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Developing a standard in lower-class Scottish writing: pauper petitions as a source for nineteenth-century lower-class Scottish language

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Abstract: The anglicisation of Scottish writing, a development in which the features of the previously high-status Scots language variety became marginalised and proscribed in favour of prestige Standard English variants, is typically dated by scholars to the sixteenth through eighteenth century. The effect of anglicisation on upper- and middle-class Scottish authors' written language has been attested in numerous studies; however, how the metalinguistic ideologies of the time affected the language of the Scottish lower classes has long remained underinvestigated. This study makes use of the recent publication of a corpus of lower-class Scottish writing from the nineteenth century – the Corpus of Scottish Pauper Petitions – to investigate the effect of prescriptivism on lower-class Scottish writing as documented in nineteenth-century pauper petitions. The materials are placed side-by-side with the writings of upper- and middle-class Scottish people during this period, taken from the Corpus of Modern Scottish Writing. This study, which investigates both overt and covert Scotticisms by drawing respectively on usage guides by contemporaneous prescriptivists and works by modern linguists, takes a ‘from below’ approach to Scotland's linguistic history and represents a new step in our understanding of the development of historical Scottish writing.

Keywords: historical sociolinguistics; Scots; anglicisation; prescriptivism; language from below

1 Introduction

In the linguistic history of Scotland, the anglicisation of Scottish writing has formed an important focus for scholars. Before the sixteenth century, a distinct standardised variety of Scots was used in Scotland; however, the changing sociopolitical relations

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between Scotland and England led to a process of convergence in favour of English during the sixteenth century, particularly affecting written language in Scotland. By the eighteenth century prescriptivist metalinguistic discourse sought to standardise and further anglicise Scottish language use, in both written and spoken form. Prominent grammarians and metalinguistic commentators of this time – including famous names such as David Hume and Sylvester Douglas – advocated for the use of Southern English prestige forms. To aid this, a large number of grammars and usage guides was written, in particular throughout the eighteenth century, proscribing so-called ‘Scotticisms’ and prescribing the Standard English forms that could be used in their stead. And, as demonstrated by scholars such as Dossena (2002), Scottish writers of the time increasingly used those forms prescribed by the usage guides, resulting in Scottish language growing increasingly anglicised – a development in which usage guides likely played a notable part.

Studies of this anglicisation have focused primarily on the period up to the early eighteenth century, by which time Scots was traditionally believed to have been fully anglicised. However, Dossena (2005) finds that this claim primarily applies to printed written works, and cannot be applied to non-print documents. This finding opens up research possibilities in the area of non-print documents of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, of which the degree of anglicisation remains largely unexplored. Moreover, while the writings of upper- and middle-class Scottish individuals have been studied widely (see e.g. Corbett 2013; Dossena 2002), the language of lower-class Scottish people has remained, by and large, underinvestigated, in large part due to the scarce availability of lower-class data for this period.

The recent publication of the Corpus of Scottish Pauper Petitions (ScotPP), compiled at Leiden University in 2022, offers new possibilities for the study of previously underrepresented subsets of the Scottish population and text types associated with them. It includes a large number of pauper petitions, letters written by poor individuals to request financial support from their local parishes as part of the Scottish system of poor relief. Composed in various Scottish parishes throughout the nineteenth century, the letters serve as a valuable resource for exploring how the preceding anglicisation of upper-class Scots affected the lower classes’ language use.

In this study I investigate how, and to what extent, the language of the Scottish lower classes in the early- to mid-nineteenth century was affected by the by then largely established Southern English norm, particularly in comparison to the language of the higher classes. Two different routes of analysis are used to address this question. The first route focuses on the Scottish forms, or Scotticisms, that were seen as markers or stereotypes of a linguistic community (Labov 1972; or as used in Beal 2004). In the nineteenth-century ideology of prescriptivism, these are the forms whose eradication would be taken to herald successful anglicisation of an individual’s language. The second part of this study focuses on typically Scottish

forms that were not socially marked as such, and therefore were not the focus of the prescriptivist efforts of linguistic commentators. Comparing the frequency of their occurrence to that of the proscribed Scotticisms can provide a valuable insight into the extent to which anglicisation, as a process that was by the nineteenth century decidedly ideologically driven, focused on just the Scottish forms that were socially marked, as opposed to the full range of Scots linguistic features present in Scottish writing at the time. Moreover, this article aims to draw attention to the scholarly possibilities presented by the ScotPP corpus, particularly as a source of language history *from below* (Elspaß et al. 2007).

A note on terminology and Scottish multilingualism is necessary: today, the main language varieties that are in use in Scotland include Scottish Gaelic, Scots, Scottish Standard English, and Standard English. While Scottish Gaelic developed from Old Irish, the other three varieties each developed from Old English. The process of standardisation in Scotland saw the emergence of a continuum. Following Stuart-Smith (2004), this ranges from the familiar-domestic and primarily spoken L-variety Scots to the prestige, written and spoken Scottish Standard English (SSE), a variety based on the Standard that developed in England but that is not quite identical, at the formal end of the cline (Maguire 2012; Millar 2020). These varieties were not immutable, however: the boundaries blur, with many forms occurring across the spectrum in both Scots and SSE. Schützler et al. (2017) therefore note that the use of “Scots” features doesn’t necessarily denote “code-shifting towards the Scots end of the continuum” (282). Since the boundaries of Scots and SSE are flexible, and the term Scottish Standard English is a more recent one and during the nineteenth century would not have been used, I will refer here to the “prestige” or “standard” variety, so as to accurately reflect the way in which people at the time thought about their own language use.

2 Theoretical background

2.1 Standardisation, anglicisation, and the history of Scottish English

Linguistic standardisation has historically been a far-reaching factor in determining the course of language change and variation. The development of many of today’s most spoken languages is affected by standardisation processes, both deliberately and non-deliberately brought about. Milroy (1994) describes standardisation as an umbrella term, which is used to describe complex processes of making choices between various sets of linguistic variants. At its base, though, the process involves

the heightening of the status of one language variety over that of another; this process develops in the direction of homogenisation of language use in a particular area. In the case of Scotland, this has historically taken the form of the anglicisation of Scottish language, a process that has an extensive and complicated history.

The sixteenth century was a turning point in the development of Scots; the language variety had been on an ongoing rise in status and usage, which peaked during the sixteenth century, but the period also marks the beginning of the variety's fall in public opinion (Devitt 1989). Where Scots had long been the prestige variety in Scotland, that position was gradually taken over by the English prestige variety – a change that is closely connected to the sociopolitical developments between Scotland and England during this period. A turning point was the Union of Parliaments in 1707; this event, in which the Scottish government was moved to London, had a strong impact on the perception of Scottish status both within and outside of Scotland. Dossena (2002: 106) writes that Scotland gained a “sense of marginality”, both sociopolitically and sociolinguistically.

