

# VARIETY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY: THE CASE OF RENAISSANCE SCOTS

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## ABSTRACT

The position of Scots in the 16th century, the vernacular that almost achieved the status of a national language, is discussed on the basis of the four sociolinguistic criteria of *abstand*, *ausbau*, *attitude* and *acquisition*. The distance from English was considerable and would have justified language planning to standardize Scottish norms on the basis of the Edinburgh court, had attitudes been uniformly in favour of such a solution. However, English being close in structure and genetically related, and having greater power and, for many Scotsmen, greater prestige, the *auld leid* came to take up the 'lower' function in a diglossia, and further on was dialectalized—it stopped expanding and was increasingly influenced by the southern neighbour—long before the Union of the Crowns in 1603 settled the standard language question and the Scottish Enlightenment brought about the anglicization of the spoken forms at least in formal, educated and largely urban contexts after 1760.

KEY WORDS: Scots, *abstand*, *ausbau*, *attitude* and *acquisition*, standardization.

## RESUMEN

La posición del escocés, la lengua vernácula que casi adquirió el estatus de lengua nacional, es discutida teniendo en cuenta cuatro criterios sociolingüísticos: *abstand*, *ausbau*, actitud y adquisición. La distancia entre el inglés y el escocés era considerable y habría justificado una planificación lingüística para estandarizar sus normas de acuerdo con la corte de Edimburgo si se hubiera dado una actitud uniforme que favoreciese tal solución. Sin embargo, siendo el inglés cercano en estructura, genéticamente emparentado y teniendo mayor poder y, para muchos escoceses, mayor prestigio, el viejo lenguaje tomó la función "menor" dentro de la diglosia y más tarde fue convertido en dialecto (dejó de expandirse y se vio influenciado de forma creciente por su pariente del sur) mucho antes de que la unión de las dos coronas en 1603 propiciara la cuestión del estándar y la Ilustración Escocesa trajese consigo las formas anglicistas al menos en los contextos formales, educados y ampliamente urbanos después de 1760.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Escocés, *abstand*, *ausbau*, actitud y adquisición, estandarización.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The history of European languages is full of case stories of the emergence of national/standard languages (which often happened in the 16th or 19th centuries) on the one hand and the reduction of languages of wider communication, formerly with a full set of functions, to the restricted range of dialects (dialectalization).<sup>1</sup> In all these cases the question of whether the variety in question is independent/autonomous or rather a subsystem of another (more prestigious, more powerful or more elaborate) variety is a matter of more or less, and of dynamic change, rather than of an easy yes-no dichotomy. I have repeatedly tried to capture the problem of degrees of languageness by applying a set of criteria ultimately based on Kloss (1978), here adapted from Görlach (2000:16-7).

*Abstand* is the distance between two linguistic systems on all levels, ranging from spelling to syntax and lexis. The distance can be neglected where members of a speech community decide that substantially divergent varieties (which may well not be intercomprehensible) should be considered one and the same language; this can be for (possibly alleged) reasons of political, religious or cultural unity. On the other hand, small differences between mutually intelligible varieties can be blown up in order to justify their classification as independent languages, again if there are political or religious reasons for such a decision. In the history of English the most spectacular case of divergence and subsequent convergence is the relationship of Scots and English, as detailed below, but *abstand* has also been a permanent question with regard to America and Australia. The title of Mencken's book *The American Language* of 1919 was meant as a provocation, and so was certainly Baker's title imitation *The Australian Language* of 1945, but it has to be admitted that in Noah Webster's times only a little effort in successful language planning would have been necessary for AmE to constitute a new language —and thus implement Mencken's claim of 130 years later.

In a global perspective, *ausbau* may be a very European concept when used as a criterion for determining languageness —after all, most languages in the world do not seem to qualify because they have no writing systems, normative grammars or dictionaries, or their ranges of function may well be restricted to informal spoken uses and employed for a limited number of topics— and yet they count as

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<sup>1</sup> The following survey does not claim to present a great deal of new data or interpretations; rather, I have here summarized ideas that I have discussed in the context of EModE (Görlach 1991a) and as a developmental stage in the history of Scots in Görlach (2002) —where I again have largely summarized established knowledge based on writings by authors such as Aitken and McClure (cf. in particular 1994). In particular, I have contrasted the linguistic histories of Scots and Low German (1985b) and of Jamaican (1991b) and summarized arguments pro and con the language status of N. Irish Ullans (2000). All these contributions are connected with the topic here treated and worth (re-)reading to complement my necessarily brief remarks in this article.

