Introduction

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In October 2021, in the middle of the COVID pandemic, the 13th Triennial Conference of the Forum for Research on the Languages of Scotland and Ulster was organised outwith the UK for the first time in its history. It took place as an online event hosted by the Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich. To mark this step, it seemed timely to highlight the international dimension of the conference and adopt as a leitmotif 'The languages of Scotland and Ulster in a global context, past and present'. In fact, there is a long tradition of research on these, including their varieties spoken around the globe, by scholars from all over the world. Some of the earliest studies in traditional dialectology focussed on language variation in Scotland, such as the early 20th-century descriptions of Scottish regional dialects by the Swiss dialectologists Eugen Dieth and Rudolph Zai. It thus does not come as a surprise that the first caretaker committee of what was then called the Universities' Forum on Scots Language Research, set up in 1977 at the School of Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh, consisted not only of a Scottish scholar, A J Aitken, but also of a German and North American scholar, Hans Speitel and Roger Lass, respectively.[1] While the initial focus of the Forum was on Scots and Ulster Scots, at the third annual meeting in 1980, its name was changed into Universities' Forum for Research on the Languages of Scotland (UFRLS), thus indicating an extended scope to

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[1] I am indebted to Joanna Kopaczyk for information on the history of the Forum for Research on the Languages of Scotland and Ulster based on email communication with Caroline Macafee and Michael Montgomery (†).

include all languages spoken and written in Scotland. In 1991, UFRLS was dissolved and reconstituted as the Forum for Research on the Languages of Scotland and Northern Ireland. This title was changed into its current form to be the Forum for Research on the Languages of Scotland and Ulster in 1993. The international conferences organised by the Forum started in the late 1980s, thus further strengthening the international scope of research conducted on the languages of Scotland and Ulster. Although not all dates can be retrieved, these international conferences moved into a triennial rhythm probably in the late 1990s but at the latest in the early to mid 2000s.

Throughout this time, core research on the languages of Scotland and Ulster, conducted in the UK, was complemented by the work of international scholars who contributed to the spread of new methods and paradigms to the Scottish context. Recent decades have, for instance, seen the launch of the Arizona/Nevada Scottish Gaelic Documentation Project (see Clayton et al. 2018), the compilation of the *Helsinki Corpus of Older Scots* (*HCOS*) and the *Helsinki Corpus of Scottish Correspondence, 1540–1750* (*ScotsCorr*) in Finland (Meurman-Solin 1995; 2017), the compilation of *ICE* Scotland in Germany (see Schützler, Gut and Fuchs 2017), as well as a spade of research on different linguistic features of Scottish Gaelic, Scots and Scottish Standard English (e.g., Bosch 2010; Brato 2016; Dorian 2014; Dossena 2005; Görlach 2002; Kniezsa 1997; Kopaczyk 2013; Melchers 1999; Rodríguez Ledesma 2013; Schützler 2015, Stewart 2013), to name but a select few. In addition to the substantial research output by scholars outwith Scotland, there has been growing research interest in varieties of Scots and Gaelic around the world, for instance, Scots in North America and Australia (e.g., Dossena 2007; 2016; Tulloch 1997) or Scottish Gaelic in Nova Scotia, Canada (e.g., Dunbar 2019, McEwan-Fujita 2013).

This broad research input by scholars from Scotland, the UK and abroad is also reflected in this volume, which contains selected contributions arising from the 13th Triennial Conference of the Forum of Research on the

Languages of Scotland and Ulster at LMU Munich. These present studies on Scots, Scottish Standard English and Gaelic in a global context both past and present. The chapters of this volume initially place their focus on language use within Scotland, with studies providing novel insights into local varieties of Scots, and into Scottish Standard English and language planning for Scottish Gaelic. The final part then considers language use and perspectives on Scots outwith Scotland. Together, they provide an overview of cutting-edge approaches to the study of Scots and Scottish Standard English, including, among others, the methods of perceptual dialectology, digital approaches such as n-gram based dialect classification and new digital tools such as *The Digital Linguistic Atlas of Scotland*, and draw attention to lesser-known sources and geographical contexts.

Chapter synopses

The first two contributions consider local usages of Scots, zooming in on the North-East of Scotland. Derrick McClure discusses the use of the Doric in William P. Milne's *Eppie Elrick*, a historical novel set at the time of the first Jacobite rising, which was first published in serial instalments between 1954 and 1955. While the tradition of representing the Doric in fictional dialogue was well established in 19th- and early 20th-century fictional and documentary works, *Eppie Elrick* is quite distinct from these. Although Milne does not interfere with the tradition of narrating the plot in English, he maximises the use of the Doric in his novel by stretching monologues and soliloquies beyond credibility. This is all the more astounding seeing that Milne, although a native Doric speaker, had spent most of his life in England. Derrick McClure's detailed analysis of the linguistic features of the Doric in *Eppie Elrick* highlights the richness of this invaluable resource for Scots scholars.

