots" would emerge.

However, the English "racism" towards the Scottish people led them to entirely give up Scots as their mother tongue, adopting English in its place, convincing students and scholars that there was something wrong with the way they were speaking, so much so that Scots was also completely dropped from the Scottish educational system.

When Scots was given up as the language for official matters in favour of English, people of Scotland had to adapt and become bilingual. This bilingualism was not a negative aspect per se, but led the Scottish down a path towards the loss of confidence and their sense of identity as a nation, which lasted until the beginning of an important period for Scottish literature, the Scottish Renaissance in the twentieth century.

The conflict between "Britishness" and "Scottishness" generated by this sudden disregard of the Scots language and adoption of English spilled into the literary works of the time, taking the shape of the characteristic theme of the double. In literature, it was highlighted with irony, multiple voices and points of views and contrast, all of which underline the deep and ongoing identity crisis.

This juxtaposition takes the name of *Caledonian Antisyzygy*. According to the newest edition of the Concise Scots Dictionary (2017), the Caledonian Antisyzygy is "the presence of duelling polarities within one entity, considered to be characteristic of the Scottish temperament sometimes shortened to antisyzygy". The term, first coined by G. Gregory Smith in 1919, was a response to those who claimed that there was no value in Scottish rural literature. Smith argued

that it was indeed this diversity and the union of the opposites that created the basis for Scottish literature.

In literature it is translated, other than with the aforementioned theme of the double, in the separation between Lowlands and Highlands (consequently, between Scots and Gaelic), Protestantism and Catholicism and, most importantly, Scottishness and Britishness, and therefore between Scots and English.

A prime example of this duality can be found in the complex character of Dr Jeckyll and his alter-ego Mr Hyde in R. L. Stevenson's popular novella *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. The contrasting nature of the two characters do not only symbolise the dual nature of men and mankind, but could also represent the linguistic contrast that Scotland was experiencing at the time. While Dr Jekyll was the clear representation of English, a high language that was used in solemn context and official procedures, Mr Hyde was the repellent portrayal of the language that was once great and held to high regard, but that was now relegated as the language of the low parts of society, namely, Scots.

1.2 THE EUROPEAN ROOTS OF SCOTS

Scots is a language that belongs to the Germanic branch of the Indo European language family. Just like Modern English it originated from Old English, a language spoken in Great Britain, particularly present-day's England and Scotland, in the early Middle Ages.

Old English originates from Proto-Germanic. It is more closely related to Old Frisian, while Swedish and Modern German, for instance, are closer to the original Proto-Germanic language (Bills, 2009). Scots has its roots in the Northumbrian dialect, one of the four dialects of Old English, which was spoken in what today is the north of England. Northumbrian is also the root of the Northern-English English dialects that are still spoken today in the area of the border between England and Scotland, which explains the similarities between those dialects and Scots.

Because Scots and English are so closely related and have roots in the same ancient language, a debate has sparked between scholars on whether Scots is just a variety of English, not

much different from the Northern-English English dialects. Fiona Douglas (2006: 42) states that “Given its origins, SC [Scots] can be linguistically (although perhaps not ideologically) considered a variety of “English””. Scholars have different views on this topic, but the argument in favour of a separate language status for Scots are mounted on discussion of its historical development, its strong literary legacy and its range of distinctive dialects (Douglas, 2009).

In the first part of the progression from Old English into two separate languages, a synchronic development in English and Scots can be spotted, however the push towards the divergence between the two languages in the XV century is tied to Scotland’s increased political and sociocultural independence (Meruman-Solin, in Jones, 1997).

However, the influences that shaped Scots into the language that is spoken today do not stop at Old English. Just like other languages of the Germanic family, Scots retains the legacy of the influence of other Germanic languages, in particular of Scandinavian languages.

The sixth century was a period of numerous invasions of Great Britain by Germanic populations. In 547 a group of Anglians arrived in the area that today corresponds to the border between Scotland and England and founded the Kingdom of Bernicia. The borders were an area that was previously mainly inhabited by Celtic population and spoke predominantly Celtic languages. With their arrival, the Anglian brought their language that with time developed into the Anglo-Saxon languages.

In the eighth century, the arrival of the Scandinavian Vikings brought a new wave of Germanic languages in Britain. South of the Scottish-English border, the Viking, who were mostly from present-day Denmark, settled in an area that took the name of Danelaw, while the Norwegian Vikings settled in the Western region of Scotland and in the Northern Isles, Orkney and Shetland.

The Viking invasion left a linguistic legacy in England as well as in Scotland, being the Scandinavian languages mutually intelligible with the languages spoken by the Anglo-Saxon communities living in the conquered territories, to the point that scholars suggest that the linguistic situation was somewhat akin to a creolisation process that resulted in the development of an Anglo-Scandinavian hybrid language (Douglas, 2006).

While in modern English the legacy of the Scandinavian invasion is rather limited although significant (*they/them/their* are results of the Scandinavian influence), in Scots the Scandinavian imprint is more evident and easier to trace back. In Orkney and Shetland, the Norwegians brought a language that originated from Old Norse called Norn, that was still spoken on the Isles until the XVIII and XIX century.

Today, many words in Scots are originally Old Norse or still have cognates in Scandinavian languages, however the majority of the Scandinavian loanwords in Scots comes from Norwegian rather than from Danish (e.g. cow: coo (Scots), ku (Norwegian); brown: broon (SC), brun (Norw), child: bairn (SC), barn (Norw)).

The Viking invasion also affected Scots phonology and it is witnessed by the existence of Norse-influenced cognates of English words (e.g. kirk vs church, brig vs bridge, dike vs ditch, skirk vs shrill, shreich vs shriek). As a matter of fact, Old Norse had the plosives /k/ and /g/ where Old English had the affricates /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ (Douglas, 2006).

As well as Proto-Germanic and Scandinavian languages, Scots underwent the influence of Romance and Celtic languages and, having developed with a certain degree of geographical as well as cultural separation from Modern English, Scots today retains those influences better than BSE does, including phonological and morphological features (Bills, 2009).



Figure 1.1: Map of the linguistic division in Scotland in 1400,
(Scotfax: Scottish Gaelic on undiscovered Scotland)

Gaelic is the language of the Gaels, one of the three Celtic populations that inhabited the Scottish Highlands at the time of the Viking invasion, and is today the only Celtic language that has survived in Scotland. Despite the two communities being in such close proximity to each other (as shown in the map above), other than leaving its trace in place names, Gaelic has not influenced Scots as much as one might think.

When the Norwegian Vikings left Scotland, the Gaels moved to the territories that were left unoccupied by the Vikings, settling in the Highlands, where Gaelic is still spoken today, while Scots remained spoken to this day in the Lowlands. In the map below, the green sections are the parts of Scotland where Gaelic is spoken and the blue ones are the areas where Scots is more present. The darker the colour, the more each language is spoken.

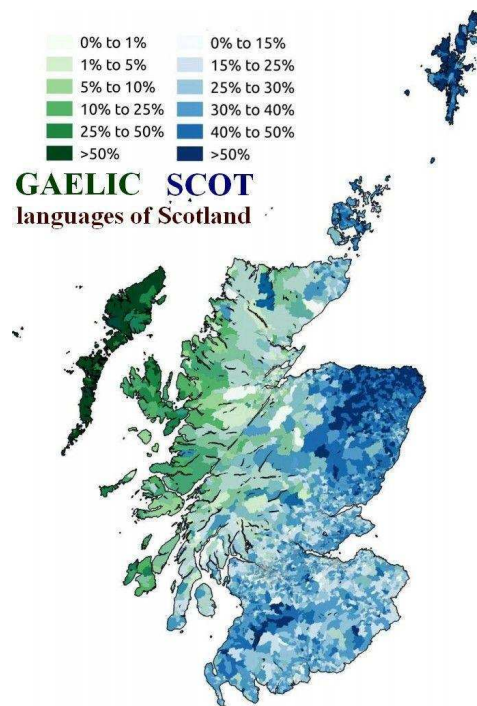


Figure 1.2: Map combining representation of Gaelic and Scots speakers from 2011 census

(<https://gorrenberry.com/armstrong-elliott-crozier-nixon-johnson-graham-ulster-scot/gaelic-scot-languages-of-scotland/>)

The linguist Charles Jones in his book *The English Language in Scotland: An Introduction to Scots (2002)* highlights that “it is important to stress that, even at this early stage in its history, the version of English spoken in Scotland was unaffected by language contact with Gaelic or the Brythonic Pictish. There is very little evidence that there was even much by way of vocabulary borrowing into the embryonic Scots from these languages and no evidence at all for effects on its syntax or morphology” (Jones, 2002, in Bills, 2009).

It is possible, Bills hypothesises, that Gaelic never had a significant influence on Scots because it was never seen as a superior, or even equal, language in Scots-speaking regions. During the Viking invasion, in fact, the language of the invaders was considered a superior language, a language of power, which explains why the Northumbrians embedded its forms into their own speech. However, in Scotland French and Latin supplanted Gaelic as the languages used for legal matters shortly after the Norman Conquest and, by the XVI century, when the courts returned to

the vulgar language, Scots became the official language for court and government matters (Bills, 2009).

However, Gaelic still made its contributions in the lexicon, leaving words that are still currently used (e.g.: Whisky, from Gaelic *uisgebeatha* 'water of life'; *loch*, meaning lake or large landlocked body of water; *glen* 'river valley') (Bills, 2009). Though the biggest influence remains in the sphere of place names. Many places in Scotland still sport Gaelic names, even in areas where Scots is more predominantly spoken.

The legacy of the French and Latin influence during the Norman Conquest remains mostly in the court-related lexicon, although French has left its traces in the morphology and phonology of Scots as well.

1.3 HISTORY OF SCOTS: HUGH MACDIARMID'S SCOTTISH RENAISSANCE

Renaissance is a concept present in many literary periods all around Europe. Literally meaning "rebirth", it is usually used to refer to the artistic movements between the late-mediaeval and early-modern times. Scotland is not foreign to the concept of Renaissance, in fact the artistic movements in Scotland went through two Renaissance periods.