languages by way of *abstand*. However, standardization and currency in ‘respectable’ written registers (possibly supported by historicity, that is, a written tradition, sometimes of a nostalgically upgraded past) certainly helps—and where it is lacking, it is comparatively easy to introduce norms by considerate language planning, where the majority of the population still uses a non-standard variety— so to speak waiting for the linguist to make it regular and respectable, as in the case of Luxemburgish, which is natively spoken by some 95% of the country’s population. However, we may wish to contrast the Scottish hesitation *not* to expand the uses of Scots to a full range of formal written registers.

*Attitude* is clearly the most important element in the set of factors mentioned; often emotional support by the speakers can override the fact that the distance to the nearest standard variety is minimal, and *ausbau* may be largely lacking. Even moribund and dead languages have occasionally been revived (admittedly, Ivrit is the only compelling example) and differences have intentionally been increased—as is happening in present-day Croatia—if there is enough support for such measures. The problem with utilizing supportive attitudes in the speech community, or even creating them, is clearly a political one. Do we want to fan existing nationalism by giving speakers an additional field for identification, and increasing the distance from neighbours, or worse, fuelling internal division?

*Acquisition* clearly comes into play where varieties are not learnt natively, or at least where the full range is not acquired as a native dialect in the home (perhaps not even from grandparents who, in some societies, can be used in revivalist programmes). The amount of second-dialect learning involved, and the language planning necessary in order to achieve the desired *ausbau*, result in various degrees of artificiality in language use. Such a situation may even create a parasitic variety which relies on the primary acquisition of the dominant language which is then relexified for identificational purposes as has happened in Anglo-Romani in Britain (and as in current efforts to extend the forms and functions of Scots in Northern Ireland)—a point which deserves special consideration and will be discussed later on.

In what follows, the four criteria will consequently be present as applied to the specific social conditions in individual phases of EModE or Scots respectively. In all this, it is quite obvious that the importance of the court vernaculars of London/Westminster and Edinburgh being taken over as prestige norms and spread throughout the two kingdoms (outside the Celtic areas) meant that dialects came to be ‘roofed’ (*überdacht*) by either London English or Edinburgh Scots, where formerly the decision of whether a text is in English or Scots—as in the case of the original version of the *Cursor Mundi*— is just wrongly put, ME being a conglomerate of dialects roofed, so to speak, by French and Latin. Accordingly, written versions of English dialects (such as Yorkshire or Devon) or of Scots (such as Ayrshire or Aberdeen) became very rare after 1450, the written standard spreading to urban educated users first as very clearly described by Puttenham in 1589 (see the text excerpt in Görlach 1991a:236-40)—only that in Scotland this spread of a written norm soon became mixed with English conventions, and was ultimately replaced by them.

## 2. ABSTAND

How different were Scots and English before 1603? Obviously there was increasing divergence in the 15th century, as a result of different code selection and codification of the two chancery/court vernaculars —where the continuum of the non-standard informal spoken dialects along the border remained intact for a long time (for the ultimate formation of a dialect boundary along the political dividing line see Glauser 1984 and 2000).

In measuring *abstand* between 16th-century English and Scots we depend on either the intelligibility of the other system to a user of Scots or English (a topic on which evidence is scarce and largely unreliable for historical periods) or on the distance between two written and largely standardized norm languages. With due allowance to the patchiness of the evidence it may be useful to point out a few cases where the distance was *not* mentioned (and therefore possibly not considered awkward —or even passed largely unnoticed):

