Sarah van Eyndhoven (University of Edinburgh)

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY HOP-SCOTCH: THE BALANCING ACT OF LOCATION, STATUS AND RECIPIENT ON SCOTS IN18TH CENTURY CORRESPONDENCE

Early eighteenth century Scots falls into the interesting transition zone from the 'heyday' of Older Scots, to the context of "the domestic, the familiar, the sentimental [and] the comic" (Murison 1979: 9–37). By 1700 the prolonged period of convergence with Southern English had displaced Scots from most written genres, but the extent to which this took place in correspondence, and across different areas of Scotland, remains unclear. Given the frequent familiarity between correspondents (Dossena 2002: 109–110), and reduced self-monitoring of private writing (Mullan et al. 2009), it seems plausible Scots features would have continued in this genre. In order to explore this, the digitised letters of Scottish writers were compiled into a purpose-built corpus and searched for Scots lexis and orthographic variants. Using these results, I explore firstly variation in frequency between authors, and what might condition their use of Scots. Specifically, I focus on external effects, such as location and status, but also linguistic factors, such as salience and stylistic practices. This is complemented by analysing intra-writer variation within specifically-selected authors; in particular the role of recipient familiarity is analysed. Results suggest a complex interplay of social and linguistic factors; location and background influence overall frequency of Scots, and interesting parallels are found between geographically dispersed locations. When looking deeper at the micro-level, we see an interesting effect for familiarity on both location and personal levels; authors' reflect an in-group/out-group preference across different correspondents in their use of Scots. However, the Scots features that remain in correspondence by 1700 were largely determined by linguistic effects, in particular their functional or grammatical nature. This research thus takes the first step towards providing fresh insight into an under-researched area of historical Scots, and its continuation in the early eighteenth century.

References

Dossena, Marina. 2002. "A Strong Scots Accent of the Mind: The Pragmatic Value of Code-Switching Between English and Scots in Private Correspondence: A Historical Overview". *Linguistica e Filologia* 14: 103–127.

Mullan, David G., Alec Ryrie, Crawford Gribben, Euan Cameron, Bruce Gordon, Bridget Heal, Roger A. Mason, Amy Nelson Burnett, Andrew Pettegree, and Kaspar von Greyerz. 2009. *Literature and the Scottish Reformation*. Abingdon: Taylor & Francis Group.

Murison, David. 1979. "The Historical Background". In: Adam J. Aitken and Tom McArthur (eds.). *Languages of Scotland, volume 4 of Occasional papers (Association for Scottish Literary Studies)*. Edinburgh: W&R Chambers. 1–13.