



The Scottish
Government

Public Attitudes Towards the Scots Language

Arts and Culture



social
research

**PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE
SCOTS LANGUAGE**

TNS-BMRB

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Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
1 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES	4
2 METHOD AND SAMPLE	6
3 MAIN FINDINGS	8
Usage of Scots today	8
Reasons for speaking/not speaking Scots	10
Perceptions of Scots as a language	14
Importance of Scots nowadays	18
Reasons for Scots being important/not important.	20
Perceptions of Scots generally	22
Expectations of the use of Scots today	24
Scots in Education	27
Reasons for encouraging/not encouraging children to speak Scots	30
4 CONCLUSIONS	32
5 APPENDIX 1 – QUESTIONNAIRE	34
6 APPENDIX 2 – TECHNICAL APPENDIX	39

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and Objectives

In their pre-election manifesto the Scottish Government made a commitment to promote awareness and usage of the Scots language in a variety of settings. In order to help inform policy development for Scots, TNS-BMRB was commissioned by the Scottish Government to conduct research amongst a representative sample of the adult Scottish population.

There is little other relevant research in this field, therefore this latest study is intended to provide a broad overview of perceptions of the Scots language and attitudes towards it, and to measure behaviours and expectations of its use in Scotland today.

Method

The research was carried out using the Scottish Opinion Survey (SOS). The SOS is a monthly omnibus survey conducted in-home amongst a sample of around 1,000 adults in Scotland using Computer Aided Personal Interviewing (CAPI). For this research, fieldwork took place during the period 23rd September and 2nd October 2009 and a total of 1,020 interviews were achieved. This sample was representative of the adult population (aged 16+) in terms of sex, age, employment status and socio-economic group (SEG). As is the case each month, the achieved sample was weighted to ensure that it represents Scotland's population and is consistent between waves.

Main findings

Behaviours in relation to the use of the Scots language

Information was collected initially on the proportion of adults **speaking** Scots, with some 85% in total claiming to do so, and a substantial proportion (43%) claiming to speak Scots a lot/fairly often. Amongst this large majority most either speak Scots when socialising with friends (69%) or when at home with family (63%). Significant, but much lower, proportions also use it when out and about (31%) or at work (25%).

By far the most common reason given for **not** speaking Scots (amongst the 280 adults who claimed that they never spoke it) is 'I am not Scottish'. 38% of this group cite this as a reason for not speaking Scots – significantly more than for any another reason given.

In comparison to spoken Scots, use of Scots when writing, or when reading news, literature, stories, etc. is much less common. Around half indicated they ever read in the Scots language and around a third ever use Scots when writing. Moreover those who do tend to read/write in Scots tend to do so only occasionally or rarely.

Perceptions of Scots as a language.

There is widespread agreement (64%) that, “*I don’t really think of Scots as a language – it’s more just a way of speaking*” suggesting that for most adults in Scotland, Scots is **not** considered a language. However a substantial minority did disagree with this statement (29%) highlighting that there is no consensus on this issue. Likewise two thirds (67%) agree, “*I probably do use Scots, but am not really aware of it*” with just over a quarter disagreeing (27%). Opinion is, however, even more divided on whether hearing Scots spoken more would encourage greater use: 43% agree with the statement “*If I heard Scots spoken more I would be more likely to speak it myself*”, with the substantial remainder (21%) not sure either way and 35% disagreeing. Notably, those already speaking Scots frequently were more likely to agree with this statement than those who do **not** speak Scots. This suggests that increasing the profile and usage of spoken Scots is more likely to encourage it further amongst those already speaking it rather than persuade non- speakers to start.

On the issue of whether Scots “*doesn’t sound nice – it’s slang*”, just under two thirds (63%) disagree, with most who disagree doing so strongly (40% in total compared to 23% disagreeing slightly). However although many are not concerned with the way Scots sounds, a significant proportion do agree (26%), highlighting that some have negative perceptions of Scots as a language.