- a) When Nisbet adapted the Late Wycliffite text of the New Testament of c1390 to the usage of Scots speakers of c1520, he had to bridge not only the regional distance, but also a time gap of some 130 years, both factors adding up to a notable linguistic *abstand* (cf. Tulloch 1989:3-10). However, Nisbet does not appear to have felt great difficulties in adapting the text (largely restricting himself to spelling and morphology) —at least, he does not comment on the linguistic distance and resulting problems. Sadly, we do not have any evidence on how the text was received by a Scots audience or readership, since Nisbet's translation remained in manuscript and was not edited before 1901.
- b) The compositor who printed Douglas's *Aeneid* in London does not comment on the linguistic distance between his copy text and his own usage, nor does he say whether he had any linguistic assistance with the production of an anglicized version. Was the adaptation to London usage felt to be not much more than preparing for print an EModE manuscript with wayward spelling, or (Caxton's practice) modernizing versions of Chaucer and Trevisa a hundred years old?
- c) When Bannatyne copied the poetry of famous Scottish makars in his grand collection of 16th-century poetry, he included, without any comment, but in moderately scotticized spelling, a few poems by Chaucer and Lydgate (printed in Görlach 2002). He must have known their English provenance, but obviously accepted them as part of the Scottish tradition, much as an American sees Shakespeare as part of his own heritage. There is no remark on *abstand*, and the question might indeed have sounded strange to Bannatyne and his like.  
On the other hand, the linguistic distance is often foregrounded —for whatever reasons. Consider the following examples:
- d) When Gavin Douglas complained about the deficiencies of 16th-century Scots, he permitted authors to borrow from Latin, French —and English to rem-



edy the situation. This, and other remarks in his translation, clearly show that he considered Scots a different system, and he may in his practice have indeed stressed the distance—even considering borrowing from English a confirmation of the fact. Compare his programmatic statements in the prologue to book I:

And 3it forsuyth I set my bissy pane  
 As that I couth to mak it braid and plane,  
 Kepand na sudron bot our awyn langage,  
 And spekis as I lernyt quhen I was page.  
 Nor 3it sa cleyn all sudron I refuß,  
 Bot sum word I pronounce as nyghtbouris doys:  
 Lyke as in Latyn beyn Grew termys sum,  
 So me behufyt quhilum or than be dum  
 Sum bastard Latyn, French or Inglys oyß  
 Quhar scant was Scottish—I had nane other choys.  
 Nocht for our tong is in the selwyn skant  
 Bot for that I the fowth of langage want (...) (1513, quoted from Görlach 1991a:263)

- e) Harrison, when providing a book on the history of Scotland for Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1587), on the one hand found that the easiest solution was to paraphrase Bellenden's Scots translation of Boethius of 1531 (cf. the parallel passages printed in Görlach 1991a:334-41), but on the other hand, complained about the difficulties in comprehension. He stated he was not a little assisted by consulting the Latin source:

I haue chosen rather, onely with the losse of three or foure dayes to translate Hector out of the Scottish (a tongue verie like vnto ours) than with more expense of time to diuise a newe, or follow the Latin copie... Hetherto I haue translated Hectors description of Scotland out of the Scottish into the English tounge, being not a little ayded therein by the Latine. (1577, quoted from Görlach 1991a:21-2)

From 1550 onwards, the distance becomes difficult to measure, since the increasing use of mixed lects makes the concept of *abstand* difficult to apply. How quickly was the diglossia of Scots and English being lost within at least the written uses?

- f) When James I used a mixed language in his letters to Elizabeth, he sprinkled his English with Scots items giving his language a veneer indicating the national identity of the writer without impairing the comprehension of the text for the recipient, as is evident from a short quotation:

I darr not wronge you so farre as not to iudge honorablie of youre unspotted pairt thairin, so, on the other syde, I uishe that youre honorable behaiouire in all tymes heir-after may fully persuaide the quhole uorlde of the same. And, as for my pairt, I looke that ye will geue me at this tyme suche a full satisfaction, in all respectis, as sall be a meane to strenthin and unite this yle, establish and maintaine the treu

religion, and obleig me to be, as of befoire I war, youre most louing... (1586-7, quoted from Görlach 1991a:351)

- g) The position of Knox in all this is more complex. On the one hand, he saw no need for a separate Scots version of the Gospels, but his *History of the Reformation* has a great deal of Scots features in it (cf. the excerpt quoted in Görlach 2002), which shows that he was not opposed to the vernacular. However, he obviously just did not give much weight to the question, being more interested in dogma.

In sum, there is no easy answer to the degree of *abstand* between the two systems. Used to variation in the vernacular, Scotsmen do not seem to have been greatly concerned about the coexistence of Scots and English, which for many was beginning to develop into a continuum, for others was a single entity opposed to Latin and for the majority had increasingly become a diglossic set, with Scots being at the informal and spoken lower end, and English at the formal written higher end. Obviously, there was no foundation for continuing the divergence, the dialectalization of Scots rather leading to rapid convergence with the prestigious written English standard.