The first Renaissance corresponds to the European Renaissance, approximately between the XV and XVII centuries. The European Renaissance saw Scotland rise to the position of full member among the European nations, participating in the diplomatic and military actions, as well as developing a court and government language (Scots) as a means to deliver literature of the highest regard. It all crumbled down with the Union of the Crown, and finally in 1707 with the Union of the Parliaments, when Scots stopped to be used as the language of official matters in favour of the more highly-regarded English.

The second Scottish Renaissance of the XX century saw the recovery of political autonomy and the revival of a modern literary culture as extremely related key aspects of the movement.

The term “Scottish Renaissance” was firstly used in 1925 by a French scholar who translated some of Hugh MacDiarmid’s lyrics, defying the style of the poet and of his followers as *Renaissance écossaise* (Keller, McClure, Sandrock, 2014).

When the use of Scots in official contexts was dismissed, Scotland started to lose touch with its native languages and traditions, overshadowed by the increasingly predominant anglocentric culture. In the early years of the XX century the idea that the 15th-century Renaissance served as an inspiration for the linguistic and literary, as well as political, rebirth of Scotland. The poet Hugh MacDiarmid revendedicated William Dunbar (c. 1460-1520) as Scotland’s national poet, in place of Robert Burns (1759-96). With the slogan “Not Burns - Dunbar!”, MacDiarmid suggested that the artistic border should be extended beyond the cult of Robert Burns, despite Burns’ poetry having revitalised Scots after the anglicisation of Scotland, shining light on authors from the 15th and 16th century such as Robert Henryson, William Dunbar or Henry Douglas. The author Niel Gunn explained in an article that “the harking back Dunbar is professedly not a harking back for language so much as a harking back for greatness” (Gunn, 1933 in Fiasson, 2018). In other words, Dunbar should be looked at as Scotland’s national poet not because of his greater works or his language, but because his works evoked the rich culture of an independent Scotland while Burns wrote “in, of and for a Scotland whose independence had been lost” (Keller, McClure, Sandrock, 2014).

Alexander M’Gill noted that one of the central concerns of the Scottish Renaissance was to reject the English tradition, which was seen as alien to Scottish culture. The enforcement of English traditions, and consequent intellectual colonisation of Scotland, followed by the loss of a sense of national identity caused by the loss of Scotland’s national language, can be traced back to the anglicisation of Scottish education and, in general, to and homogenisation of the educational system in the UK, which was conformed to the English standard. Concerns about the anglicization of the Scottish education system were raised, but promptly ignored by the Scotch Educational Department (SED), which was based in London. Consequently, Scotland’s native languages were

ignored and dropped from the educational programs, at least until 1918, for what concerns Gaelic, in favour of the adoption of English (Fiasson, 2018).

In 1923, through an article in the *Scottish Chapbook*, MacDiarmid laid the grounds for a “synthetic Scots”, also called Lallans, whose words were taken from John Jamieson’s *Etymological Dictionary of Scots* (1808), from sensory experiences or invented to fill the gaps of an historically fragmented language. The intentions behind “synthetic Scots” were for it to be the standard language for the world class literature of Scotland however it resulted in Scots words plastered on a standard English grammatical structure. Its other flow was that the intended speakers of MacDiarmid’s Lallans were not native speakers of the “real” Lallans, which is the actual language spoken in the Lowlands (Scots), spoken by the working class and the middle class.

Despite the apparent artificiality of his “synthetic Scots”, Hugh MacDiarmid wrote several of his works in his “new” language, allowing the expression of poetry in Scots to enter the modern international literary scene. His most famous work is possibly “*A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle*” (1926), a 2685-line poem in which the poet explores many different themes, with the underlying purpose of grappling with “this root-hewn Scottis soul” and analyse the nation of Scotland, claiming a place for Scots as a contemporary literary language in the international artistic scene.

The Scottish Renaissance was not only an artistic and literary movement, but it planned to politicise the literature, the languages and the arts of Scotland with the purpose of restoring the lost greatness of the nation (Gunn, 1933). Fiasson (2018) argues that Scottish literature does not reflect the experiences of a nation in a single language, but it expresses the multiple identities of a multilingual nation. However, according to Neil Gunn, Scots remains the most adequate language to express the national poetry in an international context.

1.4 GEOGRAPHICAL VARIATIONS OF SCOTS

1.4.1 EDWIN MORGAN’S “THE CHAFFINCH MAP OF SCOTLAND”

Visual poetry has been around since before Christ. It is a poetry practice that consists of shaping the verses of a poem into a pattern that illustrates the subject. There are many examples that date

length of the words and the spaces between them. The three regions of Scotland (the Highlands, the central Lowlands and the Southern Uplands) are represented by the stanzas of the poem.

In this special map of Scotland, place-names are replaced by bird-names used for the chaffinch. Its peculiarity is, though, that each bird-name is a Scottish regional name placed in order of its actual geographical distribution, making the poem an effective map of the dialects of Scotland (Williams, 1967 in Haft, 2000).

It is curious to observe how, if we travel through Scotland, the name for one single bird changes from each region to the other, highlighting the difference in vocabulary and language in the different regions.

Scots language is composed of four main dialects (Insular, Northern, Central and Southern, these regions have been appearing on maps of Scotland since the 1870s), and within each of these dialects can be found several other sub-dialects, different for every specific area and the region.

1.4.2 INSULAR SCOTS

Insular Scots is one of the four main dialects of Scotland and it is particularly used in the Eastern Isles of Scotland, Shetland and Orkney. It is the Scots dialect that was mostly influenced by the Norse vikings. Insular Scots has in fact a “Scandinavian accent” that accompanies the Norn-influenced vocabulary. Even the intonation and the voice is not typical of other varieties of Scots (Johnson, in Jones, 1997). It is composed of two sub-dialects, the Shetland dialect and the Orcadian dialect.

The Shetland dialect, which takes its name from the Shetland islands, shares many characteristics with other branches of Scots. The Norwegian influence is still present in various areas which regard pronunciation, place-names, vocabulary and expressions. The Norse control over the islands lasted from the 9th century AD until 1469, when the King of Denmark-Norway pawned off the Islands for his daughter’s marriage with James III of Scotland. Despite being under the rule of Scotland since then, the particular form of Norwegian that was spoken there (Norn, in Scots) was used in official settings until the 16th century and was spoken up until the 18th century,

when a form of Scots became the most used language in the community.

In Shetland Scots, it is typical to hear “du” in place of the singular “you” of English, when addressing friends, equals and family members, followed by the third person of the verb (e.g. *Du is daft if du believes him!*). Inanimate objects are usually referred to by *he* or *she/sh* (*sh* is a local pronunciation). From a phonetic point of view, many vowel sounds resemble the ones that can be found in Scandinavian languages, while the sounds /ð/ and /θ/ are dropped in favour of /d/ and /t/, in writing as well as in the pronunciation of the word. Words like “thing” and “there” are consequently written as “ting” and “dere”. For what concerns the vocabulary, Shetland Scots words are still used in contexts related to tankers, ferries and, more generally, the sea.

Just like Shetland Scots, the Orcadian dialect, or Orkney Scots, was heavily influenced by Norn and other Scandinavian languages, but today the Orcadian stress patterns are more similar to the ones of Irish and Welsh, rather than the Scandinavian ones, as it is the case of Shetland Scots. Differently from Shetland, Norn in Orkney had its roots in the Faroese language and Icelandic and it started to die down before it did in Shetland, with the rise of Scots starting in the early 1300s. Some characteristics of the Orcadian dialect are the use of the auxiliary verb “be” instead of “have”, the use of “thoo” as the second person singular pronoun (unlike the Shetlandic “du”) and the use of plural nouns in place of their singular form.

1.4.3 NORTHERN SCOTS

Northern Scots is the umbrella term that refers to the dialects of Scots spoken in the North Eastern part of Scotland which, despite facing Orkney, has a Scots dialect of its own. Geographically, Northern Scots is spoken from Caithness down to Eastern Angus.

The variety of Northern Scots spoken in Caithness was widely influenced by both Norn and Scottish Gaelic, which in 1735 was spoken by four local parishes out of the ten or eleven in the region, according to Aneas Bayne’s survey of the county of Caithness. Linguistically, to some extent

the Caithness dialect resembles North Eastern Scots, which is perhaps better known as Doric. Doric is spoken in the North Eastern region of Scotland, in particular Aberdeenshire.

The Doric dialect varies quite heavily from other Scots dialects, both in pronunciation and vocabulary. There are in fact many Doric words used in an everyday context that can not be found in other parts of Scotland, such as *cappie* (ice-cream cone), *dubby* (muddy), *ficher* (play with your fingers) and many others.

In Doric, also referred to as Buchan, the clusters *cht* and *ght*, may become /ð/ in some words (*dochter* (daughter), *micht* (might) and *nocht* (nought) are often written as *dother*, *mith* and *noth* in dialect writing); towards the coast, *th* followed by *er* may become /d/, rather than /ð/ as in other dialects (*brither* (brother), *faither* (father), *gaiter* (gather) and *mither* (mother) are often written *bridder*, *fadder*, *gaidēr~gedder* and *midder* in dialect writing); and *wh* is realised /f/ (*whit* (what) and *wha* (who), often written *fit* and *fa(a)* in dialect writing).

The Doric dialect was also widely used in literature, featuring heavily in dialogues in the Kailyard literature, which was a Scottish literary movement developed around the end of the 19th century. Kailyard literature revolved heavily around sentimentalism and the idealisation of rural Scotland and was usually written in Scots dialects to maintain the realistic aspect of life in the Scottish countryside. Regionalisms were in fact an important part of kailyard literature, which helped the author stick to reality throughout their novel.

However, Doric also finds representation in the modern media, most recently in the Disney movie *Brave*, one of the young men asking for Princess Merida's hand speaks in Doric, by choice of the voice actor Kevin McKidd, native of the region.

1.4.4 CENTRAL SCOTS

Central Scots is the entirety of the Scots dialect spoken in the Central belt of Scotland. Is mostly divided in two categories: the East Central North Scots, spoken in the area that covers western half

of Angus, all of Clackmannan, Fife, Kinross, Stirlingshire and Falkirk, and half of Perthshire, and West Central Scots, spoken in the region around Glasgow.

West Central is undoubtedly the most interesting dialect of Central Scot, with Glasgow having its own variety of Scots called the Glasgow patter.