Attitudes towards the Scots language

At a general level the majority (67%) regard it is as important that Scots is used in Scotland these days, and indeed for a significant minority this view was expressed with conviction (29%). However although opinion is more likely to be positive than negative on the importance of using Scots these days, the percentage claiming it is **not** important is fairly substantial, at just under a third (31%). For the latter group the lack of importance appears to stem from the perception that it is not required /pointless and clearly some are simply not engaged with the language. Other concerns with understanding Scots, with it being old fashioned, inferior to English, and not being as universally used as English were also raised but only by small minorities in each instance.

In line with spontaneous comments obtained as to why Scots is important, follow-up measures confirmed that there is widespread recognition of the role of Scots in the history, culture and local identities of Scotland. Specifically, the vast majority of adults agree that Scots is an important part of the history/heritage and the culture of Scotland (88% and 86% respectively), with in each instance more than half the sample indicating that these views are strongly held. Agreement that Scots plays a part in the identity of local areas of Scotland is also widespread, with 82% endorsing this view. A majority of adults (67%) also agree that Scots is spoken a lot in their area, with again many agreeing strongly.

Whilst there does appear to be an overall consensus that Scots has an important role in terms of the identity, culture and heritage of Scotland (even amongst those not considering it important, or not using it themselves) the percentage disagreeing

that Scots is **not** relevant to the modern Scotland of today is much lower at 62%. Adults in Scotland are therefore more in agreement with regard to the legacy of Scots than in terms of its contemporary value.

Expectations of current use of Scots

With regard to the role of Scots in Scottish life today, usage in Scottish **culture** (in arts, literature, drama, music, etc.) is much more likely to be considered important than usage in Scottish political, business and legal arenas. The views of respondents towards the latter were very mixed and indeed overall were fairly indifferent as to whether Scots should be used in these areas. Perceptions of the current role of Scots in broadcasting are also polarised, although on balance views are more positive than negative, with 57% considering it important compared to 40% rating it as unimportant.

Interestingly though, when asked whether the use of Scots across these 5 different areas is enough, not enough or too much, the arena which achieved the highest level of support for **more usage** was broadcasting (at 29%), just ahead of culture, at 28%. The corresponding figures for civic/political, legal and business life were only slightly lower at around 20% for each. Most however are content with the current level of usage across all aspects rated.

Scots Language in Education

Views relating specifically to learning Scots, and Scots in the context of education are more likely to be positive than negative, but there is by no means a consensus. For example, whilst there is particularly widespread agreement that learning Scots can contribute to a sense of national cultural identity (73% of the sample agree with this view) the proportion agreeing that learning Scots has educational benefits for school children is much lower, at 56%. Likewise, whilst just over half are in support of teaching Scots in schools (specifically 55% disagree that Scots should **not** be taught in schools), some 29% are **not** in favour of Scots being taught, and a further 14% are unsure either way.

Similarly when asked whether children in Scotland should be encouraged to speak Scots, just under two thirds (64%) agree, with around a third definitely in favour. There is, however, a relatively large minority against children being encouraged to speak Scots (31%). Very broadly, those with primary and secondary school aged children, and especially the latter, are more supportive of children being taught Scots and speaking Scots than those with no children in the household and those with children under 5 years old.