The anglicisation of the Scots language had its roots earlier than these developments; indeed, the anglicisation of written texts was largely completed by the end of the seventeenth century (Millar 2020). Conceptually spoken texts and spoken language, however, still showed variation through the eighteenth century, and the Union of Parliaments instilled the anglicisation process with renewed vigour (Millar 2020). Given the sense of marginality that the preceding political developments had lent the people of Scotland, many people, generally those from the upper echelon of society, saw social benefits in taking up the linguistic patterns of their Southern neighbours, and generally shedding all outward signs of Scottishness in order to partake in the preferred ranks of English society. The language of upper-class Scotsmen during the 1500–1900 period has been investigated at length by scholars such as Dossena (2002), Cruickshank (2011), Corbett (2013), and Meurman-Solin (1997), who uses the writings and correspondence of primarily upper-class Scottish people to trace the course of said anglicisation. Important factors that influence the adoption of English variants in the early seventeenth century include gender – men were generally the first adopters – and the relationship between writer and addressee: Meurman-Solin finds that letters written to social inferiors showed more Scottish features than letters written to socially superior recipients.

A primary motor of the anglicisation of the Scots language was the phenomenon of the usage guide. The eighteenth century saw a stunning boom in the number of usage guides being written, following the popularisation of the genre among the English neighbours with Robert Lowth's *A Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1762). The usage guide was, and remains to this day, different from the grammar because its focus lies not exclusively on grammar, as is the case with its eponymous counterpart; instead, usage guides often focus on a variety of linguistic features,

including grammar but also touching on topics like register, phonology, etc. Lexicon is often highlighted in particular, with authors such as Sinclair (1782) providing long lists of specialised vocabulary categorised by subject. In their eighteenth-century heyday in Scotland, usage guides epitomised and strengthened an age of prescriptivism that would cause previously unseen levels of anglicisation of Scottish language (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2008).

Eighteenth-century usage guides were primarily aimed at the upper classes of Scottish society, and scholars such as Dossena (2005) have highlighted their marked effect on the anglicisation of those target audiences' language use. It was not only the upper classes of Scottish society who had access to the usage guides, though: literacy was a widespread quality in late modern Scotland, and by the mid-eighteenth century the Scottish population enjoyed "remarkable, if not total literacy" (Houston 2002: 45). The middle classes had a need for literacy in order to be able to read the laws that applied to their businesses, trade, and commerce; but even lower classes were widely exposed to a notable degree of literacy through the parish schools established by the reformed kirk throughout Scotland; Sir John Sinclair's survey of Scottish parishes in 1790 found that the local population should be able to read with ease and often (though this went for girls less than boys) write too (in Lynch 2007: 290). There were, however, regions of Scotland that remained behind in terms of literacy: particularly in the Gaelic-speaking Highlands, literacy remained largely unavailable until well into the nineteenth century (Houston 1985: 257).

This raises the question of to what extent those lower classes' language use was actually affected by the usage guides – but that question is a difficult one to investigate critically. Written data representing lower-class language use from this period is difficult to come by; as such, while the effect of efforts towards anglicisation on the language use of the Scottish upper and middle classes have been studied at some length, the question of how the usage guide influx affected the language of the lower classes has thus far remained understudied, primarily because the data that would make such a study feasible was simply unavailable.

This problem is a common one in the field of historical sociolinguistics and often makes for incomplete language histories, leaving a considerable portion of a language's historical variation and speaker base unrepresented. Moreover, this issue has historically given way to a tendency to focus on processes of language change and standardisation as teleological. As Watts (2012: 585) writes, language historiography has traditionally been grounded on "an implied teleology [...] that standard languages are the only valid objects of study for a language history".

In reaction to this issue, historical sociolinguists in past years (e.g. Elspaß et al. 2007) have increasingly been focusing on the *language history from below*. By studying "the social ranks below the highest social class and texts representing everyday language that could thus be considered as below formal registers such as

the language of literature” (Elspaß et al. 2007: 5), scholars are able to construct more holistic and representative language histories, incorporating a broader range of perspectives into our understanding of historical language. An important source in the study of language from below is the ego-document: these texts tend to be both less mediated and editorialised than formal writing, and produced by a broader range of the population. Research into standardisation and prescriptivism processes therefore no longer has to primarily focus on the high-prestige, upper-class materials that were traditionally the focus of studies in historical sociolinguistics.

2.2 Pauper petitions as a source for lower-class Scottish English

Therefore, the introduction of the Scottish Pauper Petition Corpus (2022), built at Leiden University by Dr. Mo Gordon, Dr. Jelena Prokic, Hester Groot, and Alma Strakova, offers a unique and innovative insight into nineteenth-century lower-class Scottish English. The majority of this corpus consists of pauper petition letters, an important part of Scottish poor relief of the nineteenth century and a promising source for supplementing our understanding of Scottish English with materials from below. In the poor law system of nineteenth-century Scotland, particularly prior to the implementation of the New Poor Law of 1845, each Scottish parish held responsibility for its own poor (Jones and King 2016). In order to qualify for poor relief, a claimant had to be ‘destitute’ and ‘disabled’; if these conditions were met, the individual would be placed on the parish poor roll and granted financial aid as a pauper. An important component of this poor relief system was the pauper petition letter (henceforth PPL): claimants would write letters to their parishes in order to outline their situation and prove their need for financial aid, in the hopes of being admitted to the aforementioned poor rolls. PPLs form a genre of their own in historical written texts, governed by formulaic rules that constrain the structure of the letter (Jones and King 2016), and bring certain methodological challenges surrounding authorship that will be touched on in Section 3. Nevertheless, such letters have in recent years proved a valuable source of (often) lower-class writing, filling a gap in historical source material. Previous work on PPLs includes the *Language of Artisans and the Labouring Poor*, or LALP, project on English PPLs (see for instance Auer and Fairman 2013; Laitinen 2015).¹

The ScotPP corpus includes, at the time of writing, two sets of letters and additional documents: one set of materials written in the 1820s in the Perth parish, and one from three decades later, written in the 1850s in the Tongue parish. Despite the three-decade gap between them, these materials offer a new perspective on early- to

¹ More can be found on the LALP project via its website at <https://wp.unil.ch/lalp/>.

mid-nineteenth century Scottish writing through the genre of PPLs. In order to adequately contextualise the language of the ScotPP's writers, comparative material is needed; this second dataset should include written materials from the same time period, written by the higher social classes (both middle and upper). A number of corpora have been built in past years that feature correspondence from this demographic. These include Dossena's Corpus of Nineteenth-century Scottish Correspondence; Meurman-Solin's Corpus of Scottish Correspondence; and Corbett et al.'s Corpus of Modern Scottish Writing.

The corpus selected here from which to draw a comparative dataset is the Corpus of Modern Scottish Writing (henceforth CMSW), built at the University of Glasgow in 2007. This corpus, which includes a variety of personal correspondence from 1700 until the present day, was (as is stated in its description) specifically built with the goal of helping research trace the course of anglicisation of Scottish language throughout this period. As ego-documents, the letters included in the CMSW are more varied than those in the ScotPP corpus. They contain a larger variety in purposes, registers, and social relations; writers are of a higher social status, and differences in hierarchy between writer and addressee are smaller. These differences affect the linguistic strategies used by letter writers. Social distance, accommodation, and hierarchy may all play a role in determining the linguistic forms that are used throughout the texts. Such factors have been highlighted in Biber (1994)'s framework for determining register and linguistic choices as determined by social and situational circumstances. Biber divides potential factors influencing linguistic choices into *social factors* (including factors such as gender, age, social position and social networks) and *situational factors* (including relations between addresser and addressee, communicative purpose of the document, and channel and topic of the text). Each of these factors can influence the linguistic choices made by a speaker or writer; particularly the parameters pertaining to *Relations between Addresser and Addressee* and *Purposes, Intents and Goals* are areas in which the CMSW and ScotPP materials diverge, and will be addressed in Section 5.