Dawn Leslie's paper on hyperlocal perceptions of the 'Doric' offers a perspective on dialect perception that differs from previous research with a

broader geographical scope. The study, drawing on data elicited from 320 informants from across the North-East of Scotland, applies an adapted version of Preston's (1999) five-step methodology. Leslie's informants performed a range of activities as part of a paper survey, comprising, among others, mapping, place ranking, and speaker identification/evaluation tasks. This approach allowed the author to detect hyperlocal micro regional perceptions and 'micro-Dorics'. Evidence from heat-maps demonstrates, for instance, that speakers tend to place their own speech community in the centre of the Doric speech area, thus showing hyperlocal shifting of the Doric boundary. The limited focus of the study on the North-East of Scotland thus offers insights into intraregional identities and dialect perception at a very local level that could not be gained by taking the whole of Scotland into consideration.

Andreas Weilinghoff's contribution shifts the focus to a wider Scottish perspective by exploring to what extent political party membership affects the realisation of onset /r/ by members of the Scottish Parliament. For the study, 24 male, white MSPs were selected from the Conservative Party, the Labour Party and the SNP, who all have similar educational backgrounds. In addition to party membership, the analysis accounted for a number of intralinguistic and extralinguistic predictors such as preceding sound, word type and regional background by implementing conditional inference tree modelling. While the preceding sound has a significant effect on the realisation of onset /r/, with fewer taps and trills after alveolar plosives, the study finds that party affiliation is indeed also a significant factor. Conservative MS are shown to produce fewer taps and trills than members of the SNP and the Labour Party.

Ole Schützler critically discusses why Scottish Standard English (SSE) has not received the same scholarly attention as other L1 standard varieties of English. He identifies three major reasons for this lack of attention: (1) the narrative of loss that Scots suffered during its gradual assimilation to the Southern British Standard English (SBSE); (2) the bias

towards Scots, which is seen by many as a variety which is clearly distinct from SBSE, unlike SSE; (3) the link between the pluricentricity of English and nationhood, which leads some linguists to consider SSE a regional variety on a par with other regional varieties such as Somerset English, due to the lack of a national border between Scotland and England within the UK. Schützler goes on to suggest some strategies to promote research on SSE, illustrated by a case study on modal auxiliaries of obligation. Such strategies include primarily the further development and sharing of corpora such as *ICE* Scotland and the generation of more clearly SSE-oriented subsets of existing corpora such as *CMSW* or *SCOTS*. Moreover, he argues for a change of perspective whereby the distinction between Scots and SSE is a register-driven one rather than one based on distinct linguistic features such that this may even effect a change in terminology towards 'Standard Scots'.

Kevin Buckley's paper puts a dialect classifier based on character N-gram features to the test, which allows him to delimit larger Middle English dialect areas across the Early and Late Middle English periods. The classifier, which draws on data from, for instance, the *Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English* (*LAEME*), the *Middle English Grammar Corpus* (*MEG-C*) and the *Linguistic Atlas of Older Scots* (*LAOS*), is moreover employed to assess to which Late Middle English dialects Older Scots is most closely related. For the study, suffix N-grams were selected since it was assumed that Middle English dialectal variation is, among others, detectable in nominal and verbal inflectional patterns. The study finds that the dialect classifier can most accurately discriminate between the Late Middle English 'North' and 'Non-North' clusters, including the Midlands and Southern dialect areas. In addition, the classifier successfully confirmed the lineage between Older Scots and Northern Middle English. This bottom-up approach thus proves a useful method to reveal the origin of Middle English texts that cannot be attributed to a particular dialect area based on text-internal or extralinguistic information.

The following two contributions introduce work-in-progress towards new digital tools for the study of Scots. The paper by John Kirk, Markus Pluschkovits, Hans Christian Breuer and Ludwig Maximilian Breuer reports on *The Digital Linguistic Atlas of Scotland* (*DLAS*) project, which has set out to digitise the material of the printed two-volume *Linguistic Atlas of Scotland* (*LAS*). This project involves much more than a simple digitisation of the original data. The prime objective is to lexemise the ortho-phonological variants in the questionnaire, i.e., the original highly varied spellings provided by the respondents, so that these can be attributed to one lexical type. It is shown that the lexemisation process may result in different lexemes from the ones indicated on the original *LAS* maps. For instance, whereas in *LAS* *cuit*/*kuit*, *queet* and *cate* are separate lexical items, the *DLAS* team considers them all as variants of the lexeme *cuit*. As part of the project, the resulting new patterns of lexical variation will be analysed and interpreted according to the four dimensions of lexicology/etymology, semantics, cultural-ethnography and geography. As the authors point out, *DLAS* will form an invaluable database to study the distribution of traditional Scots vocabulary, e.g., with respect to the Highland Line border or the etymological composition of the Scots vocabulary.