1 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Background

- 1.1 In its pre-election manifesto the Scottish Government made a commitment to promote awareness and use of the Scots language in a variety of settings. More recently, at the Scots Language Conference, held at the University of Stirling in February 2009, the Minister for Culture and External Affairs asserted that Scots is a national language of Scotland, and that it is definitely 'good for the nation'. It was also indicated that the Scottish Government was ready to do what it could to encourage, enable and endorse the use of the language.
- 1.2 Prior to the Scots Language Conference, and recognising the lack of evidence based research on Scots, the Scottish Government commissioned a study entitled *The Audit of Current Scots Language Provision in Scotland*. The audit provided an overview of current Scots language provision using the seven categories of public life of the CoE ECRML¹. The audit concluded that the Scots language provision has most deeply penetrated Scottish life in the categories of Education and Cultural Activities and Facilities. In the categories of Judicial Authorities and Administrative Authorities and Public Services, however, Scots language is relatively low, although it is variable across places and regions. The audit also noted a significant growth potential in the field of Media. In addition, it also provided potential ways forward for increasing Scots language provision in Scotland, which were discussed and debated at the February 2009 Conference.
- 1.3 The only other recent relevant research in this area is a piece of work commissioned by The General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) as part of the development into extending the provision of information into other languages (in addition to Gaelic which has been included in the census since 1881) in the March 2009 Census Rehearsal. Critically the initial cognitive testing on 3 proposed questions highlighted that people experienced difficulty in understanding the term Scots, and that people interpreted the questions on the Scots language in different ways. As a consequence of this, further testing has been commissioned to look specifically at the interpretation of 'Scots', and the level of understanding of differences between Scots and Scottish Gaelic in order to ensure that the questions are "workable and fit for purpose".
- 1.4 In order to take forward research and policy development in this area, particularly in Education, the Scottish Government wished to respond to this current evidence gap by commissioning some initial research to explore public perceptions of, and attitudes towards, to the Scots language amongst the general public in Scotland.

¹ CoE ECRML: Council of Europe European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

Research Objectives

- 1.5 The overarching objective of this latest research was to explore public perceptions of, and attitudes to, the Scots language amongst the general public of Scotland.
- 1.6 The overall **research objectives**, as defined in the brief, were to:
- explore what people understand the Scots language to be;
 - investigate public perceptions of, and attitudes to, the Scots language by adults living in Scotland; and
 - examine behaviours and expectations in relation to the use of the Scots language in Scotland.
- 1.7 More specifically, research into current **understandings and perceptions** of the Scots language aimed to establish:
- What people living in Scotland understand the Scots language to be, what it means to them, whether they regard it as a distinct language and to explore positive and negative perceptions of Scots as a language;
 - The extent to which, and the ways that, the Scots language is relevant to life today in Scotland and Scottish identity.
- 1.8 The research was also required to examine **current behaviours and expectations** for the Scots language, including:
- The use of Scots (reading, writing and speaking) in different aspects of public and private life to understand when and how people use the language;
 - Whether respondents would wish more provision to be available in the Scots language in education, broadcasting and the arts;
 - The relevance of the Scots language in education;
 - The relevance of the Scots language in shaping a sense of identity (both local and national).

2 METHOD AND SAMPLE

- 2.1 The research was carried out using the Scottish Opinion Survey (SOS). The SOS is a monthly omnibus survey conducted in-home amongst a sample of around 1,000 adults in Scotland using Computer Aided Personal Interviewing (CAPI). The SOS uses a quota sampling methodology and interviewers use a 'random route' technique within each sampling point to select addresses. Only one interview per household is permitted.
- 2.2 For this research, fieldwork took place during the period 23rd September and 2nd October 2009 and a total of 1,020 interviews were achieved. Interviewing was carried out across 72 constituencies across Scotland. This sample was representative of the adult population in terms of sex, age, employment status and socio-economic group (SEG)².
- 2.3 As is the case each month, the achieved sample was weighted³ to ensure that it represents Scotland's population and is consistent between waves should future tracking be required.

² The standard six socio-economic (SEG) or social grades, commonly used in research, are based on the current or previous occupation of the chief income earner in the household. AB includes higher and intermediate managerial, administrative and professional occupations, C1 includes supervisory or clerical, and junior managerial, administrative or professional occupations, C2 includes skilled manual workers whilst DE includes semi and unskilled occupations, state pensioners and the long-term unemployed.

³ Weighting is the process by which data are adjusted to reflect the known population profile. This is to counter any effects of differential refusal rates, interviewers falling short on particular quotas, or to correct for any over-sampling of minority populations. A 'weight' is the percent assigned to a particular criterion. If this is not carried out then the results will not properly reflect the views of the population being considered.

2.4 The weighting applied is based on population estimates from the National Readership Survey 2006. Table 1.1 below outlines the composition of the sample for the SOS in September 2009.