2.3 Overt and covert Scotticisms

Determining how 'Scottish' a text is can be a dicey subject; Corbett (2013: 83–4) warns against the notion of a text's 'Scottishness' as an empirical diagnostic or index. Often, a text may be deemed 'Scottish' based on the occurrence of a single Scots lexeme or orthographic sign, when that sign may be a unicum in a text otherwise characterised by the use of prestige forms. Similarly, the presence of a singular prestige form cannot be taken as a sign of standardisation at face value; it is important to weigh context and co-occurrence in an assessment of said anglicisation.

However, the occurrence of Scottish lexemes or orthographic signs can shed light on where a text falls within a societal, metalinguistic perspective on ‘Scottishness’. To this end, one valuable source for deciding on variables and markers of socially marked Scotticisms is the wealth of usage guides published around the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, whose contents strongly reflect the prevailing societal ideas surrounding Scottishness and the stereotypes associated with them. This pertains specifically to features that could be socially and culturally recognised as Scotticisms – in short, what Labov (2001) described as the stereotypes, as opposed to the markers, of a linguistic ‘style’. This distinction relates to what Aitken (1979) terms *overt* versus *covert* Scotticisms. Overt Scotticisms are those that are marked in the public discourse as being Scottish, and may therefore occur for instance in literary representations of Scottish people in which their Scottishness is being emphasised; these features are the ones that will often be remarked on by authors of usage guides. Covert Scotticisms, on the other hand, are those that are in use in the day to day but need not be markedly Scottish in the perception of speaker and listener; they are, as a result, generally used (more) unselfconsciously.

In utilising usage guides to investigate the occurrence of marked Scotticisms as compared to the use of prestige forms, the Scotticisms that are highlighted are those that were, at the time, considered highly marked and overt. The forms commented on and proscribed in usage guides are those that were, by definition, recognisable to commentators as Scottish forms, and in need of eradication. As such, making use of usage guides when analysing standardisation in nineteenth-century Scottish language yields a perspective that focuses, by necessity, on the Scottish forms that were socially marked at the time. This makes for a valuable perspective because, of course, the anglicisation of the Scots language also became an increasingly socially and ideologically driven process from the eighteenth century onward.

This approach is supplemented with a further investigation of the presence of covert Scotticisms in the language across nineteenth-century Scotland’s social classes. This additional perspective uses modern descriptive writings on Scotticisms (a term that no longer carries the derogatory tone it did in Scotland’s prescriptivist age) to investigate the presence of covert Scotticisms that retained their prevalence under the current of anglicisation. This complementary aspect to the usage guide-based study of anglicisation can offer a more complete view of the diachronic development of Scots and prestige forms and everything that lies on the continuum between them.

Selecting the usage guides used for the first part of this study was done following the work of Cruickshank (2011). Four works were chosen, on the basis of their being highly influential at the time of publication but also in the following decades. The final selection includes David Hume’s *A list of Scotticisms* (first published in 1752); James Beattie’s *Scotticisms: arranged in alphabetical order, designed*

to correct improprieties of speech and writing (1787); John Sinclair's *Observations on the Scottish Dialect* (1782); and Hugh Mitchell's *Scotticisms, vulgar anglicisms, and grammatical improprieties corrected* (1799).

3 Methodology

In order to analyse the different degrees of anglicisation versus Scottish English in nineteenth-century Scottish correspondence, two datasets were compiled. As detailed, these datasets consisted respectively of archives of nineteenth-century Scottish PPLs from the Tongue and Perth parishes, and correspondence taken from the Corpus of Modern Scottish Writing, or CMSW corpus. These datasets will be referred to as the ScotPP dataset and the CMSW dataset.

3.1 The ScotPP dataset

For the ScotPP dataset, I drew on a research project conducted under the leadership of Gordon and Prokic at Leiden University (2022). This ongoing project seeks to compile, transcribe, and digitise a collection of pauper petition letters and related correspondence, collected from the parish archives of Tongue and Perth into a single corpus, titled the ScotPP corpus and totalling at 13.209 words.² At the time of writing, the corpus comprises sources collected from two periods: documents written in 1821 in the parish of Perth, and documents from the parish of Tongue written between 1850 and 1852. Additionally, both sets of letters include cataloguing notes written by their respective parish inspectors, and the Tongue dataset included a number of medical reports, composed by the local doctor about individual petitioners in order to determine whether their medical situations were as described in the petitions. These notes and reports were not included in the dataset used for this study, which was limited to the pauper petitions that make up the bulk of the corpus.

In total, the Tongue data included 54 PPLs, totaling 8.179 words. The Perth dataset, by contrast, was markedly smaller; it consisted of just 11 PPLs, many of which were written by the same scribe, Alexander Mackenzie. In addition, this dataset included two documents that catalogued the court proceedings of one Margaret Spence; since these appear to have been written by Margaret Spence, these documents were included. In total, the Perth dataset consisted of 2.953 words.

² More on the corpus' contents and construction can be found on the corpus website, www.scotpp.lucdh.nl.

Letters were tagged for authorship, as well as other features such as the gender of the writer and the location and decade of its writing. These factors, taken from Biber (1994)'s framework of situational factors that might influence variation in language use, were the ones that could be ascertained with reasonable certainty, considering the general lack of available metadata and in-depth information on the petitioners. The factors in which they differed from the CMSW letters were interesting as potential explanations for disparities in the linguistic choices, particularly as relating to anglicisation and the inclusion of Scotticisms, between the two datasets.

3.1.1 Determining authorship

One recurring issue when working with PPL data is that of authorship. While most PPLs appear to be written by the petitioners themselves, some letters were written by other scribes, which historically often occurred in situations where the petitioner themselves was less educated, illiterate, or disabled. Identifying the letters that fell under this category was at times a delicate task. Many could be recognised by an X-mark, serving as the petitioner's signature in the document which was otherwise written up by a scribe. However, the absence of this X-mark signature could not always unequivocally indicate that the PPL had been written by the petitioner themselves, and in many cases the definitive authorship of the letters could not be attested with absolute certainty. Scholars such as Rutten and van der Wal (2014) and Włodarczyk (2016) have sought to overcome this problem by using handwriting recognition software, a potentially useful tool to explore in future research on the ScotPP materials.