West Central Scots is deeply characterised by the division between city and non-city that happened in the 19th century, when people who lived in the city began to reject Scots in favour of English, associating it with poverty and the low-life. On the other hand, there was also a surge in the number of Gaelic speakers, both Scottish and Irish immigrants. The consequences of it were a progressive decrease in the number of Scots speakers in the city of Glasgow while at the same time a new dialect that combined Scots, English and Gaelic (both Scottish and Irish) was on the rise.

In the city of Glasgow much of Scots has been lost, but it has also gained newly-coined words which have been influenced by other languages and which are typical of the city. On the other hand, the regions around Glasgow, Lanarkshire and Ayrshire, appear to have maintained the Scots language in its original form.

Jane Suart-Smith, Linguistics professor at the University of Glasgow, in a chapter featured in the book *Urban Voices* (1999) defined two varieties of the Glaswegian dialect: Glasgow Standard English (GSE), the Glaswegian variety of Scottish Standard English (SSE), spoken mostly by the middle class, and Glasgow vernacular (GV), spoken by the working class and historically closer to West Central Scots with strong Irish Gaelic influences.

The differences between the two versions of the Glasgow patter lay mostly in the vocabulary.

1.4.5 SOUTHERN SCOTS

There are three dialects that make up the Southern variety of Scots: East Central South, South Central and Borders Scots.

East Central South is spoken in the area around the Scottish capital and as a consequence of the government becoming centralised in Edinburgh, East Central South Scots was the one that provided the standard for the use of the language in the whole of Scots-speaking Scotland. The Edinburgh speech, however, has been marginalised in the written language, with authors and poets native to Edinburgh, among whom we can find Sir Walter Scott, Robert Louis Stevenson and many more, choosing to drop the local characteristics of Scots or reject Scots altogether, opting for writing their works in English.

South Central Scots is closely related to Central Scots, however it appears to have suffered a strong Irish influence, especially in Wigtownshire, as a consequence of the presence of both Scots and Gaelic speakers.

Borders Scots is spoken in the region close to the border with England, hence the name Borders Scots. Borders Scots, much like the other Southern Scots dialects, is different from the Northern and Central Scots for the pronunciation of vowel sounds. Where in other places in Scotland, 'you' would be pronounced as 'yoo', in Borders Scots the pronunciation is closer to 'yow', which leads to a more standard pronunciation of 'now' and 'down', as opposed to 'noo' and 'doun'.

1.4.6 ULSTER SCOTS

Ulster Scots, also known as Ullans, is the variety of Scots spoken in the Ulster region of Ireland. Ulster Scots is typically considered a dialect of Scots although many Ullans speakers consider it a proper language.

Scottish people, mostly Gaelic speakers, have inhabited the Ulster province since the 15th century, but with the start of the colonisation of the region by Great Britain, the settlers came mostly from the southeast and southwest of Scotland. In the key areas of the settlement, the Scots largely outnumbered the English.

In the 1640s, during the Irish Confederate Wars, where the Irish tried to conquer their territories that were under British domain, the Scotch-Ulster people were protected and stayed in their settlement. Then, once again in the late 1600s a herd of Scots settlers emigrated to Ulster to escape the famine that was raging in Scotland.

As they emigrated to Ulster, the Scots brought with them their culture and traditions as well as their language, which then was influenced by the Irish languages that were spoken in the region prior to the arrival of Scots, becoming what is now known as Ulster-Scots, which was renamed “Ullans” in the 1980s by the historian and politician Ian Adamson merging the words “Ulster” and “Lallans”.

Today, Ulster Scots is mostly treated by the majority of linguists like a dialect of Central Scots, while some would go as far as consider it a dialect of English. However, supporters of the Ulster-Scots Language Society and the Ulster-Scots Academy argue that Ulster Scots is a language of its own.

As of 2021, according to a census conducted in Northern Ireland, only 1,14% of the population speaks and is able to write and read Ulster Scots and only about 10% has some knowledge of the language.

1.5 CONCLUSIONS

Scotland is a nation with a long history that for the most part had been tied to, and mistakenly confused for, England. Of course, Scotland and England are, from every point of view, two very different countries but they inevitably have cultural and linguistic influences coming from

each other.

The duality of the contrast between Scotland and England, Scottishness and Englishness, will always have a place in Scottish culture, and in particular in its literature and language. The fact that the national language of Scotland is English does not exclude the presence of a Scottish language. Despite being less present in the international scene, or at least less recognised as a language, Scots is widely popular in Scotland and deeply rooted in its culture and, although many mistake Scots as a dialect, it is a language of its own and as such is part of the national identity of Scottish people. Scots also has its own wide number of regional dialects that vary from each Scottish region, depending on the influences of external factors, such as the contact with other languages, mostly Scottish or Irish Gaelic and the Scandinavian languages. This diversity within the language can be seen in Edwin Morgan's poem *The Chaffinch Map of Scotland*, where the poet recreates the shape of Scotland by repeating different variations of the word "chaffinch" according to the place where those variations are used within the country.

Scotland is a country that is very rich in culture, nature, traditions and arts, but its rich languages should not be forgotten or overlooked because they are an essential component of Scottish national identity and of Scottish culture. As such, Scots deserves to have its place in "the back lanes of Scottish life rather than the main street" (Douglas, 1994).

2. HOW SCOTS WAS AND IS SPOKEN IN SCOTLAND

2.1 THE LANGUAGES OF SCOTLAND TODAY

If in the past, Scots was the most spoken language in Scotland, followed by Gaelic and English, nowadays the geolinguistic configuration of the country is quite different. As a result of the British Invasion and the consequent adoption of English as Scotland's national language, Scots began to disappear from official settings at first, and in the end from the lives of Scottish people. Soon replaced by English, Scots was no longer taught in schools all around the country and the teaching of the language was relegated to the households, where families passed it down from one generation to the other. With the passing of time, both Scots and Gaelic were reinstated, next to English, as the official languages of Scotland, and began to be used again in official government matters as well as in everyday life. Despite this positive turn, Scots saw a steady decline in the use of the language among the population following the British Invasion. It is only until recently, following the Census in 2011 (Scotland's Census 2011), that Scots was effectively declared one of the indigenous and official languages of Scotland and, as such, Scotland as a nation has the duty to protect and celebrate its contributions in shaping Scotland's identity and culture. The previous censuses of 1991 and 2001, in fact, did not include any question on Scots, despite a long campaign led by Scots speakers to have one included in the document (Council of Europe, 2002). In the comment submitted in 2002, following the 2001 Census, to the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, it is supposed that no questions about the use of Scots were asked simply because revealing the exact number of Scots speakers, it would become increasingly difficult for the Scottish Executive to hide their suppression of the language itself (Council of Europe, 2002).

Despite no data being collected through the official census in 2001, surveys show that 30% of the respondents stated that they could speak Scots, to a greater or lesser degree. Many of these speakers could switch from English to Scots and vice versa mid-sentence, mixing Scots words and Scottish grammar into English. The 2001 census also slowed the lack of legally established

institutions in Scotland for the conservation and development of Scots, which was not the case for other minority languages such as Welsh, Gaelic and Ulster Scots. The linguistic situation presented itself differently in Scotland as a result of the 2011 Census, where questions about the Scots language were included in the document. Data collected from the census showed that 1.5 million people spoke Scots, while approximately 1.9 million people could understand, read or write in Scots and 267,000 people said that they could understand Scots but not write, speak or read the language. Only 1.1% of the population, however, spoke Scots at home (see Figure 1) (Scotland Census, 2021).

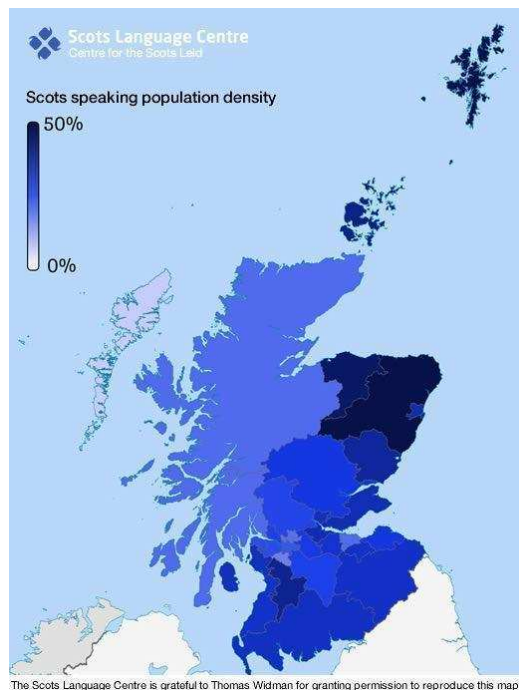


Figure 2.1: A map showing the density of Scots speaking population in 2013, following the 2011 census (Thomas Widman for scotlangaugecentre.com)

The map in Figure 1 above, made by Thomas Widman according to the data revealed by the 2011 census and published in 2013 by the Scots Language Center website, shows the density of the Scots-speaking population. The dark blue area in the North East of Scotland (Aberdeenshire, Orkney and Shetland) are the regions with the highest proportions of Scots speakers at home.

Following the 2011 census, Scots was reinstated as one of the official languages of Scotland and began to be used in official governmental matters. In the following years, following the suggestions of the Scots Language: Ministerial Working Group founded in 2009, a Scots language policy was launched in 2015. This policy aims to enhance the status of Scots within Scotland, promote the use of Scots in education, media and the arts, and encourage the use of Scots as a valid and visible form of personal communication.

2.2 AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE PRESENT-DAY SOCIOLINGUISTIC STATUS OF SCOTS

In order to fully comprehend how Scots is used in modern-day Scotland and its cultural significance, I distributed distributed among Scottish participants. The survey was created using Google Forms and was accessed online. The primary aim of this study was to outline the attitudes, practices, and perceptions surrounding the use of Scots, considering a diverse range of factors such as age, geographical location, and familial language dynamics.

The results of this questionnaire helped paint a neater picture of the importance of Scots and of its role as one of the official languages of Scotland, bringing light not only raw statistical data but the participants' own experience and their relationship with the language in a modern Scotland, where the full recognition of Scots and its role as a language is still up for debate.

2.2.1 STRUCTURE OF THE SURVEY

The survey's aim was to study the use of Scots in Scotland, particularly how that differs in the different regions of the nation and how it varies in different age groups.