Table 1.1 - Sample profile

Base: All respondents (1020)

		Unweighted (1020) %	Weighted (1020) %
SEX:	Male	48	48
	Female	52	52
AGE:	16-24	9	13
	25-34	11	13
	35-44	16	18
	45-54	18	16
	55-64	18	17
	65+	29	23
SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUP:	AB	18	23
	C1	24	28
	C2	24	21
	DE	35	28

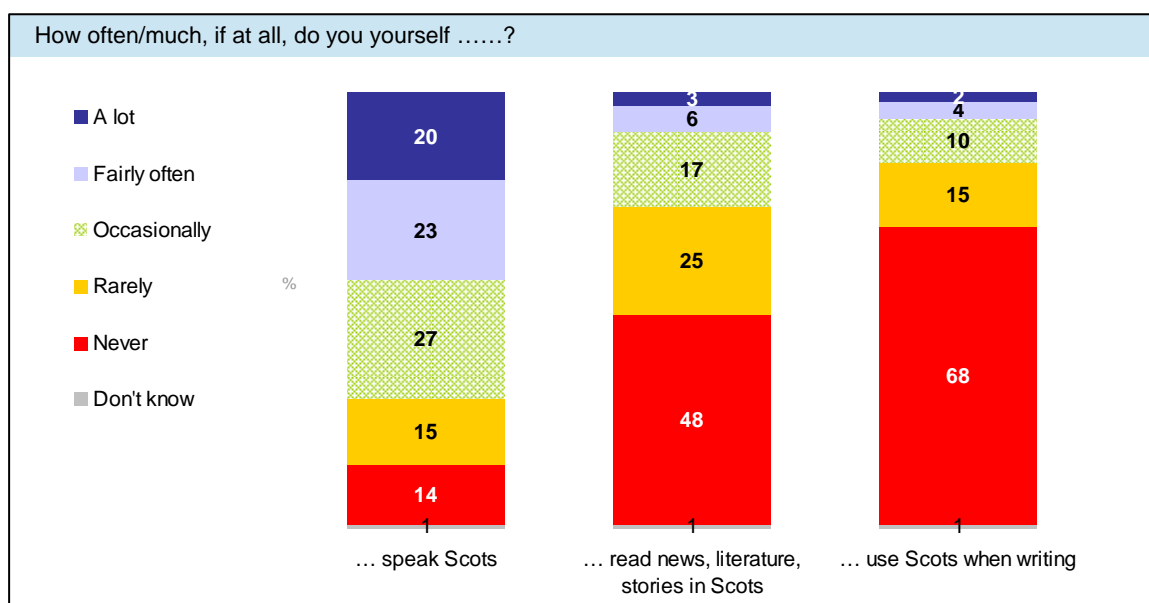
3 MAIN FINDINGS

Usage of Scots today

3.1 Information on the usage of Scots nowadays was collected for speaking Scots, reading Scots and writing Scots. In each instance respondents were asked how much or often they did so, using a five point verbal scale, ranging from 'a lot' to 'never'. The results for each, amongst the total sample, are shown in Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1: Usage of Scots today

Base: All respondents (1020)