### 3. AUSBAU

English and Scots suffered, at the beginning of their standardization, from similar deficiencies. Entire text types which had been traditional domains of Latin and French came to be in the vernacular, which necessitated elaboration in particular in syntax and lexis. Two complementary motives were behind this modernization and improvement —the filling of gaps and the desire for rhetorical embellishment. However, the conditions for English and Scots for successful expansion were extremely different: whereas English had a powerful centre of a country with ten times as many inhabitants, and a concentration of administration, wealth and communication (including book printing), Scotland (though an independent kingdom) was marginal, then as now. Although the Scottish language made an excellent start, with translations of the *Aeneid* (by Douglas, 1513) and of Livy (by Bellenden, 1533, cf. Corbett 1999) which preceded similar efforts in England, and Nisbet's (unprinted) modernization of the New Testament c1520 came before Tyndale's new English version of 1525, the *ausbau* of Scots came to a standstill because English translations became available in increasing numbers of texts and copies, and the need to have vernacular versions of learned texts in Latin was possibly felt to be less urgent than in England. In sum, the emerging diglossia of formal written English as against informal spoken Scots had the consequences that it used to have for dialects and minority languages elsewhere: code-switching replaced the laborious language planning process for the vernacular involving code-selection, codification, elaboration and implementation, the takeover being all the easier because the acceptability of English as a written norm was close to universal.



As far as comment on the adequateness of Scots is concerned, we must be duly cautious. For instance, Henryson's complaint in the *Prologue to the Morall Fabillis* (c1490) is a clear case of the traditional modesty topos—which proved that *he* at least knew his rhetorical figures:

In hamelie language and in termes rude  
Me neidis wryte for quhy of eloquence  
Nor rhetorike I never understude. (quoted from Jack & Rozendaal 2000:281)

The deficiencies in scientific terminology were perhaps more real and more strongly felt. Skeyne, when writing a treatise on how to deal with the pestilence found that his training acquired in Latin lectures at the university would have made it much easier for him to use that language rather than the vernacular:

(gude readar) thou sall nather abyde greit eruditioun nor eloquence, bot onlie tho sentence and iugement of the maist ancient writaris in medicine expressit in vulgar langage without poleit or affectionat termis. And howbeit it become me rather (quha hes bestouit all my Zouthe in the Sculis) to had vrytin the samin in Latine, Zit vnderstanding sic interpryses had bene nothing profitable to the commoun and vulgar people, thocht expedient and neidfull to express the sam in sic langage as the vnlernit may be als weil satisfyit as Masteris of Clargie. (1586, quoted from Görlach 1991a:225)

It is therefore difficult to say whether James VI's postulates in his *Reulis & Cautelis*, viz. to use lexis (and syntax) appropriate to the topic, could be fulfilled, the *ausbau* of Scots being what it was:

Ye man lykewayis tak heid, that ye waill your wordis according to the purpose: as in ane heich and learnit purpose to use heich, pithie and learnit wordis  
Gif your purpose be of love: to use commoun language with some passionate wordis.  
Gif your purpose be of tragicall materis: to use lamentable wordis, with some heich, as ravisht in admiratioun.  
Gif your purpose be of landwart effairis: to use corruptit and uplandis wordis. And finally, quhatsumever be your subject, to use *vocabula artis*, quhairby ye may the mair vivelie represent that persoun quhais pairt ye paint out.  
This is likewayis neidfull to be usit in sentences, alsweill as in wordis: as, gif your subject be heich and learnit, to use learnit and infallible reasonis, provin be necessities.  
(ch. 3, quoted from Jack & Rozendaal 2000:466)

#### 4. ATTITUDE

The limited number of explicit statements as to what the Scots thought about the need, or desirability, of creating (*and using*) a Scottish standard language, gives a complex picture reflecting widespread division of opinions, in which various

sociolinguistic factors obviously played a part —national feeling, education, anglophilia, closeness to the court, religious persuasion and the writer's profession. Many members of the learned professions were happy with continuing Latin and thus retaining their elevated social position, such as doctors, professors and priests. They would not care much for the vernacular, and certainly not for possible distinctions between Scots and English. Lindsay made a spirited plea for making available sacred writings in translations into the vernacular (while accepting that writings in astronomy, philosophy and medicine might well remain in Latin):

Lat Doctouris wryte thair curious questionis  
 And argumentis, sawin full of Sophistrie:  
 Thair Logick, and thair hich Opinionis,  
 Thair dirk Iugementis of Astronomie,  
 Thair Medecine, and thair Philosophie:  
 Lat Poetis schaw thair glorious Ingyne,  
 As euer thay pleis, in Greik, or in Latyne,  
 Bot lat vs haue the buikis necessare,  
 To commoun weill and our Saluatioun  
 Iustlie translait in our toung vulgare (...) (1574, quoted from Görlach 1991a:382)

Note that he did not define what he meant by 'the vulgar tongue'. Would he have agreed with Knox's policy of taking over the *English* Geneva Bible?