Christine Elsweiler's article introduces a pilot speech act annotation scheme developed for selected 18th-century letters from the *Helsinki Corpus of Scottish Correspondence, 1540–1750* (*ScotsCorr*). In letters, speech acts such as apologies or requests generally do not occur in isolation but rather in hierarchically organised sequences. This means that certain speech acts, for example, apologies, are used to support the communicative goals of other, larger speech acts, so-called macro-speech acts, such as requests. The speech act annotation under development captures the hierarchical organisation of macro-speech acts in historical letters. The annotation is stored in XML so that both micro- and macro-speech acts and different realisation strategies can be searched for. The annotated pilot corpus is a first building block for a larger

pragmatically annotated cross-varietal correspondence corpus consisting of 18th-century Scottish, Irish and English letters, which is to be compiled as part of a larger project. This cross-varietal correspondence corpus will enable researchers to conduct variational pragmatic studies on historical regional varieties of English.

The aims of Wilson McLeod's contribution are two-fold. On the one hand, it evaluates the impact of the *Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005*, the so-called 'Gaelic Act', and on the other, it assesses the Scottish Languages Bill introduced into the Scottish Parliament in November 2023. The Gaelic Act provided for the establishment of Bòrd na Gàidhlig, a statutory body that is required to develop a National Gaelic Language Plan every five years. Despite these provisions, the Gaelic Act has not had the positive impact that had been hoped for. In his evaluation of the Gaelic Act, McLeod draws on examples of good practice from legislation for other minoritised languages, in particular, Gaelic in Wales. Bòrd na Gàidhlig has, for instance, only been allocated a moderate budget and as a consequence has been under-staffed. By contrast, the Welsh Language Board had nearly five times as many staff members at its peak. Moreover, the objectives set in the National Gaelic Language Plans have remained low compared to the target of reaching 1 million speakers by 2050 stipulated in the national Welsh language strategy Cymraeg 2050. The recently introduced Scottish Languages Bill introduces some new powers for local authorities to specify 'areas of linguistic significance'. Moreover, if sufficient demand exists, education authorities will be required to offer Gaelic-medium education not only in primary schools but additionally at the level of early learning and childcare. Yet, despite these innovations, McLeod identifies crucial omissions from the Scottish Languages Bill, such as the failure to introduce an enforceable right to Gaelic-medium education or to establish a language commissioner in charge of enforcing compliance with language laws. It moreover criticises the lack of detail regarding, e.g., the introduction of specific language standards.

Rob Dunbar's article widens the scope from mainland Scottish Gaelic to a variety spoken in Nova Scotia, Canada. Although it is known for its conservatism and distinctiveness, Dunbar demonstrates in his paper that it is more than a mere fossilised variety. At present, Nova Scotian Gaelic has fewer than 200 native speakers. Nevertheless, it has aroused some scholarly interest since it can offer some insight into how Gaelic may have been spoken in parts of the Scottish Highlands, such as Lochaber, where it is now extinct. Dunbar surveys observations by Gaelic speakers from Scotland as well as earlier linguistic fieldwork, to consider both the history of Nova Scotian Gaelic and its current developments. While it appeared to preserve the original dialectal distinctions in Scotland, mainly due to a number of factors such as migration and settlement patterns, dialect mixing seems to have occurred as well. However, during the 20th century, the number of Gaelic speakers in Nova Scotia steadily declined. Recently, some efforts at revitalising Nova Scotian Gaelic have been made, marked in particular by the establishment of an Office of Gaelic Affairs in 2006. A number of language acquisition programs have been initiated, many of which place a focus on the dissemination of local forms of Gaelic.

The final contribution, by Marina Dossena, offers a perspective on Scots from outside Scotland, taking a cultural linguistic approach to the creation of myths about Scotland's past and its linguistic heritage in a diasporic context in late modern times. The study draws on articles in North American journals and magazines digitally available on the *Making of America* website. Through these outlets, literary representations of Scotland's past and linguistic history were disseminated among a readership of varying levels of schooling. Dossena uses this material to explore to what extent the perceptions of Scotland's past stem from literary sources. It is demonstrated that contrasting or even contradictory portrayals of Scottish culture blending Highland culture with Hanoverian representations have their origin in the aftermath of the last Jacobite uprising in 1745. These led to the creation of

myths and sentimental idealisations of Scots and Scottish culture as rustic and idyllic, which are perpetuated in the present day, giving rise to an image of a mythical, global Scotland.

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