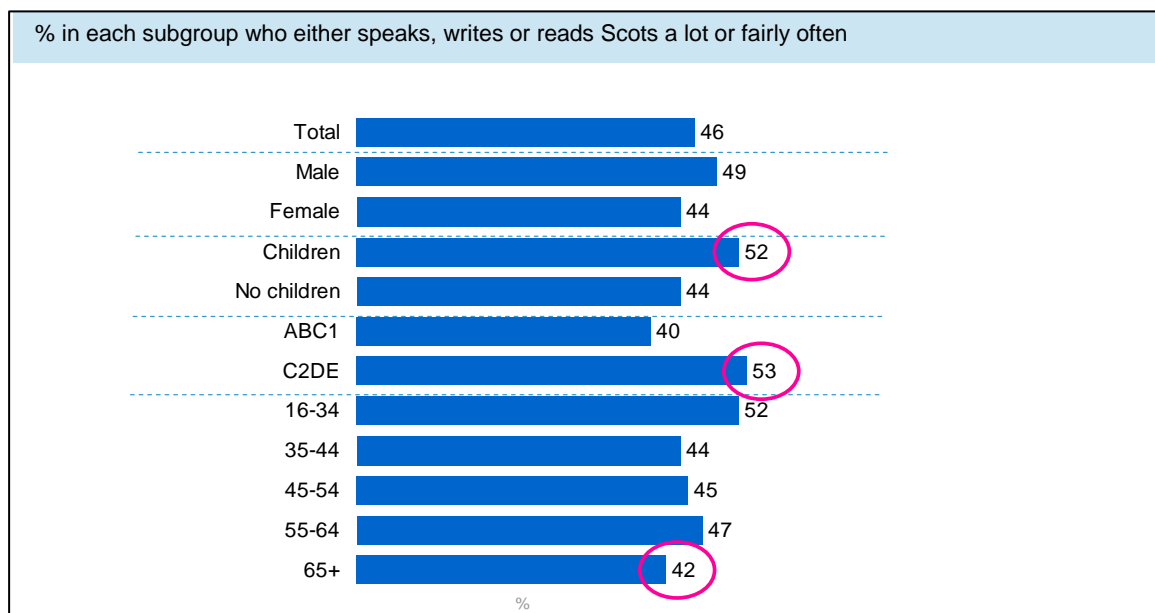


3.2 The two key findings here are firstly, that Scots is spoken to a degree by the majority of adults in Scotland today, and secondly, that Scots is primarily a spoken language rather than one that is read or written. In total, some 85% claim to speak Scots nowadays, with 43% claiming to do so 'fairly often/a lot'. By comparison 51% ever read in Scots, and just 31% ever use Scots when writing, with around only around 10% doing either on a regular basis.

3.3 Further analysis reveals some significant age and socio-economic differences in terms of speaking, reading and writing in Scots. For example, in terms of the spoken language, the over 65s are the least likely to ever speak Scots nowadays (80% in total compared to at least 86% across all other age groups) with those *most* likely to speak Scots in the 55-64 year old age range (89%). Arguably the lower usage amongst the oldest group may reflect differences in upbringing amongst a generation that was encouraged to speak English and discouraged from using their local speech. Lower usage levels amongst the over 65s are also evident for reading and writing in Scots.

- 3.4 Conversely the younger age groups appear to be more likely to use Scots at all when writing; although the difference is only significant in comparison to the over 65s: 34% of 16-34s and 36% of 35-44s compared to 27% of over 65s.
- 3.5 The differences according to socio-economic status on the other hand are not consistent across the three dimensions. For example, whilst those in the highest groups are **less** likely to speak in Scots than any other group (80% of ABs compared to 86% of C1s, 86% of C2s and 87% of DEs) the same pattern does not hold true for reading: respondents in the highest socio-economic grades emerged as those **most** likely to ever read in Scots (56% compared to 48% of C1s and 50% of C2DEs). It is C1s though who appear much **less likely** to write in Scots (23%), compared to any other socio-economic group (33%, 37% and 34% for ABs, C2s and DEs respectively).
- 3.6 Looking at usage across all 3 dimensions - speaking, writing and reading - , the profile of those using Scots regularly, that is a lot or fairly often, is that of a younger, C2DE, and slightly male biased group. Figure 3.2 below shows the total percentage across all key sub-groups who speak, write or read Scots at least fairly often.

Figure 3.2: Total percentage speaking, writing or reading Scots regularly
Base: All respondents (1020)



Reasons for speaking/not speaking Scots

- 3.7 To establish the reasons for not using Scots, all those respondents who claimed to speak it either rarely or never were asked why they did not speak Scots/speak Scots more. This was an open-ended question therefore the responses have been grouped into themes as shown in Figure 3.3 below.
- 3.8 The first column of figures shows the results based on all those asked this question (n=280 respondents) and the second column shows the same responses as a percentage of the total sample (n =1020).