The inclusion of scribal letters means that these materials cannot be asserted to be lower-class entirely, in part because we often cannot determine the social background and history of the scribe, nor even say with certainty whether the material was penned by a scribe or by the petitioners themselves. In the study of English pauper petitions, numerous scholars have found that the scribes generally came from the same socio-cultural milieu as the petitioners themselves, the scribes also being members of the labouring poor (Hitchcock et al. 1997; Sokoll 2001). While it seems likely that this is true for the Tongue and Perth scribes whose background can be determined (Section 5 will more closely examine an individual scribe in the Perth dataset), too little data is available to conclude that these patterns also apply to the Scottish parish scribes. The ScotPP dataset therefore cannot conclusively be said to exclusively include lower-class writing, while many letters do fit that category. This is important because scribes would generally have a level of literacy that exceeded the petitioner's, influencing the scribe's writing practices and knowledge of both standardised language forms and genre practices. The resulting writing is,

consequently, a step removed from the unmediated spoken forms used by the petitioner and/or scribe in a way that should be accounted for in any analysis of this data.

It is nonetheless evident that PPLs as a genre occupy a space outside of the higher-class norm that is challenged by Elspaß et al. (2007) with the notion of *language from below*. Even when scribes cannot be identified fully – though inferences can be made about their social background by examining textual context, researching individual scribes where possible, and looking at findings from other pauper petition research such as Sokoll (2001) – the petitions still represent a non-normative and original text type and genre. This leaves us with a quantitative analysis of the different ends of the Scots-Standard English continuum that are employed in these writings, which can at most function as an indication of lower-class patterns but is underpinned by class divisions that are by necessity estimated and artificial. Nonetheless, they can give us insights into linguistic patterns in this genre of writing that are markedly distinct from those in the data that we can attest as definitively higher-class, as represented by the CMSW.

3.2 The CMSW dataset

For the second dataset, representing higher-class written correspondence from the same period as the ScotPP dataset, I compiled a selection of letters from the Corpus of Modern Scottish Writing (1700–1945), created at the University of Glasgow by Corbett et al. (2007). This electronic corpus compiles written text, including a large amount of correspondence, in a period that falls in between that covered by the Helsinki Corpus of Older Scots (covering the 1450–1700 period) and the Scottish Corpus of Text and Speech (1945–today). As such, it is highly suitable for comparing the written language of early- to mid-nineteenth century petitioners to that of their higher-class contemporaries' correspondence.

The CMSW dataset was compiled by drawing written correspondence from the period of 1820–1860, approximately the same period covered by the ScotPP dataset. From the available materials of the CMSW, 44 were selected on the basis of writers' documented metadata. Occupation was taken into account here in particular, as the most visible and reliable predictor of social class out of the metadata options offered in the corpus. Demarcating and defining social class for historical subjects presents a challenge; many factors play into class status, such as education, income, employment, wealth, and personal background. While these were often easier to identify and categorise for the better-documented writers of the CMSW dataset than for the PPL writers, many class-determining variables remained difficult to identify;

occupation was therefore taken as a primary indicator of class status, as a good gauge for education and thus level of access to prestige norms.

This dataset, at 14.742 words in total, was larger than the PPL dataset. The writers of the letters held varying professions – including publishers, explorers, and authors – and geographical backgrounds; some, such as David Livingstone, were originally Scottish but wrote from entirely different continents, whilst others, such as James Hogg and Mary Mather, wrote their letters from Scotland. The subject matters of the letters covered both professional matters – reprints of published works, discussions of financial transactions, etc. – and informal ones, discussing personal matters such as new maids, appointments set for upcoming familial meetings, and more. The CMSW letters were tagged for the same external factors as the ScotPP materials.

3.3 Selecting Scotticisms

The selection of variables to be investigated was done using the most influential usage guides written around, or slightly prior to, the period in which the letters were written. These usage guides were the ones written by Hume (1752), Sinclair (1782), Beattie (1787), and Mitchell (1799). Of these usage guides, Mitchell's was the one most explicitly aimed at a readership of middle- to lower-class Scots, while the others focused more on prescribing the language of the upper classes.

Due to the large overlap in the linguistic features on which these authors comment, the lists could be easily combined into one extensive set of Scotticisms that were, according to the leading voices in Scottish prescriptivism of the day, the most notable (and worst-offending) characterically Scottish linguistic features. While these forms are often not exclusive to Scotland but also occur in other variants, they are here treated as Scotticisms due to the fact that they have been prescribed as such. Psychologically, to Scottish people with awareness of prescriptivist norms, they would be seen as elements emblematic of Scottishness and distinct from the standard. The resulting list, which totalled at 526 features, included Scotticisms in a variety of linguistic domains. Most of the Scotticisms listed were lexical (466), but there were also entries discussing generalisable morphosyntactic rules (41) and orthographic items (19; particularly found in Sinclair [1782]). Examples can be found in Sections 4 and 5.

The second part of the analysis involved cataloguing the Scotticisms in the data which were not proscribed in usage guides of the time. These Scotticisms, which could give insight into the covert and overt Scotticisms that existed in the early to mid-nineteenth century, could of course not be selected on the basis of said usage guides. The selection of these covert features was therefore based on the work of

Dossena (2005). This work compiles various lists of observed Scotticisms, which were themselves compiled by linguists across the back end of the twentieth century. Dossena includes the works of Aitken (1979, 1992), McClure (1994), Görlach (1990), Lass (1987), and Miller (1993), to showcase the various features that are considered defining aspects of modern-day Scots by contemporary linguists. In most of these authors' lists, features that are considered 'defining' include both a spectrum of covert and overt features, as well as a variety of linguistic categories. The full collection of Scotticisms can be found in Dossena (2005: 18–36).

3.4 Analysing the datasets

Using these compiled lists of Scotticisms, I catalogued the occurrences of those Scotticisms throughout the ScotPP and CMSW datasets. The data was retrieved through a process of close reading the compiled letters and coding the relevant findings. In doing so, the entries taken from the usage guides were treated as variables – that is, linguistic items that could take the form of the characteristically Scottish, proscribed form discussed in the usage guides, or the prestige form that the authors proscribed. In this way, every occurrence of either variant throughout the letters could be annotated as either a Scots or a prestige form. While applying this binary classification is an oversimplification of the linguistic situation at the time, which reflected more of a continuum between Scots and Scottish Standard English (Stuart-Smith 2004) – not to mention that not every Scotticism is in reality exclusive to Scotland, with many occurring in Northern England and Ireland during the same period – it does represent the prescriptivist ideas of the time, which pitched Scottish and Standard English forms directly against each other as binary opposites. The total number of occurrences of these respective variants were compiled, and ratios of the occurrence of Scottish variants versus prestige ones were calculated. This was done separately for the ScotPP and the CMSW datasets, as well as more specifically the Perth and Tongue subsets of the PPL data, in order to account for regional variation. Moreover, the occurrences and ratios of the different linguistic types of Scotticisms – the lexical, morphosyntactic, and orthographic variables – were determined where numbers were large enough to allow for it. This made it possible to draw up a more detailed picture of the degree of standardisation throughout the datasets.