The survey was made of seventeen questions, divided into two sections. The first one was purely anagraphical, while the second one asked more detailed questions about the participants' own experience with Scots. Even though the questionnaire was anonymous, in the first section of the survey the participants were asked to choose their age range and what part of Scotland they

came from, identifying their provenience on the map that was provided in the question. Participants were then asked if they themselves or anyone in their family spoke any Scottish language other than English and whether that language was Scots or Scottish Gaelic. They were also asked about the age of the members of their family who actively speak Scots. The second section of the survey was more focused on harvesting data on the overall use of Scots in Scotland, starting from the participants' own experience with the language. Respondents were asked to quantify the extent they used Scots in their daily life, if at all, and if they did use Scots, be more specific about the contexts in which Scots is mostly used on a regular basis and about their interlocutors. Interviewees were also asked about a possible generational gap in the use of Scots. Finally, they were invited to list Scots expressions and words that they commonly use in their English speech, if any. A significant part of this section asked participants about the cultural impact of Scots and its representation in mainstream media and cultural events in Scotland.

2.2.2 THE SURVEY

The survey used in this study to collect the data for this study is reported in this section. It is composed of 17 questions, 12 of which are closed questions and 5 are open questions.

1. How old are you?

<18

18-25

25-35

35-50

50-60

>60

2. What region of Scotland do you come from?

South East (Borders)

South West

Highlands and Western Isles

Central

Northern Isles (Shetland and Orkney)

North East

3. Do you or any of your family speak any Scottish languages or regional dialects?

Yes

No

4. Which one?

Scots

Gaelic

We only use English

Other

5. If so who? And what is their age?

...

6. If you speak Scots, to which extent do you use Scots in your daily life?

1 (Never)

2

3

4

5 (Daily)

7. On which occasions do you mostly use Scots?

...

8. With whom do you use Scots?

Close family

Grandparents

Extended Family

Friends

Co-workers

People you meet during the day (shop clerks, bartenders, etc)

Other

No one

9. Are there family or cultural events where you are more likely to use Scots over other languages or dialects?

Yes

No

10. What are these events?

...

11. Are there any specific words or phrases that you commonly incorporate in your English speech? If so which ones?

...

12. Do you think there is a generational difference in the use of Scots?
Yes
No
13. Who do you think is more prone to use Scots on a daily basis?
Kids and teens
Young adults (17-25)
Adults
Elderly people
14. Do you think there is enough representation of Scots in the media (television, radio, newspapers, social media)?
Yes
No
Maybe
15. If so, which are the media platforms that promote the use of Scots?
...
16. If not, do you think that with enough representation in the media, Scots would be spread more widely in the country and towards a younger demographic?
Yes
No
Maybe

17. Do you think there should be more representation of Scots in the media in order to spread and preserve the language?

Yes

No

2.2.3 THE SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

The survey and circulation method were specifically designed to be received by Scottish individuals, in order to ensure the collection of data that provide accurate insights into the attitudes and practices surrounding the use of Scots within the native population. This ensured that the survey goal to paint a picture of the contemporary landscape of Scots within its cultural and geographical context could be met.

I shared the link to my questionnaire on the official Facebook pages of the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, and on Instagram, in order for it to reach the widest possible participant pool, composed for most part of students and former students of the University of Strathclyde.

The participants were additionally asked to share the link with their Scots-speaking family members, which made it possible to also include the experience of members of the public from different demographics.

The participants agreed to take part in the survey voluntarily and were informed that the data of the survey would be used for research purposes only.

3. RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE PRESENT-DAY

SOCIOLINGUISTIC STATUS OF SCOTS

In the context of linguistic diversity in Scotland, this study aims to examine the prevalence and perceptions surrounding the use of Scots, a distinctive language variety. A comprehensive questionnaire was employed to investigate respondents' attitudes, language practices, and socio-cultural influences

3.1 FINDINGS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE

This section will delve into the findings, providing insights into the contemporary landscape of the usage of Scots and its cultural significance within the Scottish context.

3.1.1 PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE

As the link to the questionnaire was distributed mainly on the Facebook and Instagram pages affiliated with the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, the participant pool mostly consisted of Strathclyde students and former students. The results of the survey therefore mostly reflect the experience with Scots of a young and educated demographic.

1. How old are you?

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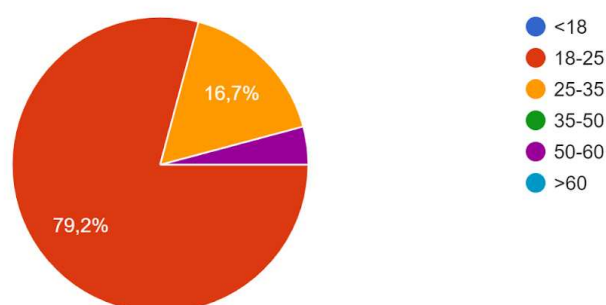


Figure 3.1: Answer to question 1 of the questionnaire

Of the 24 people who took part in the survey, the overwhelming majority (79.2%) of the participants were between the ages of 18 and 25. Another significant portion of responders (16.7%) was in the 25-35 age range. However, despite the efforts to spread the survey towards older demographics as well, only one person older than 35 participated.

2. What region of Scotland do you come from?

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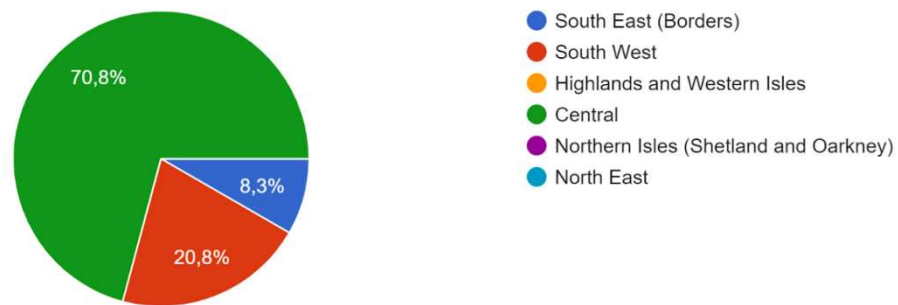


Figure 3.2: Answer to question 2 of the questionnaire

Examining the geographical distribution of respondents (question 2, Figure 3.2), a significant 70% originated from the Central Belt in Scotland, indicating a substantial representation from this region. Additionally, 20.8% of participants hailed from the South West, while 8.2% were from the South East of Scotland. This specific aspect of the demographics of the participants is not surprising as the main method of distribution was through the social media of a Glaswegian university and it was to be expected that the large majority of its students came from or around Glasgow.

3.1.2 FINDINGS AND THEIR ANALYSIS

To conclude the anagraphical portion of the survey, respondents were asked whether they or anyone in their family spoke any Scottish language other than English and if so, to specify which one. The pie chart in Figure 3.3 represents the answers to the first question.

3. Do you or any of your family speak any Scottish languages or regional dialects?

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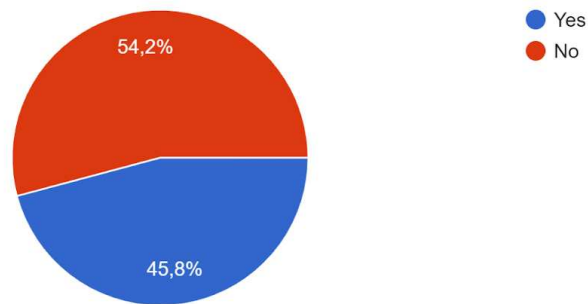


Figure 3.3: Answer to question 3 of the questionnaire

The pie chart in Figures 3.4 represents the answers to question 4.

4. Which one?

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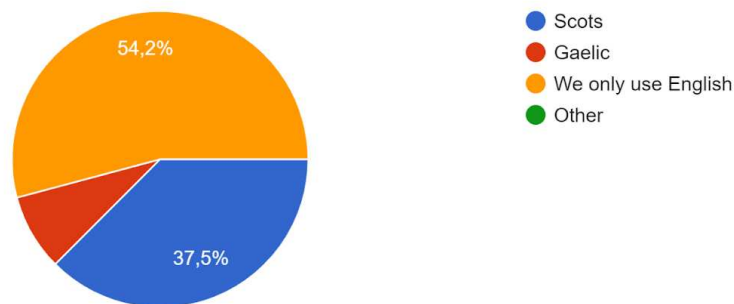


Figure 3.4: Answer to question 4 of the questionnaire

The majority (54.2%) of the participants answered that no one in their family spoke any language other than English. Of the 45.8% that speak a Scottish language in their family, 37.5% stated that Scots is the language they speak while only a small percentage speak Gaelic. In question 5, when asked about who speaks Scots in their family, the line of responses was quite homogeneous. Participants listed as their Scots-speaking relatives older members of the family, all in the 50-80 age range. Some of the respondents listed themselves too as Scots speakers. It is important to note

that a participant stated that in their family most of the family members speak Scots, “mostly Scots words used while speaking English”.

6. If you speak Scots, to which extent do you use Scots in your daily life?

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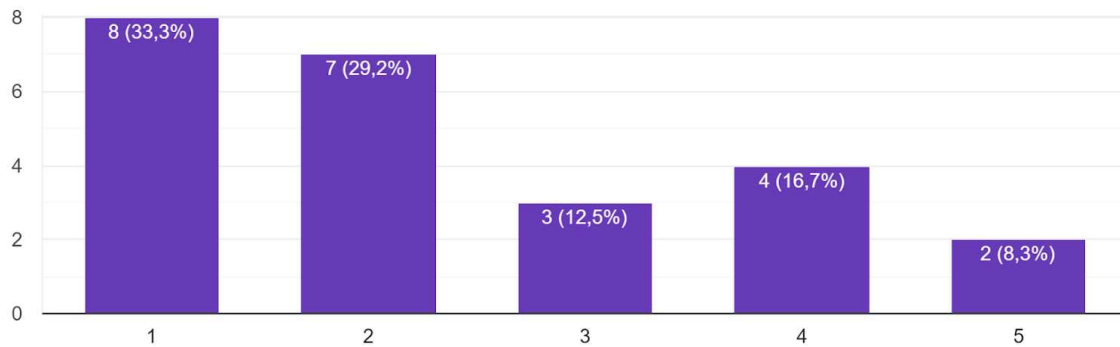


Figure 3.5: Answer to question 6 of the questionnaire

When asked about the frequency of their use of Scots, a third of the participants stated that they never speak Scots, while only two use it on a daily basis. The majority of the respondents answered that, while not speaking it frequently, there are some occasions when they do.