Figure 3.3: Reasons for speaking/not speaking Scots

Base: All respondents never/rarely speaking Scots (280)/All respondents (1020)

Why do you not speak Scots/speak Scots more?		
	Never speak/rarely speak (%)	All respondents %
I am not Scottish/I am English/Polish, etc.	38	11
Prefer to speak English/good English/speak properly	10	3
Just the way I was brought up	8	2
Never spoken it/never had any need to	8	2
Don't understand / don't know the language	7	2
Sounds like slang	4	1
Don't know / not stated	9	2

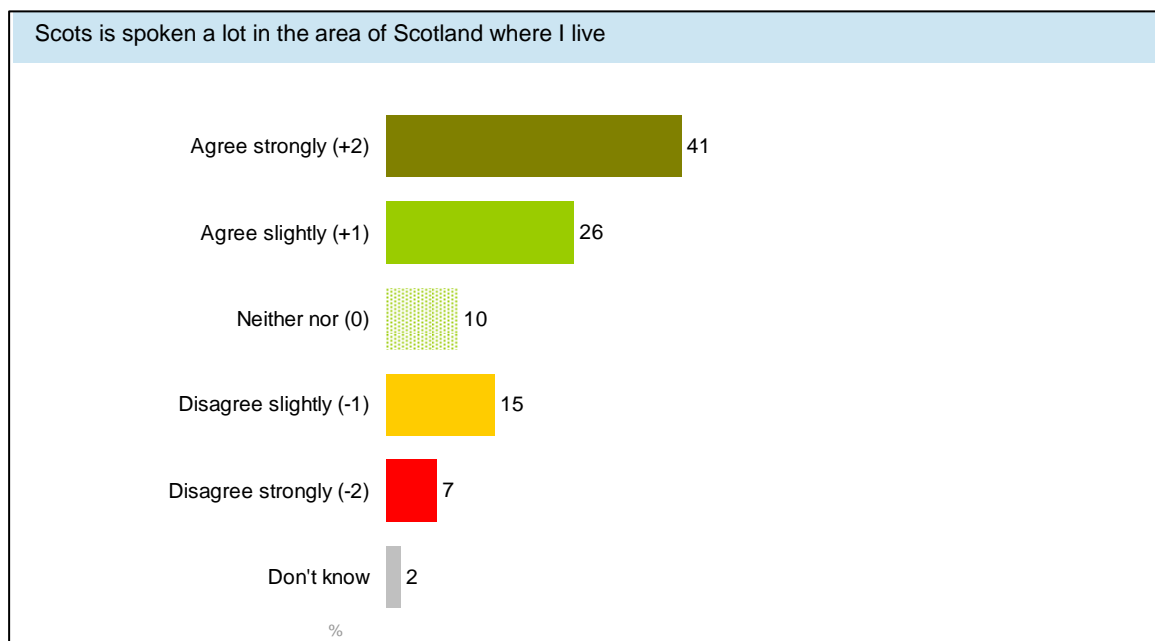
This shows all responses provided by 3% or more of those asked. A full list of responses is shown in the appended data tables

- 3.9 By far the most common reason given for **not** speaking Scots (amongst the 280 adults who claimed that they never spoke it) was 'I am not Scottish'. Almost four out of ten in this group cited their non-Scottish origins as a reason for not speaking Scots – a far higher number than recorded for any another reason given. However, whilst this percentage is high for a response amongst those answering this question, when the number is re-based on the total sample, the figure drops to 11% (as shown in the right hand column above) which is broadly in line with the percentage of non-Scottish adults in Scotland.

- 3.10 In terms of the other reasons offered, none were mentioned by significant numbers but several themes do emerge. There are concerns, for example, that Scots is not proper/not good English (10%), with a further 4% also specifically referring to it as slang. Additionally it appears that for some, Scots has either simply never been a part of their life, it has not been required or it has not been part of their up-bringing (8%). The issue of lack of understanding was also cited, but again by only a very small minority (7%).
- 3.11 The relatively large number claiming that they ‘don’t know’ at this question also seems to suggest that there are no particularly strong negative factors limiting usage; rather, for most of the non-speakers Scots is just not their normal way of expressing themselves; either because they are not Scottish or because they have not been encouraged or required to do so.
- 3.12 In addition to measuring personal use of Scots, the survey also sought to gauge the extent to which people consider it commonly heard in the area where they live. Specifically, as part of a battery of attitude statements respondents, were asked to agree or disagree with the statement “there is a lot of Scots spoken in the area of Scotland where I live”. Not surprisingly, given the large majority claiming to speak Scots, there was widespread agreement with this statement, as shown in Figure 3.4 below.