Two of the intellectual and political leaders that could have drastically influenced the future of Scots were, however, not consistent, and certainly far from being language activists. Knox's ideolect, as far as we can judge from written sources, was a compromise between Scots and English, partly related to text type, but he was certainly committed to dogma rather than the language issue. For James VI, Scots was an important cause, as shown in his *Reulis and Cautelis*, the only handbook of rhetoric in Scots ever written, and evident from the density of his Scots in the manuscript form of his *Basilikon Doron*, where he also advised on proper language use:

In baith youre speiking & youre gesture then use a naturall & plaine forme not fairdit uith artifice, for as the frenshe men sayes, rien conterfaict fin, bot escheu all affectate formis in baith, in your langage be plaine, honest naturall, cumlie, clene, shorte & sententious escheuing baith the extremities alsueill in not using a rusticall corrupt leid, nor yett booke langage & penn & inkerne termes, & least of all mignarde & æffeminate termis...  
 (MS version 1595, quoted from Görlach 1991a:311)

However, he did not object to Waldegrave's anglicization when the text was first printed in 1599, still in Edinburgh, and the sprinkling of Scots in his more or less English letters to Elizabeth I exhibit a conventional veneer, but not self-assured linguistic *abstand*. No need to stress, then, that James's attitudes swerved entirely over to English after 1603 when he became the first ruler of the United Kingdom.

In the 17th century the apparent difficulty to distinguish between English and Scots becomes even more apparent. The Education Act of 1616 (based on the





Statutes of Iona) regulated that Highlanders should be educated in English, but the text itself is largely Scots, and the Dundonald School Regulations of c1640 discuss the teaching of English again in unmistakably Scots-influenced spelling and diction (excerpts of both texts are found in Görlach 1991a:384-9). When Alexander Hume wrote *Of the Orthographie and Congruity of the Britan Tongue* (c1617) did he describe English or Scots, or a compromise 'Britan', using for his exposition a near-English with many Scottish spelling conventions left in his text? What attitude towards the question of a 'national language' or 'regional identity' is behind such practices?

To sum up: Scottish identity came to be reduced to a set of markers in writing (and no doubt in speech, where evidence is almost totally lacking). These features could be manipulated at will, stressing English as against Scottish features in binary choices such as *alane*, *-edl-it*, *wh-/quh-* etc. This is the result of Devitt's investigations (1989) of the anglicization process in different registers between 1520 and 1659. However, she places too much weight on these features, which are much more diagnostic of deliberate options and expressions of identity than reflecting fundamental differences in the linguistic systems. Any copyist could easily make a text more English- or Scottish-looking by applying more or less mechanical substitution.

Thus, it is quite clear that after the breakdown of diglossia Scots became a dialect within the English system, even though its special status is reflected in the fact that it remained the only regional variety that is documented throughout, in contrast to Yorkshire or Devon dialects.<sup>2</sup> But having been reduced to a point on a stylistic cline, Scots now became more and more mixed with English, the degree depending on text type and register. By contrast, Scots dialects had thereby lost their point of reference: they could be contrasted with each other but not measured against a Scots norm. In Kloss's terminology, they were 'roofed' (*iiberdacht*) until, say 1620, but 'unroofed' thereafter, an unrelated system, English, having taken up the function of the standard language.

## 5. ACQUISITION

Varieties of Scots have normally always been those of native speakers. However, a small number of texts has, for various purposes, been written by non-Scots. One of the earliest specimens is the effective story about the misunderstanding about the *boar* or *bare head* (see Görlach 1991a:21) which was probably written by an Englishman. Shakespeare used Scots in Henry IV to characterize Jamy—but his

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<sup>2</sup> Note that the dialectalization of Scots made *its* dialects those of a second order—so when in the 18th century interest in English dialects led to the collection of various 'glossaries' in England, Scotsmen started compiling glossaries of Scots rather than of the regional dialects of, say, Ayrshire or Buchan.