For the non-proscribed, i.e. covert, Scotticisms, the analysis had to be conducted differently. The Scotticisms included in Dossena's (2005) work were not listed alongside a corresponding Standard English variant, given that the linguists who compiled these forms were not working with prescriptive intent, unlike the authors of the usage guides. While I investigated the data for various potential Standard

English competing variants to these Scotticisms (e.g. *late morning* for *forenoon*, *needs to be counted* or *is in need of counting* for *needs counting*), many did not occur at all throughout the two datasets. That could suggest that the Scottish forms were so ubiquitous that no Standard English forms were in use, but it is perhaps more likely that other Standard English forms were in popular use at the time than those investigated for here. In order to avoid skewing the results due to this lack of fitting Standard English variants, I chose to contextualise the occurrence of these Scotticisms not by comparing their frequency to their Standard English counterparts, but rather by comparing the ratios of non-proscribed Scotticisms between the ScotPP and CMSW datasets to the ratios of proscribed Scotticisms between the ScotPP and CMSW datasets. In other words, if the number of non-proscribed Scotticisms in the ScotPP dataset and the CMSW dataset are more or less equal, while the proscribed Scotticisms occur twice as frequently in the ScotPP letters as in the CMSW ones, that is a salient difference between the written language of these population groups. With this in mind, the total number of occurrences of covert Scotticisms across the two datasets was counted and analysed.

4 Results

4.1 ScotPP dataset

Firstly, the ScotPP dataset was investigated for Scotticisms proscribed in usage guides. In total, 38 instances of proscribed Scotticisms were found across this dataset, covering 24 usage guide entries. Of these Scotticisms, 29 were classified as lexical items. Examples include the following:

1. Likewise I wish to say that my wife would rather take to two **Bairns** (William McKenzie, 30 March 1852)
Prescribed form: children (Sinclair 1782: 111)
2. which is **instructed** by the certificate produced (Alexander Mackenzie, 24 October 1821) Prescribed form: which is proved by ... (Beattie 1787: 12)

Nine Scotticisms were classified as instances of Scotticisms in the morphosyntactic domain. These include the following:

3. has **stopt** short and will pay no more (Alexander Mackenzie, 22 November 1821) Prescribed form: stopped (e.g. Sinclair 1782: 69)
4. Humbly Sheweth That the petitioner **haves** presented two former petitions (Isabella Reid, 4 November 1851) Prescribed form: has (e.g. Beattie 1787: 9)

No orthographic Scotticisms were found in the ScotPP dataset. As for prescribed Standard English – i.e., prestige – variants of the overt Scotticism variables, 77 instances occurred throughout the ScotPP data. These instances covered a total of 42 usage guide entries. The vast majority of these items, 73 in total, was classified as lexical. One item was classified as a Standard English variant of an orthographic variable.

The counting of Standard English morphosyntactic features presented a challenge. Since the generalised forms prescribed across the usage guides occurred near-ubiquitously throughout both the ScotPP and CMSW data, their tallying would skew the ratio of overt Scotticisms to Standard English forms. This applies in particular to forms such as the Standard English form ‘he/she/it will’, as opposed to ‘shall’; and the form ‘he has’ as opposed to the Scotticism ‘he have’. These forms occurred so uniformly throughout the data that I elected to consider their Scotticism counterparts on a case-by-case basis, so as not to skew the data with a singular variable. This very finding, of course, was salient in and of itself, as it reflects a standardness of Standard English morphosyntax in the written language of all represented social classes.

Taking this into account leaves us with three noteworthy examples of prescribed Standard English morphosyntax, including example 5.

5. ... which can be **proved** by investigation (Scribe of Isabella Reid, 4 November 1851) Proscribed Scotticism: proven (Beattie 1787: 17)

An overview of the above figures is represented in Table 1.

Overall, these figures show that the ScotPP PPLs contained around one Scotticism from the list proscribed in the usage guides for every two Standard English forms prescribed there; in short, a 1:2 ratio. This ratio differed for the two included parishes. In the Tongue PPLs, a total of 17 instances of proscribed Scotticisms were identified. Twelve of those were lexical Scotticisms; the remaining five were morphosyntactic. Moreover, the Tongue PPLs contained 49 prescribed Standard English forms, of which 46 were lexical and the remaining three were morphosyntactic – a ratio of approximately 2:5. In the Perth PPLs, 18 instances of proscribed Scotticisms were found, of which one was morphosyntactic; the rest were all lexical Scotticisms. The Perth letters also contained 17 prescribed Standard English forms, all of which

Table 1: Scots and Standard English forms in the ScotPP data.

Scotticism type	Scots form	Standard English form	Total
Lexical	27	72	99
Morphosyntactic	8	3	11
Orthographic	0	1	1
Total	35	76	111

Table 2: Scots and Standard English forms in the Perth and Tongue data.

Scotticism type	Perth		Tongue	
	Scots form	Standard English form	Scots form	Standard English form
Lexical	17	17	12	46
Morphosyntactic	1	0	5	3
Orthographic	0	0	0	0
Total	18	17	17	49

were classified as lexical; this results in a near-1:1 ratio. These results are summarised in Table 2.

These inter-parish differences will be expanded upon in Section 5, where I also discuss the intra-writer variation found in scribal materials in the Perth data.

4.2 CMSW dataset

In total, 14 instances of proscribed Scotticisms were found across the CMSW dataset, covering 13 usage guide entries. Of these Scotticisms, 12 were classified as lexical items. Examples include the following:

6.

I **think shame** for having been so long in writing to you ... (James Hogg, 24 March 1821)

Prescribed form: I am ashamed ... (Beattie 1787: 22)
7.

I have therefore, to save time, **desired** Mr Wardlaw to send a copy of the lease ... (Archibald Campbell, 17 April 1823)

Prescribed form: I have told him to ... (Beattie 1787: 20)

The remaining two Scotticisms were classified as morphosyntactic. An example is the following:

8.

Time flies faster in this capital **than ever I have found it** ... (Burnes, 28 December 1834)

Prescribed form: ... than I have ever found it (Hume 1752 [unnumbered])

No proscribed orthographic Scotticisms were found in the CMSW data. On the other hand, this dataset contained a total of 59 instances of the prescribed form of a Scotticism listed in one or multiple usage guides. These items covered a total of 42 usage guide entries. Forty nine of them were classified as lexical items, including the following:

Table 3: Scots and Standard English forms in the CMSW dataset.

Scotticism type	Scots form	Standard English form	Total
Lexical	14	49	63
Morphosyntactic	2	4	6
Orthographic	0	6	6
Total	16	59	75

9. Constable is very **ill**. (James Hogg, 24 March 1821)
Proscribed Scotticism: ... is badly/poorly (Beattie 1787: 5)
10. For God’s sake Mr Murray accept the **bill** (James Hogg, 11 June 1821)
Proscribed Scotticism: the account (Sinclair 1782: 111)

Six forms were classified as orthographic Standard English forms, including the following:

11. I have [... gone] **likewise** to Oliver & Boyde (James Hogg, 11 June 1821)
Proscribed Scotticism: likeways (Sinclair 1782: 57)

There were four instances of morphosyntactic Standard English forms (bearing in mind the same caveat as with the ScotPP data).
An overview of the above figures can be found in Table 3.
Overall, the CMSW letters contained approximately one overt Scotticism for every four proscribed Standard English counterparts.

4.3 Covert Scotticisms and Standard English forms

Non-proscribed Scotticisms occurred noticeably more sparsely throughout the datasets of both the ScotPP and the CMSW corpora in comparison to the proscribed Scotticisms. The total number of these Scotticisms is listed in Table 4.