The seventh question asked the participants to list the occasions where they or their families speak Scots. The uniformity of the contexts where the respondents use Scots is noteworthy. The results show that Scots is most commonly used in informal contexts, such as meals with the family, with some close co-workers, at the pub or with friends. It is important to stress the complete absence of formal contexts among the ones listed by the participants in the survey.

Similarly, when asked (see question 8, Figure 3.6) with whom they or their family members use Scots, no one among the respondents answered that they use it with their bosses or superiors at work or in official settings.

8. With whom do you use Scots?

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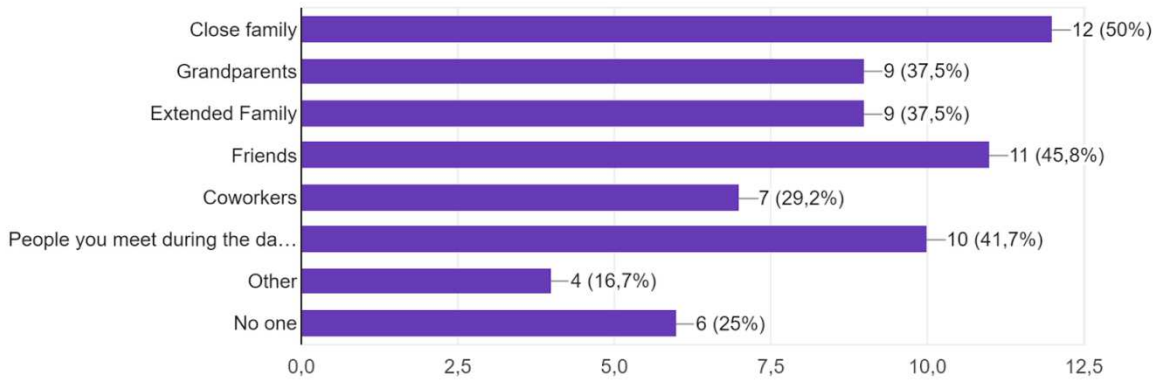


Figure 3.6: Answer to question 8 of the questionnaire

A trend in the respondents' answers clearly appears, highlighting how Scots is clearly spoken in informal and unofficial contexts. 50% of the participants speak Scots with their close family and 37.5% either with their grandparents or with their extended family. Another big portion of the participants speak Scots with their friends or with people they meet during the day, such as shop clerks, passers-by or bartenders (45.8% and 41.7%, respectively).

Then, participants were asked if there were any family or cultural events where, in their experience, Scots was most likely to be used over English or other Scottish languages (question 9, Figure 3.7). A slight minority (45.8%) of the respondents answered "Yes".

9. Are there family or cultural events where you are more likely to use Scots over other languages or dialects?

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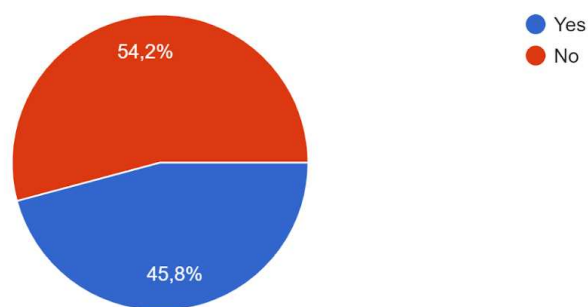


Figure 3.7: Answer to question 9 of the questionnaire

They were then asked what those cultural events were (question 10, Figure 3.8). Among the responses, Burns Night was a popular one. Burns Night is a celebration that happens every year on January 25th to commemorate the Scottish poet Robert Burns. During the celebration, a *ceilidh* (the typical Scottish social gathering, consisting mostly of Gaelic folk music and dances) is held with traditional songs played on the fiddle and the bagpipes and the most famous among Burns Scots poems are read.

10. Which are these events?

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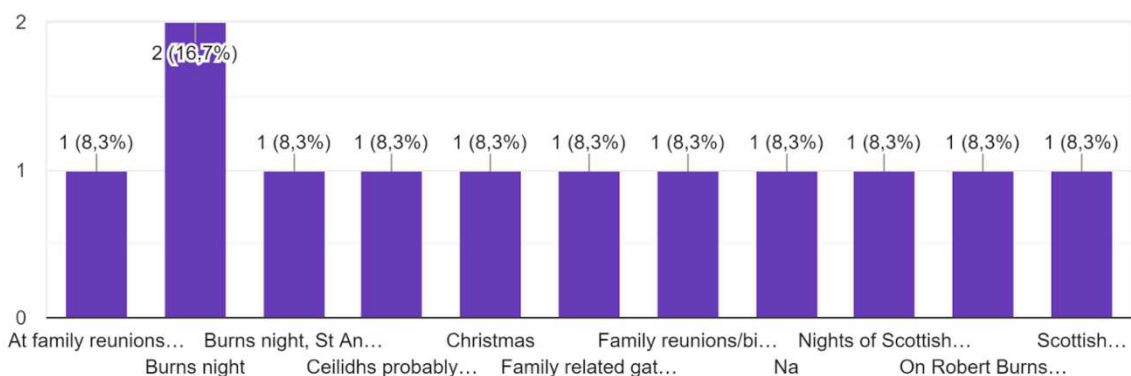


Figure 3.8: Answer to question 10 of the questionnaire

The next question (question 11) asked the participants to list the Scots words that they use in their English speech, if any. To this question, the words “aye” (yes) and “wee” (little, small), and “dreich” (used to describe bad weather) were without doubt the most commonly found ones. One answer stands out from the others.

One of the participants lists some of the Scots words that they use when speaking in English (words like “aye”, “wee”, and “dreich” made the list, in line with the other respondents’ answers) and then proceeds to state out that while being able to understand Scots speech, they are not able to speak it. They point out that, growing up, they have always been aware that Scots was seen as a language for the lower class, and because they came from a middle-class family, their only interactions with Scots were in school, where the curriculum mainly focused on the work

of the poet Norman MacCaig. They then proceed to explain that in school they were taught that the use of Scots was forcibly removed from most parts of Scotland following the Jacobite Risings of 1745, with people being physically assaulted to drop both Scots and Gaelic in favour of English. Due to the efficiency of these policies, Scots and Gaelic are still perceived today as “tier B” languages, despite their abolishment during Queen Victoria’s reign. The participant feels that it is important to point out that members of the upper-middle class who look down on Scots and Gaelic as languages and as culture, are usually more than happy to celebrate them during culturally significant occasions, such as Burns night, flaunting their connection to the Scottish heritage, just to hide it back again once the event is over.

With question 12 the participants were asked if in their opinion there is a generational difference in the use of Scots.

12. Do you think there is a generational difference in the use of Scots?

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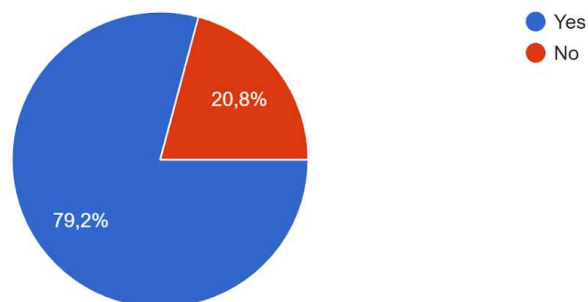


Figure 3.9: Answer to question 12 of the questionnaire

The overwhelming majority of the participants (79.2%) answered “Yes” to this question. This generational gap was explored more in detail by question 13. Respondents were asked to identify who, in their experience, is most likely to speak Scots.

13. Who do you think is more prone to use Scots on a daily basis?

24 risposte

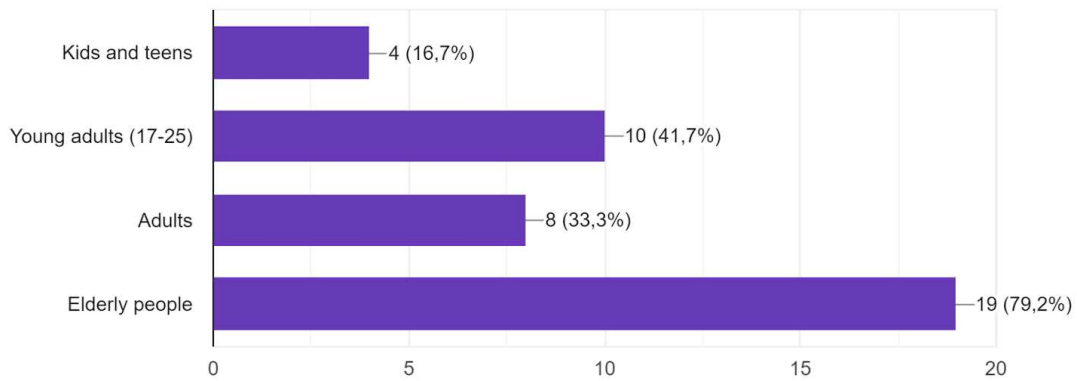


Figure 3.10: Answer to question 13 of the questionnaire

19 out of 24 (97.2%) of the participants indicated that the elderly are most likely to know and practice Scots, surprisingly followed by young adults in the 17-25 age range (41.7%), and adults (33.3%). Only four participants selected the “kids and teens” option.

The last questions of the questionnaire inquired about the presence of Scots in mainstream media and how prominent is the public’s exposure to the language.