grasp of the variety was apparently limited so that we cannot expect any realistic or even convincing representation (cf. Blake 1982:86, and for the entire context Görlach 2001). Shakespeare may of course have relied on actors making the Scottishness of the text more convincing, and he certainly would not have claimed that his text was authentic. Scots as a second language was therefore very marginal (except for Celts living close to the Highland Line). It was rather English acquired by Scots that became a problem —and that learners of Scots were offered by members of the older generation more and more mixed lects, which caused the Scots to drift away from the pure forms of Dunbar and Gavin Douglas who, as early as 1513, to indicate *abstand* from English, used the conservative speech of his youth (“as I lernyt quhen I was page”).<sup>3</sup>

## 6. EVALUATION OF SCOTS

It is remarkable how positively the Scots language and ScE accents have been evaluated throughout their history. Whereas IrE was seen negatively and used for caricature indicating backwardness from the beginning (see the excellent collection of early texts and interpretation in Bliss 1979), there do not seem to be any discrediting judgments on Scots from Englishmen in the 16th century, and quite few thereafter. On the other hand, attitudes of Scotsmen and the estimation of their own speech were increasingly dominated by the ‘cultural cringe’, especially after English had become fully accepted as the language of the intellect by the Edinburgh Enlightenment in the late 18th century. However, it speaks for the continued esteem of Scotland that braid Scots and rural dialect are as highly valued as they are impossible to understand, and that the local standard of English, ScE has remained one of the most prestigious accents in Britain and in fact world-wide. (Though little Scots survived in the colonies, ScE had a remarkable influence on extraterritorial pronunciation and, possibly, on concepts of linguistic correctness).

## 7. CONCLUSION

Variation can be (relatively) free allowing the speaker or writer a choice, which has no ostensible semantic or stylistic reasons. It can be functional —often the result of functionalization, which can take several generations, and possibly will

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Nativeness’ of Scots (in whatever anglicized form) was no problem until the 18th century when the language by and large remained the dominant everyday means of communication. For 20th-century writers it is —and it is significant that first-language competence in authors like McLellan and Annand contrasts with the acquired Scots in S.G. Smith (born in Wellington, NZ) and Lorimer (whose family was ScE-speaking). Such second-dialect writers tend to use more experimental (or even artificial) forms of the language.

never be complete. And it can involve the use of more than one language, so that 'borrowed' terms stick out of the context and are usually highly marked. The latter process is typical of 16th-century Scots and it is very risky to decide which of the variants ('Scots' vs. 'English' for short) are socially and stylistically motivated. It may be that the question of whether Scots was a language or a dialect of English would have seemed irrelevant to most Scots in the Renaissance (as it is today). However, Scots was clearly closest to be an autonomous system in the 16th century. The complex situation may be summarized as follows (adapted from Görlach 1991a: 22-3):

On the one hand, Scots fulfilled the criteria usually assumed to be constitutive of a language:

1. It was a national language whose use coincided with the political boundaries of the Scottish kingdom.
2. It had developed a literary/written standard as homogeneous as contemporary English.
3. The court at Edinburgh and the University of St. Andrew's provided a norm of written (and presumably also of spoken) Scots —unless Latin was preferred.
4. There are several statements extant indicating that some users considered Scots an independent language (as above, and cf. Bald 1928).

On the other hand, the weight of these criteria is diminished by the increasing convergence of Scots with English in the course of the period; as a consequence, there are other factors which argue against independent language status:

1. The reciprocal intelligibility of Scots and English was not seriously endangered even when the two were furthest apart (in spite of the remarks on *abstand* made above).
2. Structural differences between the two systems were most marked in phonology/orthography and —in some texts— in lexis, but much less so in inflexion and syntax.
3. Educated speakers remained conscious of the common descent of Scots and Northern English, and of the close historical relationship between Scots and English in general.

It can therefore be argued that Scots is and has always been a subsystem of English, whose incipient separation from EModE was slowed down as a consequence of political, economic and cultural factors in the sixteenth century and whose elaboration and functional expansion was finally blocked by the adoption of English as the written (and, later, the spoken) language of higher prestige, developing through a stage of diglossia to the function of Scots in a stylistic/social continuum. This shift away from diglossia (and consequently the loss of Scots as an autonomous system) happened to different speech communities or individuals at different times, and for different reasons. Whatever these differences, the result was inevitably (and one is tempted to say teleologically) the dialectalization of the formerly semi-independent *auld leid*.

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