Table 4: Non-proscribed Scotticisms occurring in the ScotPP dataset.

Scotticism	Scots occurrences
Close	1
Never (as past negation)	3
Should	3
Auld	3

Table 5: Non-proscribed Scotticisms occurring in the CMSW dataset.

Scotticism	Scots occurrences
Never (as past negation)	1
Undertaken	4
Forenoon	1
Advocate	1
Should	1
Want binding	6
Needs no counting	1

In total, four of the Scotticisms listed in Dossena (2005) occur in the ScotPP dataset. A number of the occurrences of covert Scotticisms involved the use of nonstandard modals, in these cases using *should* where Standard English would require *ought*. One examples is the following:

12. if his circumstances were faithfully & truly represented it **should** have been increased (George MacKay, 13 August 1852)

While one Scotticism listed in Dossena (2005), the negative *not* as opposed to the contracted *n't*, occurred near-exclusively throughout the data – with only two instances of the contracted *n't* form in the ScotPP data – its use was not exclusively Scottish at the time, but also featured frequently in Southern British Standard English (Miller 1993). As such, it has been left out of the results for both the ScotPP and CMSW data, so as not to skew the findings.

The results for the CMSW dataset are shown in Table 5.

In total, seven of the Scotticisms listed in Dossena (2005) occur in the ScotPP dataset. The total number of instances is higher still, at 15 items throughout the letters. Neither here nor in the ScotPP data were any major differences between genders observed.

5 Discussion

5.1 Proscribed Scotticisms in the ScotPP and CMSW data

While the total number of features identified in the data, both pro- and proscribed, was notably low, distinct differences existed between the two datasets. Overall, proscribed Scotticisms occurred less frequently than their Standard English counterparts in both the ScotPP and the CMSW datasets. However, in the ScotPP dataset,

the ratio of Scotticisms to Standard English forms was approximately twice as high as it was in the CMSW data; in the ScotPP dataset it sat at 35–76 (or a little under 1:2) compared to 14–60 (or nearly 1:4) in the CMSW. These results show that the number of Scottish forms compared to the number of Standard English prestige forms is markedly lower in the writing of the early to mid-nineteenth century middle and upper classes than it is in that of the lower classes at the time.

Important to keep in mind when interpreting these results is that they primarily reveal writers' 'Scottishness' as it was perceived through a contemporaneous metalinguistic lens. The compilation of Scotticisms in the usage guides was highly coloured by the writers' linguistic ideologies. As such, the feature lists are not necessarily reflective of the actual language use at their time of compilation. Since linguistic ideologies are also a large part of what motivated the process of anglicisation, usage guides can offer a valuable guide to those ideologies and how reflective they were of actual language use. But while the design of this research is oriented towards anglicisation and the results can shed light on that ideology-driven process, they should at this point not be taken as an unbiased, definitive account of the writing of the lower, or indeed upper, classes of the time.

Moreover, processes of anglicisation cannot be ascribed to the use of usage guides with any definitive certainty: other factors might include the greater geographical and social mobility of higher classes, which in turn might lead to a stronger inclination towards standard models and prestigious language (Nevalainen 2000). Additionally, the genre of the usage guide was only popularised around the mid-eighteenth century, while the anglicisation of Scots had been on its way for well over a century by that point. It is therefore possible that the prescriptivists who authored the guides were not setting the trends in prescriptivism that are observed here, but rather signalling pre-existing metalinguistic trends, and spreading and perpetuating the developments via their writing.

That being said, a number of interesting conclusions can be drawn from the results. For one thing, consider that the usage guides included here were published multiple decades prior to the ScotPP and CMSW data's time of writing; moreover, they were primarily aimed at upper- and sometimes middle-class populations. By the mid-nineteenth century, though, the above results show that the Scotticisms listed in those older usage guides were found more frequently in the language of the lower classes than they were in that of the middle and upper classes. Standard English forms were dominant (and four times as frequent as Scotticisms) in the writings of the higher classes in this study. This dominance was far less strong in the PPLs, and suggests that by this time, the written language of the higher classes had been heavily standardised, while that of lower classes was not as strongly affected. Despite the caveats mentioned, these results do suggest a distinct difference in the development of these social classes' language use.

Comparing the rates of lexical to morphosyntactic and orthographic Scotticisms for the respective datasets yielded just minor results. In the ScotPP dataset, lexical Scotticisms made up 77.1 % of the total number of Scotticisms. In the CMSW data, those lexical Scotticisms comprised 87.5 %. The remainder was in both cases made up of morphosyntactic Scotticisms. These numbers suggest that the lower-class writers of the ScotPP letters were slightly more likely to use morphosyntactic Scotticisms in their writing than the higher-class writers, whose writing contained near-exclusively lexical Scotticisms. This is noteworthy because the use of morphosyntactic forms is usually less conscious than that of lexical forms; if the anglicisation of the higher classes was indeed further along than that of the lower classes, then it is unexpected that their language would retain more lexical than morphosyntactic Scotticisms. Overall, however, these differences were not big enough to draw any major conclusions from.

5.1.1 The ScotPP data

What stands out in the ScotPP data is that the ratio of overt Scotticisms to Standard English forms was higher in the Perth PPLs than in the Tongue PPLs. A potential explanation is the fact that the Tongue PPLs were written around three decades after those from Perth. During that period, prescriptivism may have moved fast enough to lead to marked changes in the anglicisation of lower class writers' language.

While the number of Scotticisms categorised as morphosyntactic was low in both the Tongue and Perth PPLs, it did include some interesting features. One Scotticism that did not occur at all in the CMSW letters was the mismatch between first and third person pronouns and verb, as exemplified by the following:

13. That **the Petitioner is** in indigent circumstances **have** five of a weak family (Widow Robert Sutherland, undated [1851])

At first sight, this feature seems like it could be an example of the Northern Subject Rule, a subject-verb agreement pattern common to many varieties of English including Scottish and Northern Irish varieties (e.g. Pietsch 2005). Both examples may also be cases of subjunctive forms, which would not be out of place in Scottish writing of the time. In this case, though, the mismatch between first and third person verb conjugations seen in examples 13 and 14 below is likely ascribable to external factors. As mentioned, PPLs as a genre are heavily constrained by formulaic structures; one such rule is that letters nearly always started with the phrase "The petition [...] humbly sheweth that the petitioner ...", continuing in the subordinate clause of this phrase and using third person throughout.

Many petitioners visibly struggled with maintaining the appropriate form throughout their letter. Petitioners would at times switch first person pronouns and

verb endings, which looks like a Scotticisms as listed in the usage guides but may be more a feature of the pauper petition genre than one of Scots. This is shown in the following example:

14. ... That **your petitioner**, being confined & afflicted for three years by a painful disease, and one that has rendered me now quite helpless, **find** it altogether impossible to live on the hitherto small allowance **I** have been receiving. (Anne McKay, May 4 1851)

Another important genre feature of pauper petitions is the relationship between writer and addressee that is inherent to the register (one of Biber [1994]’s situational factors). PPLs were characterised by a “rigid” and “supplicatory” style (Jones and King 2016); however, this supplicatory style was not just a matter of form, but one of social etiquette, too. The formality of these letters went hand in hand with a need to ‘talk up’; in a socially unequal situation like that of petitioning, this may have involved speakers adopting, where they could, the prestige language forms of higher social ranks. It is therefore possible that the standardisation in the letters was a conscious effort on the authors’ parts to fit the hierarchical nature of the interaction. The levels of standardisation in these authors’ written language may therefore not necessarily have been reflective of writers’ day-to-day (spoken) language, and reflect the authors’ skill in moving within the linguistic continuum and balancing prestige and informal language as required by their situational context.