14. Do you think there is enough representation of Scots in the media (television, radio, newspapers, social media)?

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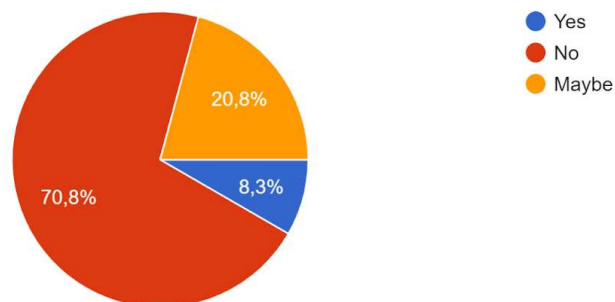


Figure 3.11: Answer to question 14 of the questionnaire

The majority of the respondents (70.8%) answered to question 14 (Figure 3.11) that there is not enough representation of Scots in the media (be it television, radio, newspapers or social media). On the other hand, two respondents think that the current amount of Scots representation in Scotland is sufficient. When asked in question 15 to list the media outlets that promote the use of Scots, most participants indicated BBC Alba. However, it is important to note that BBC Alba is a Scottish channel that mostly promotes Scottish Gaelic, and the representation of Scots on BBC Alba, if any, is minimal.

Those who answered “No” to question 14 were then asked if, in their opinion, with more Scots representation in mainstream media Scots could become more popular in Scotland, especially with the younger generations (question 16, figure 3.12).

16. If not, do you think that with enough representation in the media, Scots would be spread more widely in the country and towards a younger demographic?
23 risposte

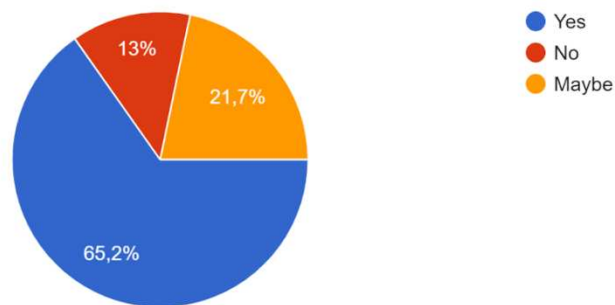


Figure 3.12: Answer to question 16 of the questionnaire

65.2% of the participants stated that is the case while only three (13%) do not agree with the statement in the question.

Question 17, the last question, asked whether there should be more representation of Scots in order to spread and preserve the language.

17. Do you think there should be more representation of Scots in the media in order to spread and preserve the language?

24 risposte

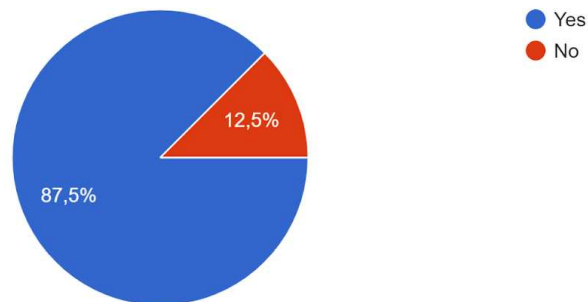


Figure 3.13: Answer to question 17 of the questionnaire

The overwhelming majority of the participants (87.5%) answered that yes, they think that there should be more representation of Scots. Only 12.5% of the respondents do not think that more representation of Scots is necessary.

3.2 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

As we navigate through the results, it becomes evident that Scots is more than a linguistic element; it is intertwined with personal identities, familial connections, and broader societal dynamics.

When analysing the data of the survey, it is important to consider that the participant pool was composed only of 24 respondents, most of which are university students, who might have significantly less first-hand experience with Scots. As it appeared from the answers and from Dr Douglas' notes (1994), there is a significant difference in the use of Scots between different social and economic classes. One participant highlighted, in response to question 11, how their coming from a middle-class family impacted their experience with Scots, not only because people in their family did not speak Scots, but also because they were well aware of the way Scots speakers were looked down on from upper classes, as speaking Scots often meant belonging to the lower classes of society. It is likely that this point of view is shared by the majority of the members of the upper

class, making the diffusion of Scots more difficult, especially among the younger generation that is slowly drifting apart from the roots of their tradition, resulting in a significant decrease in the use of Scots and its regional dialects. However, it was surprising to find that, according to the participants, young adult between the ages of 17 and 25 are more likely to speak Scots than people in the next age range.

The results of the questionnaire paint quite a homogeneous picture of the Scots-speaking scene in Scotland. The generational gap between Scots speakers is a reality indicated by most of the participants. Older generations are likely to have retained from their parents and their grandparents before them the language aspects of the Scottish culture, whereas, with the fundamental lack of Scots representation in mainstream media and the overall negative way Scots is still today perceived, younger generations are discouraged from learning and using the language. The answers of some participants to the questions about the Scots-speaking family members and the situations Scots is used in, reflect the findings of the 2011 census. The answers to the survey show that younger generations are more likely to understand Scots rather than speak it. This data could explain why, as per the census findings, such a big portion of Scotland's population can only understand spoken Scots (267,000 against 1.5 million who can speak Scots) (Scotland Census, 2011).

Data gathered from the survey shows that, in the respondents' own experience, informal settings are the contexts where Scots is most likely to be spoken. Some examples that participants provided are family gatherings, cultural events or everyday informal conversation with, for example, shop clerks. This shows that, despite not being forbidden and actively persecuted anymore, Scots is still not held to a high enough regard to be used in contexts that might be considered more official and, therefore, where English is still considered the more appropriate language.

It is the almost unanimous opinion of the participants that, if Scots media were more widely accessible by the younger generation, the Scots-speaking population could increase and this daunting situation could change. This is not to say that materials and media contents in Scots are

completely non-existent. There are, in fact, a great number of videos teaching the history of Scots as well as useful Scots words that are easily found through a quick search on YouTube. However, these contents are accessible only if a person has prior knowledge of their existence or is actively looking for them. If this accessibility was not limited to a person's search history, the spread of Scots could and would be facilitated, taking Scots back to being a celebrated part of, not only of Scottish culture and identity but also of the life of the Scottish people.

Moreover, breaking away from the historical stigma of Scots as the language of the lower class requires not only linguistic revitalization but also a shift in the perception of the people and society of Scots. The increase in the use of Scots as well as in the number of people learning to speak the language and appreciate the culture could provide an opportunity to confront deep-rooted stereotypes and cultivate the linguistic diversity within Scottish society. This growing interest in the language could become a promising route towards the revitalisation of the language and the reclaiming of its cultural significance.

CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation has explored how the perception of Scots varies from context to context. Through the administration of a survey and an analysis of the derived data, a nuanced understanding of the attitudes, practices, and perceptions has been gained about how Scots is used by individuals with different experiences with the language. One finding that emerged from the survey is that Scots is deeply rooted in the cultural landscape of Scotland. From the poems of Robert Burns to folklore songs and rich literature, Scots is the beating heart of the Lowlands culture and, despite the efforts of the anti-Scots policies following the unification of the Parliaments and the Jacobite Risings in the 18th century, this language and the rich culture behind it has held strong and has been passed down from generation to generation up until today.

Even in Scotland, when Scots is mentioned, the first instinctive reaction is to class it as just a dialect of English. However, there are those who believe that the reason behind the skepticism to accept the linguistic status of Scots is rooted in the internalised racism that was caused by decades of English oppression, where Scottish children were physically abused into giving up their own mother language (Douglas, 1994).

The survey findings discussed in the third chapter clearly illustrate this detachment from the Scots language, highlighting the generational gap between Scots speakers and the separation between the contexts where Scots is used and the ones where English is the preferred language. The participants, mostly students and alumni of the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow aged 18 to 25, listed for the bigger part informal contexts as the occasions where Scots is mostly used. These include family gatherings, conversations with family members and friends, and cultural events that are tied to the Scottish indigenous culture and language. It is important to note that more formal contexts that might be considered more important and official (i.e. their workplace, universities and schools) were not included in the participant's answers. This fact supports the

opinion that Scots has been relegated to the back rows of the Scottish culture for way too long (e.g. Douglas 1994).

One factor of this perceived unimportance of Scots is definitely the scarcity of data regarding the use of Scots in Scotland. The first and last official data dates back to the last Scottish census in 2011 when a question about Scots was asked for the first time. In the previous censuses, questions were asked about the use of English and Gaelic as well as other languages spoken by immigrant families. This gathered important information to paint an accurate picture of the sociolinguistic background in Scotland. Still, its accuracy is not to be trusted completely, as a big portion of the data was missing due to the lack of questions about Scots and Scots-speaking practices.

This study has tried to, at least partially, cover this gap in the research, not only gathering statistical data on the use of Scots but also trying to get an insight into the way Scots is perceived by Scottish citizens to determine if the statement made by Dr Douglas in 1994 at the Robert Gordon University's Heritage Conference is still relevant today.

However, despite the comprehensive nature of this study, it is important to acknowledge several limitations that may have influenced the interpretation of the findings. The participant pool is surely one of these limitations. The link, spread through social media pages affiliated with the University of Strathclyde, only reached a limited participant pool, both in numbers and demographics. Out of the 24 respondents, only 5 were over the age of 25, and only one of these was between 50 and 60, it is safe to assume that most, if not all, of the respondents are highly educated people, either currently enrolled at university or recent graduates.

In spite of these limitations, it is believed that the survey has provided important information about the way and frequency Scots is used among the younger generation, arguably the most distant to its roots and its cultural significance.

However, the lack of representation of Scots in the media and the understanding that with enough available media presence Scots could once again become culturally relevant in Scotland is an almost unanimously recognised fact.

The Scottish is a people that takes great pride in expressing and showing their culture, in honouring their roots and their history. Scots, their language and the language of their ancestors deserves to be treated with the same respect, making it emerge from the back rows of the Scottish linguistic background, with a view to helping it grow and become once again an integral part of the rich Scottish identity.

Whether it is through the addition of Scots as a subject in the school curricula or through the promotion of Scots-speaking channels, I believe Scotland should preserve this rich language that is such a fundamental part of the Scottish identity.

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RIASSUNTO IN ITALIANO

La lingua scots è sempre stata un componente fondamentale nella consolidazione dell'identità scozzese. Nonostante ciò, essa viene spesso considerata, anche da esperti, come un dialetto della lingua inglese, negando alla lingua scots il riconoscimento dello status di lingua. In passato, lo Scots, la lingua delle Lowlands (la regione a sud della Scozia che si estende dai confini con l'Inghilterra fino a nord-est e alle isole Orcadi e Shetland), da non confondere con il gaelico scozzese, era la lingua parlata dai Re scozzesi ed era la lingua ufficiale di documenti e atti regali, ma era anche la lingua principale della tradizione letteraria scozzese che vedeva come esponente il poeta Robert Burns, le cui poesie vengono ancora lette e recitate al giorno d'oggi. È perciò naturale domandarsi il motivo per cui la lingua scots viene così spesso dimenticata e ignorata nello scrivere la storia della Scozia. Secondo la dottoressa Sheila Douglas, il motivo di questa continua indifferenza nei confronti dello scots giace nella storia scozzese e nel continuo e radicato razzismo nei confronti delle lingue e della cultura scozzesi (1994). La dott.ssa Douglas spiega in una conferenza tenutasi alla Robert Gordon University nel 1994, che nel 1707, con l'unificazione dei Parlamenti inglesi e scozzesi, lo scots iniziò a scomparire sia come lingua ufficiale del governo che come lingua parlata dalla popolazione, incoraggiata ad usare una lingua "più dignitosa" come l'inglese, relegando lo scots nell'immaginario collettivo fino ad oggi al ruolo di lingua lingua dei pub e delle classi sociali più basse. Questi pregiudizi nei confronti dello scots hanno portato al lento declino della lingua, sia scritta che parlata, e alla mancata nascita di una "lingua scozzese standard". Il bilinguismo che ancora oggi esiste in Scozia, con la contrapposizione tra la lingua inglese e le lingue scozzese, ha portato ad un inevitabile regresso nella costituzione dell'identità nazionale scozzese e alla conseguente e ancora più marcata spaccatura tra l'identità scozzese e quella inglese.

La lingua scots, nonostante venga considerata da molti, scozzesi e non, come una forma distorta dell'inglese è una lingua a tutti gli effetti, che trova le sue radici nella sottofamiglia germanica della

famiglia linguistica indoeuropea. Così come l'inglese, lo scots prende origine dall'inglese antico, la lingua parlata in Gran Bretagna nel Medioevo. Così come l'inglese, lo scots appartiene al ramo della famiglia germanica più vicino alla lingua frisone, mentre lingue moderne come lo svedese e il tedesco sono più simili al protogermanico.

La lingua scots, in particolare, affonda le sue radici nel dialetto Northumbro, un dialetto dell'inglese antico parlato nella regione che corrisponde al nord dell'odierna Inghilterra. Questa vicinanza tra le regioni del sud della Scozia e il regno di Northumbria è sicuramente il motivo delle somiglianze linguistiche che appaiono ancora oggi tra la lingua scots e i dialetti del nord dell'Inghilterra. Questa relazione tra la lingua inglese e lo scots è uno dei motivi che sta dietro al dibattito sullo status di lingua dello scots. A questo proposito, Fiona Douglas sostiene che, almeno dal punto di vista ideologico, lo scots è da considerarsi come lingua, visto il suo sviluppo storico, la sua tradizione letteraria e il suo vasto numero di dialetti (2006).

Oltre alle radici nell'inglese antico, che hanno portato alla vicinanza linguistica con l'inglese moderno, la lingua scots ha subito le influenze anche di altre lingue germaniche, in particolare di quelle scandinave in seguito all'invasione vichinga dell'ottavo secolo, che portò i vichinghi danesi a stanziarsi a sud-est del confine scozzese, mentre i norvegesi si stanziarono nelle regioni a nord e a est della Scozia, in particolare nelle isole Orcadi e Shetland. L'invasione dei vichinghi scandinavi lasciò un importante retaggio linguistico sia in Inghilterra che in Scozia. L'influenza scandinava nello scots è facilmente riconoscibile nei dialetti parlati nelle isole Orcadi e Shetland, dove si parlava una lingua originata dal norvegese antico chiamata Norn e che ancora oggi influenza lo scots parlato nelle regioni insulari della Scozia.

In Scozia, oltre allo scots, ancora oggi si parla il gaelico scozzese, una lingua celtica parlata dai Gaeli e l'unica lingua celtica scozzese sopravvissuta fino ad oggi. Il gaelico scozzese ancora oggi viene parlato nella regione delle Highlands e nelle grandi isole a nord-est del Paese. Nonostante la vicinanza geografica tra le due lingue, lo scots non ha mai subito influenze significative da parte del gaelico perchè non è mai stata vista come una lingua superiore allo scots. Al contrario, durante le invasioni vichinghe, era la lingua degli invasori ad essere considerata superiore. In seguito al

ritorno all'uso della lingua volgare nell'ambito legale dopo che il gaelico venne soppiantato a seguito dell'invasione normanna in favore del latino e del francese, fu lo scots a ricoprire il ruolo di lingua ufficiale della burocrazia. L'influenza gaelica al giorno d'oggi rimane nella toponomastica. I nomi di paesi e regioni, soprattutto nelle Highlands, vengono infatti dal gaelico scozzese.

Il Rinascimento, come per il resto dell'Europa, è stato un periodo di forte importanza culturale e linguistica in Scozia. Nella storia della Scozia si possono infatti contare due periodi rinascimentali, caratterizzati dalla rinascita della cultura, della letteratura e della lingua scozzese.

Il primo Rinascimento coincide con il Rinascimento europeo, tra il quindicesimo e il diciassettesimo secolo. Durante questo primo Rinascimento, la Scozia si ritrova protagonista al fianco delle altre nazioni europee, sia nell'ambito politico che letterario, con lo sviluppo della lingua ufficiale delle corti e della burocrazia (lo scots) anche come mezzo dell'espressione letteraria e artistica della nazione. Questo primo Rinascimento finì però nel 1707 in seguito all'unione dei Parlamenti, quando lo scots venne soppiantato dall'inglese.

Il secondo Rinascimento scozzese ebbe luogo nel ventesimo secolo, che vide la ripresa dell'autonomia politica della Scozia e la rinascita della sua tradizione letteraria.

Dopo l'abolizione della lingua scots come lingua ufficiale della Scozia, il popolo scozzese iniziò ad allontanarsi progressivamente dall'identità e dalle tradizioni scozzesi. Nei primi anni del '900, gli ideali di indipendenza del primo Rinascimento furono d'ispirazione per la rinascita politica, linguistica e culturale della Scozia.

Il poeta Hugh MacDiarmid, considerato l'esponente principale del secondo Rinascimento scozzese, rivendicò il poeta William Dunbar come poeta nazionale scozzese al posto dell'acclamato Robert Burns. Questo perché Dunbar nelle sue opere esaltava la lingua e la cultura scozzese mentre Burns scriveva di e per una Scozia che era stata privata della sua indipendenza (Keller, McClure, Sandrock, 2014). MacDiarmid inventò anche una nuova versione dello scots, chiamata Lallans, il cui lessico venne in parte preso dall'Etymological Dictionary of Scots, scritto da John Jamieson nel 1808 e in parte inventato dal poeta. Le intenzioni di MacDiarmid erano quelle di rendere il Lallans la lingua standard che avrebbe riportato la letteratura scozzese in auge nella scena letteraria internazionale.

Il risultato che si ottenne fu però un fallimento: la lingua Lallans risultava come una versione artificiale dello scots, nella quale parole in scots venivano usate con una struttura grammaticale tipica dell'inglese standard. Inoltre, il Lallans non divenne mai una lingua popolare tra i nativi della vera lingua lallans, lo scots parlato nelle Lowlands, proprio a causa della sua artificialità. Nonostante i difetti del Lallans, MacDiarmid scrisse numerose poesie e antologie nella nuova lingua, riportando in superficie nella scena letteraria dell'epoca lo scots come espressione poetica della Scozia. Nella sua più famosa poesia, *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* (1926), MacDiarmid analizza diversi temi, tra cui il ruolo internazionale della Scozia e di conseguenza evidenzia come lo scots debba avere un posto come lingua della letteratura nel panorama artistico e culturale del Novecento. Il Rinascimento scozzese non fu perciò solo un movimento culturale e letterario, ma il suo scopo principale era quello di politicizzare la letteratura scozzese e lo scots per ripristinare la grandezza perduta della Scozia. La letteratura scozzese dell'epoca e la sua diversità linguistica rappresentano le molteplici identità di una nazione in cui coesistono lingue diverse fra loro che rappresentano sfaccettature diverse della cultura scozzese.

La diversità linguistica in Scozia si può trovare anche all'interno di una stessa lingua. Lo scots, infatti, raccoglie sotto il suo ombrello numerosi dialetti regionali, la cui struttura grammaticale e lessicale si differenzia in base alle diverse collocazioni geografiche. La differenza lessicale è evidenziata nella poesia *The Chaffinch Map of Scotland* (1965) del poeta Edwin Morgan. L'opera rientra nella corrente della poesia visiva e a primo acchito è facile vedere come essa rappresenti la conformazione morfologica della Scozia così come è rappresentata nelle carte geografiche. Le tre principali regioni scozzesi (le Highlands, le Lowlands e le Southern Uplands) rappresentano le tre strofe della poesia, ma la sua particolarità è che il testo è in realtà composto da variazioni di una stessa parola "chaffinch" (fringilla). La fringilla è un uccello presente tutto l'anno in Scozia e il poeta ha scelto di utilizzare i diversi modi in cui questo uccello viene chiamato per delineare le forme della nazione, evidenziando come, anche all'interno di una nazione relativamente piccola in cui la prima lingua rimane comunque l'inglese, la lingua cambi così repentinamente in base alla regione.

Nello scots ci sono quattro principali variazioni linguistiche (insulare, settentrionale, centrale e meridionale), ognuna delle quali comprende altri dialetti che cambiano con il variare della regione d'origine.

Lo scots insulare, parlato nelle isole Shetland e Orcadi, è la variazione dello scots che più è stato influenzato dalla lingua norrena, importata dai vichinghi scandinavi. I dialetti delle Orcadi e delle isole Shetland, diversi linguisticamente fra loro, sono caratterizzati da una forte intonazione di origine scandinava e dal lessico che riporta influenze della lingua norn, lingua parlata nelle isole a nord-est della Scozia durante e dopo l'invasione vichinga, anche in contesti ufficiali fino al diciottesimo secolo. A differenza delle isole Shetland, il cui l'influenza scandinava, sia nella fonetica che nella morfologia, è di origine norvegese, il dialetto delle isole Orcadi trova le sue radici nella lingua faroese e nell'islandese.