5.1.2 Scribal highlight: Alexander Mackenzie

As mentioned, eight of the 11 letters included in the Perth dataset were written by a single scribe. This man, Alexander Mackenzie, appears to have been a carpenter and ship’s joiner who moved around Scotland throughout his lifetime, and is so heavily represented in the data that his language and its variation can be highlighted in more detail.

Overall, Mackenzie’s proportion of Scotticisms to Standard English forms is roughly the same as that of the overall ScotPP dataset including all authors. A total of four Scotticisms occurs throughout his writing, versus 9 prestige forms. The Scotticisms are listed below:

15. but has **stopt** short & will pay no more (Alexander Mackenzie, 22 November 1821).
Prescribed form: stopped (Sinclair 1782: 69)
16. and was in consequence confined **to her Bed** for several weeks (Alexander Mackenzie, 15 May 1821).
Prescribed form: to bed (Beattie 1787: 15)

17. Peter Liddle shoemaker in Perth & **presently** Private in the Royal Perthshire Mekka (Alexander Mackenzie, 12 July 1821).
Prescribed form: at present (Sinclair 1782: 32)
18. which is **instructed** by the certificate produced (Alexander Mackenzie, 15 May 1821).
Prescribed form: proved (Beattie 1787: 17)

With roughly twice as many Standard English forms as Scotticisms, Mackenzie's results correspond more with those of the wider ScotPP corpus (where the Standard English forms outnumbered the Scotticisms two to one) than with those of the remaining Perth letters (in which there was a 1:1 ratio). While the results remain so small in number that they do not allow for conclusive generalisation, they do seem to show that Mackenzie was relatively aware of the prescriptivist language norms that rejected overt Scottish forms. The fact that he used fewer overt Scotticisms on the whole in his written language indicates that the degree of standardisation in Mackenzie's language was higher than that of his fellow parishioners who wrote the remaining letters in the Perth dataset, and may have been linked to his suitability as a scribe. While he was likely still a member of the lower classes, he was able to navigate the Scots-English continuum and adopt prestige forms to fit the genre more adeptly than the petitioners he represented, perhaps indicating a higher level of literacy, too. Ultimately, though, this remains a matter of speculation.

5.1.3 The CMSW dataset

In the CMSW data, much like the ScotPP data, the total numbers of both overt Scotticisms and Standard English forms are remarkably low, with only 59 instances occurring across a total of nearly 15,000 words. The ratio, though, is notably different than in ScotPP, with the CMSW data containing one Scotticism for every four Standard English forms, thus skewing more towards the Standard English end of the continuum. These numbers are particularly notable considering the number of usage guides being published at this time specifically targeting the social classes represented in the CMSW data. This low number of results is likely in part due to the usage guides' focus on specialised lexical domains such as legal matters, clothing, agriculture, etc.; those variables were less likely to occur in letters not explicitly about those domains.

An interesting factor is the relationship between writer and addressee in the ScotPP and CMSW datasets respectively. As observed, the ScotPP materials were primarily concerned with making requests, which placed writer and addressee at different hierarchical levels, with the writer 'talking up' to the recipient from whom

they expect or hope to gain something. The letters of the CMSW corpus put writers and recipients on more equal footing: many of the CMSW letters were written between business partners, or between friends and family members. A letter by Grace Knox, for instance, showcases a level of familiarity that could never have occurred in the PPLs:

19. I ought to have given it before parting with you but as taking farewell of my friend is always painful and confusing to me it quite escaped me till after you were gone. (Grace Knox, undated [1821])

This more balanced relationship between writer and addressee in the CMSW letters is particularly interesting because it should generally lead to less formal language usage. It thus stands out all the more that the CMSW letters, despite being composed in distinctly less formal contexts, still contain such a low proportion of Scotticisms compared to the ScotPP letters.

It is worth noting that while the writers of the CMSW letters included few Scotticisms throughout their written work, it is not necessarily the case that this translates to their spoken language also being near-entirely free of those Scotticisms. Görlach (1999), while acknowledging that “[p]rivate letters can contain valuable evidence on informal usage”, has pointed out that “[t]hey rarely include dialect [...]”. Writing is so much connected with the school and standard language that composing a letter in dialect is a breach of sociolinguistic convention” (149–150). The education of the middle- and upper-class writers of the CMSW letters had, through their formal schooling, likely granted them a knowledge of the norms and formalities of written language that prevented them from slipping into overt vernacular forms in their writing. Of course, this goesprimarily for overt Scotticisms; the next section will discuss how the above ties into the presence of covert Scotticisms in these letters.

5.2 Non-proscribed Scotticisms in the ScotPP and CMSW corpora

The remaining part of this analysis will focus on covert Scotticisms: characteristically Scottish features which are not listed in any of the usage guides as proscribed Scotticisms. These variables, taken from the collection compiled by Dossena (2005), occurred considerably less frequently throughout both datasets than those proscribed by the usage guides of the time. The results showed that four of the covert Scotticisms occurred in the ScotPP dataset, and seven of them in the CMSW dataset; these numbers, while interesting, are so small that we should hesitate in drawing large conclusions from them. Non-proscribed Scotticisms that occurred in the ScotPP dataset included:

20. as I am an **auld** frail woman upwards of 80- years (Isabella McKay, January 14 1852)
21. which your Petitioner knows nothing of as he **never** at any time said to her that such a sum was due till he has given her a Charge to appear before your Lordship (Margaret Spence, January 13 1821)

The CMSW letters included Scotticisms such as:

22. if you have nothing particular to buy, come with the **forenoon** omnibus if in time (Mary Mather, April 29 1841)
23. The last edition of the Wake **needs no counting** for that was stipulated at £100. (James Hogg, March 24 1821)

The forms shown here are the ones that were not deemed socially marked as Scottish, or at least not enough to be eradicated via usage guides. It is of course uncertain why these features were not stigmatised in the way that other Scotticisms were; their lack of acknowledgement suggests that these features either were not recognised as Scotticisms or were considered less ‘vulgar’ or ‘colloquial’ than the previous features. It may be that very lack of ostracisation which has allowed them to persist in present-day Scottish English. Where usage guide authors of the 1700–1800s did not consider these specific features in need of ostracising, today they are considered by linguists like Aitken (1992) and McClure (1994) to be among the strongest markers of the Scottish English language variety.

Furthermore, it is interesting that the overall numbers of covert Scotticism occurrences are more or less equal for the ScotPP and CMSW datasets. With four types of Scotticisms occurring in the ScotPP data, and seven types in the CMSW data, the numbers skew slightly in the CMSW data’s favour, though those figures are so small that we should be wary of drawing overhasty conclusions. In the total number of tokens of those Scotticisms, too, the CMSW data slightly outweighs the ScotPP data.

This is noteworthy because, as seen above, the number of *overt* Scotticisms was markedly lower in the CMSW data than in the ScotPP data. The question is whether to look to lower-class or higher-class language use (or, of course, a combination of both) to explain the differences in relative frequencies of covert and overt forms. A potential argument for looking to the higher classes for an explanation is the level of metalinguistic awareness that higher-class Scottish people had access to during this time. As mentioned in Section 5.1, these social classes likely had a high level of awareness of the contemporaneous metalinguistic discourse, since prescriptivism had been widespread throughout their social circles for over a century by this time. While this metalinguistic awareness might have led them to use fewer markedly Scottish features in their language – those features, in short, that were proscribed in

the usage guides of the time – the unmarked Scottish features would have been able to persist in their language use more freely without being suppressed with the goal of deliberate anglicisation.

The language of the lower classes, by contrast, was less affected by this suppression of markedly Scottish features, as we have seen above. Whether this had to do with a lack of immediate potential to move upwards in society through the adoption of standardised written forms, or simply a lack of awareness of the prescriptivist ideas that had propelled that anglicisation in the ranks of the middle and upper classes, the proportion of overt Scotticisms to Standard English forms in their written language would logically be higher as compared to the higher classes, as observed in the data.

Overall, it is important to include this non-prescription-based perspective in the study of Scots anglicisation to nuance the discussion of standardisation and the traditional focus on upper-class language. As discussed, the latter runs the risk of taking a teleological view on this process, thinking of a Scottish version of Standard English as the end state and ‘goal’ of the linguistic development of Scots. Examining the elements of Scots that were not anglicised, but persisted in the present-day situation of Scots, shows that the anglicisation process – a case of standardisation from above – does not reflect the full picture of the development of Scottish writing. Tracing the usage of linguistic features that developed further into established Scottish forms, even as more marked features were being stigmatised in the nineteenth-century metalinguistic discussion, highlights the importance of stepping away from the traditional teleological perspective, and not neglecting non-normative language forms and social groups in our linguistic histories.

5.3 Limitations and future research

Unfortunately, the bad data problem remains an unavoidable presence when conducting historical sociolinguistic research. While the present study has worked hard to minimise the disparities between datasets and create an optimal comparative environment, there remain inevitable limitations to the data and methodology.

One issue encountered is that of scribal authorship, which complicates the idea of lower-class language that the PPL materials are proposed to represent. It remains difficult to identify whether a letter was written by a scribe despite clear indications such as X marks, handwriting analysis, or textual clues such as authors switching to first person throughout petitions. Future research may be aided by the use of handwriting recognition software on this front, which is available and has been used by scholars such as Rutten and van der Wal (2014) and Włodarczyk (2016) (though this only works when there are multiple letters signed with the same name; in the ScotPP data, where there is thus far usually only one letter per petitioner, this might prove a

difficulty). Additionally, the social background of scribes often cannot be ascertained with any certainty, despite indications that scribes were often drawn from within the same (lower) social classes as petitioners themselves. This means that the ScotPP dataset investigated here remains heterogeneous, and cannot be said with certainty to represent only the lower classes. While its materials remain part of a genre that itself lies outside the standard linguistic canon that Elspaß et al. (2007) identify and challenge, this heterogeneity remains, for the time being, unavoidable but important to acknowledge.

Moreover, standardisation is, by its nature, a diachronic process. For the Scots language to go from the peak of its status to a low-prestige language variety condemned by commentators nationwide required time and gradual development. For this reason, the degree of anglicisation in a given text would ideally be measured against a socially and contextually comparable dataset from before the material of interest, so that the diachronic difference might be attested. That data is, for the language of lower classes in Scotland, not available as of yet. The alternative approach used here, of measuring the degree of Scotticisms versus Standard English forms that have been made metalinguistically salient through their inclusion in usage guides, allowed for a perspective on the degree of standardisation that still offers valuable insights into the (meta)linguistic situation of the lower classes of nineteenth-century Scotland.

There is potential to build on these results in future research, however. Since there are many more pauper petitions strewn across the depths of Scottish parish archives – some possible sources for the material are listed in Jones and King (2016: 86) – there is certainly potential for future studies to uncover more data and introduce a more diachronic perspective. Indeed, the ScotPP is at present being expanded to include further Scottish PPL materials, thereby already broadening the range of materials from this period available for research purposes.

There are, moreover, further angles in the study of these pauper petitions that remain open avenues for further research; social factors such as gender, age, and education level may be of interest to both historical sociolinguists and historians, if such information can be identified reliably through further archival research. The pauper petitions presented in this study form a rich resource for such studies, and a resource that can be complemented with further materials in the future for a fuller picture of the linguistic and historical reality of nineteenth century Scotland.

6 Conclusion

This study has examined new data from lower-class Scottish writers in the early to mid-nineteenth century, making use of the newly assembled ScotPP corpus. These

new materials represent an important step in the study of historical Scottish writing *from below*, and a fresh insight into the language of people from previously understudied social backgrounds.

Comparing the ScotPP materials to a set of correspondence data from the same period written by middle to upper-class Scottish people, taken from the Corpus of Modern Scottish Writing, this study investigated the degree to which anglicisation had progressed in the language of the different social layers of Scottish society. The first section of the analysis, focusing on what Aitken (1979) termed *overt* Scotticisms, found that the Scottish features explicitly proscribed in the metalinguistic discourse of the era were markedly less likely to occur in the writing of the middle and upper-class writers' letters than in those of the lower classes. This difference suggests that while the prescriptivist ideals had permeated the writing of the higher classes of Scottish society, leading to the forfeiture of Scottish features in favour of their more prestige counterparts, that process had not taken place to the same extent in the writing of the lower classes. However, those lower classes did include around twice as many prestige forms as Scotticisms in their writing, suggesting that their written language, too, was seeing the strong effects of standardisation.

Additionally, the occurrence of covert Scotticisms was investigated, making use of a list of Scotticisms provided by Dossena (2005). Here, in contrast to the previous case, the frequencies of covert Scotticisms were found to be more or less equal across the ScotPP and CMSW materials, even skewing slightly in favour of the CMSW letters; in other words, it seems that the higher-class writers of the nineteenth century used more covert Scotticisms in relation to overt Scotticisms than the lower-class writers did. This further suggests that the metalinguistic awareness of higher-class writers regarding overt Scotticisms informed their language use, while the covert Scotticisms, not attached to such a conscious metalinguistic attitude, were not particularly affected by the anglicising trend and writers' self-correction. By contrast, the language of lower-class writers was likely less governed by self-correction and the same levels of conscious metalinguistic awareness. As such, their use of covert Scotticisms did not differ notably from that of the middle and upper classes of their time.

Overall, this study has opened new avenues for research into lower-class Scottish written language, in line with the aims within the field of historical sociolinguistics to broaden their focus beyond the standardised and upper-class forms that have traditionally been the field's object of study. With a number of potential areas for future research suggested, there is a promising road ahead for developing a greater understanding of the development of Scottish English from below.

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