Il dialetto del nord della Scozia è parlato nella regione che va dalla contea di Caithness fino alla regione dell'East Angus. Il dialetto parlato nella contea di Caithness è stato fortemente influenzato dalla lingua norn e dal gaelico scozzese che, nel 1700, veniva parlato in meno della metà delle parrocchie della contea. A nord est della regione invece, il dialetto dello scots prende il nome di dorico. Rispetto agli altri dialetti, il dorico è vastamente differente, sia per quanto riguarda la fonetica che per quanto riguarda il lessico. In dorico infatti si possono trovare molte parole appartenenti al lessico quotidiano che non si trovano in nessun altro dialetto scozzese. Il dorico veniva anche frequentemente usato in letteratura, specialmente nei dialoghi delle opere appartenenti alla corrente letteraria della "kailyard school" dell'inizio del Novecento. Le opere della kailyard school area fortemente incentrate sul sentimentalismo e sulla romanticizzazione delle aree rurali della Scozia e i dialoghi, carichi di regionalismi e espressioni dialettali, erano il mezzo degli autori per rinforzare il realismo presente nelle loro opere.

I dialetti dello scots parlati nella fascia centrale della Scozia sono principalmente due, ma quello più interessante è quello parlato nelle zone circondanti Glasgow, nella regione ovest della Scozia. Glasgow infatti presenta una propria variazione di scots chiamata "Glaswegian patter". Nella regione a ovest della fascia centrale, c'è una forte distinzione tra le città, dove lo scots venne

progressivamente abbandonato e mescolato con l'inglese e con il gaelico, sia scozzese che irlandese, e le campagne dove la tradizione dello scots si è mantenuta. A Glasgow, nonostante lo scots sia progressivamente sparito, si sono coniate nuove parole che sono entrate nel vocabolario degli abitanti della città e che hanno subito l'influenza di altre lingue ma sono tipiche della città. Le regioni del Lanarkshire e dell'Ayrshire, non lontane da Glasgow, hanno mantenuto lo scots nella sua forma più pura.

I dialetti del sud della Scozia invece sono tre e sono molto diversi tra loro: la parlata della regione di Edimburgo è quella che potrebbe essere definita come lo scots standard, essendo il dialetto parlato nella capitale, ma allo stesso tempo, è anche quella meno usata in letteratura, seppur essa sopravviva nella lingua parlata.

Il dialetto parlato nella parte centrale della regione presenta molte somiglianze ai dialetti della fascia centrale della Scozia anche se in esso è possibile riconoscere una forte influenza del gaelico irlandese.

Il dialetto parlato nella regione al confine con l'Inghilterra invece, è molto diverso dagli altri dialetti dello scots, anche da quelli parlati nella regione meridionale, soprattutto per la forte differenza nella pronuncia delle vocali.

L'ultimo dialetto dello scots è quello parlato nella regione dell'Ulster, in Irlanda del Nord, dove viene considerato come una vera e propria lingua e non un dialetto. La presenza dello scots in Irlanda è dovuta all'arrivo di immigrati scozzesi provenienti dalla regione ovest della Scozia, e quindi parlanti nativi dello scots, in seguito alla colonizzazione dell'Irlanda da parte della Gran Bretagna nel quindicesimo secolo. Nei secoli successivi, la regione dell'Ulster divenne una meta particolarmente popolare tra gli emigrati scozzesi, che portarono nell'Ulster, oltre alle tradizioni e alla cultura, anche la loro lingua che, influenzata dalle lingue irlandesi parlate nella zona prima dell'arrivo degli scozzesi, divenne un dialetto chiamato Ulster scots, o Ullans, dall'unione di Ulster e Lallans.

La conformazione geolinguistica della Scozia, al giorno d'oggi, presenta una sostanziale differenza rispetto all'epoca in cui lo scots era la lingua più parlata, seguita dal gaelico scozzese e dall'inglese.

Come conseguenza dell'invasione inglese, l'uso dello scots cominciò a sparire dai contesti ufficiali e, di conseguenza, anche da quelli più informali, dando spazio all'inglese, considerata dal governo in primis una lingua "più dignitosa" e pertanto più adatta all'uso quotidiano. Lo scots quindi, non più insegnato nelle scuole, rimase una lingua limitata ai contesti domestici e di conseguenza tramandata di generazione in generazione per via orale, senza insegnamenti "formali." Nonostante, con il passare degli anni lo scots venne restituito tra le lingue ufficiali della Scozia accanto all'inglese, l'uso lingua ha subito un veloce declino. Fu solo nel 2011, a seguito del censimento, che allo scots venne riconosciuto il titolo di lingua indigena della Scozia, sancendo il dovere della nazione di conservare la lingua con tutte le sue tradizioni e il loro impatto culturale. Nel 2011 fu anche la prima volta che una domanda sull'uso della lingua scots venne inserita in un censimento. Nonostante la mancanza di dati ufficiali, nel 2001 un'indagine ha rilevato che il 30% dei cittadini scozzesi fosse capace di parlare lo scots a qualsiasi livello. Questa indagine ha evidenziato anche la mancanza di istituzioni per la conservazione e lo sviluppo dello scots, entità esistenti per altre minoranze linguistiche come il gallese, l'Ulster scots e il gaelico. Nel 2001, i dati raccolti dal censimento sulle minoranze linguistiche in Scozia mostrano che circa 2 milioni di persone conoscono la lingua scots e sono capaci di parlarla o comprenderla. Solo per l'1,1% della popolazione però lo scots è la prima lingua.

In seguito a forti campagne messe in atto da associazioni per la preservazione dello scots, nel 2011 la lingua scots venne inserita tra le lingue ufficiali della Scozia e fece la sua ricomparsa come lingua degli affari ufficiali della nazione. Nel 2015 venne lanciato un progetto, esistente ancora oggi, che ha come scopo quello di preservare e incoraggiare l'uso dello scots in Scozia, nella speranza che esso possa perdere la sua reputazione di lingua delle classi inferiori e possa reclamare la sua perduta grandezza linguistica.

Essendo gli ultimi dati riguardanti l'uso dello scots in Scozia risalenti al 2011, per comprendere a fondo come la lingua scots viene usata al giorno d'oggi, ho distribuito un sondaggio ad un gruppo di studenti scozzesi dell'Università di Strathclyde a Glasgow. Lo scopo del sondaggio era quello di delineare le abitudini e le percezioni riguardanti la lingua scots, prendendo in considerazione

fattori come l'età, la regione geografica di provenienza e le dinamiche linguistiche familiari. I risultati del sondaggio hanno delineato il ruolo dello scots nella scena linguistica scozzese, portando alla luce non solo i dati statistici ma anche le esperienze personali dei partecipanti.

Il sondaggio si compone di diciassette domande divise in due sezioni. La prima sezione riporta le domande atte a delineare il profilo anagrafico del partecipante, con domande sull'età e sulla regione di provenienza, da identificare sul cartina della Scozia che era stata fornita. Ai partecipanti veniva poi chiesto se e quale lingua scozzese viene parlata nelle loro famiglie e l'età dei membri della famiglia che parlano scots.

La seconda parte invece era incentrata sui dati statistici sull'uso dello scots e sulle esperienze dei partecipanti.

Alle persone consultate veniva chiesto di quantificare l'uso dello scots nella loro vita di tutti i giorni e di specificare i contesti in cui loro o i membri della loro famiglia sono più propensi a parlare scots piuttosto che l'inglese. Veniva poi chiesto se, secondo la loro esperienza, esiste un gap generazionale tra i parlanti dello scots e se la rappresentazione nei media è sufficiente o se, aumentando questa rappresentazione, lo scots potrebbe diventare più popolare anche tra le generazioni più giovani.

Il sondaggio e il metodo di distribuzione adottato sono stati studiati affinché il link del questionario raggiungesse il più vasto numero di individui scozzesi.

Il link è stato condiviso sulle bacheche delle pagine social dell'università di Strathclyde e ai partecipanti veniva poi chiesto di condividere il questionario con i membri della loro famiglia, per garantire che la ricerca comprendesse tutte le fasce d'età.

Proprio a causa del metodo di distribuzione scelto, i partecipanti allo studio erano per la maggior parte studenti ed ex studenti dell'università di Strathclyde. Delle 24 persone che hanno risposto al questionario, la maggior parte erano studenti tra i 18 e i 25 anni provenienti dalla fascia centrale della Scozia. Il campione di partecipanti si confaceva quindi di persone molto giovani che avevano accesso all'istruzione universitaria, rendendo molto ridotta la loro esperienza con lo scots. Dai dati del sondaggio emerge infatti che il divario generazionale tra i cittadini che parlano scots è

sostanziale. Le nuove generazioni, sia per il distacco socio-culturale nei confronti della lingua scots, sia per la mancata rappresentazione della lingua stessa nei media, si stanno allontanando sempre più dalla lingua e dalle tradizioni scozzesi. Le generazioni dei genitori e dei nonni dei partecipanti, invece, sono state in grado di mantenere viva la tradizione linguistica scozzese, provando che la situazione dipinta dai dati di questo studio rispecchia quella presentata dai dati del censimento del 2011. Le nuove generazioni presentano comunque un certo grado di familiarità nei confronti dello scots, ma è più probabile che i giovani sappiano capire lo scots parlato piuttosto che parlarlo loro stessi.

I dati inoltre mostrano che l'uso dello scots è predominante nei contesti informali, dimostrando che, nonostante non ci sia più il divieto di parlare scots, la lingua non è ancora considerata appropriata per i contesti ufficiali, in cui ancora oggi l'inglese è la lingua predominante.

Unanime è l'opinione dei partecipanti sul fatto che la rappresentazione media (televisione, social media,...) al momento non è sufficiente, ma se allo scots venisse reso accessibile attraverso i canali media, allora anche l'opinione delle generazioni più giovani e della popolazione in generale nei confronti dello scots cambierebbe, rendendola una lingua più comunemente parlata in Scozia.

Se la popolarità dello scots si estendesse oltre alle vecchie generazioni e venisse accolta anche dai più giovani, allora forse gli stereotipi che dipingono lo scots come una lingua grezza, degna solamente di appartenere alla classe più bassa della società scozzese, potrebbero sparire e lasciare spazio alla rivitalizzazione dello scots e al riscatto della sua importanza culturale come elemento fondamentale dell'identità nazionale scozzese e fonte di orgoglio per la Scozia.

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