Figure 3.4: % agreeing/disagreeing that Scots is spoken a lot in the area of Scotland where I live

Base: All respondents (1020)

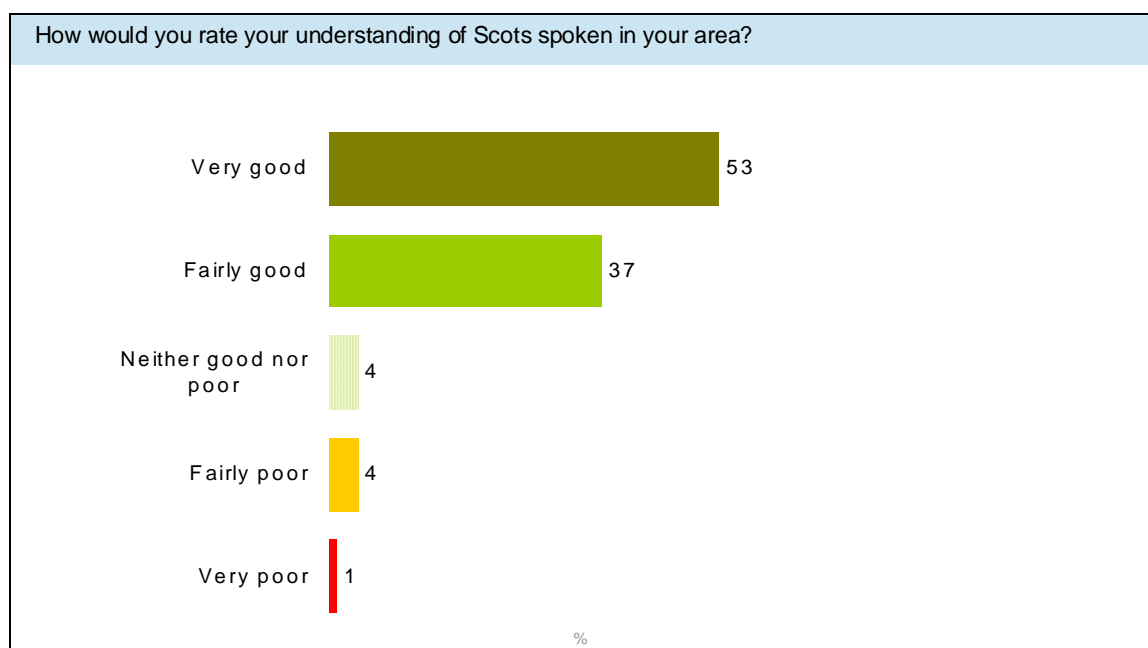


- 3.13 In total, two thirds agree that Scots is spoken a lot in their area, with the remainder broadly split between those neither agreeing nor disagreeing, those disagreeing slightly and those disagreeing strongly. However, in line with the demographic profile of Scots speakers, there is also a significant difference amongst socio-economic sub-groups at this measure, with levels of agreement rising to 74% and 72% amongst DEs and C2s respectively,

compared to 63% of C1s, and just 57% of ABs. The relative economic status of a local area thus appears to have a strong influence on whether or not Scots is widely heard.

3.14 Those respondents who agree that Scots is spoken a lot in their area were also asked a follow up question on their level of understanding. Specifically, they were asked to rate their understanding of the Scots spoken in their area, using a 5 point rating scale, ranging from very good to very poor. The results are shown in Figure 3.5 below.

Figure 3.5: Rating of understanding of Scots spoken in area where live
Base: All respondents who agree that Scots is spoken a lot in their area (690)



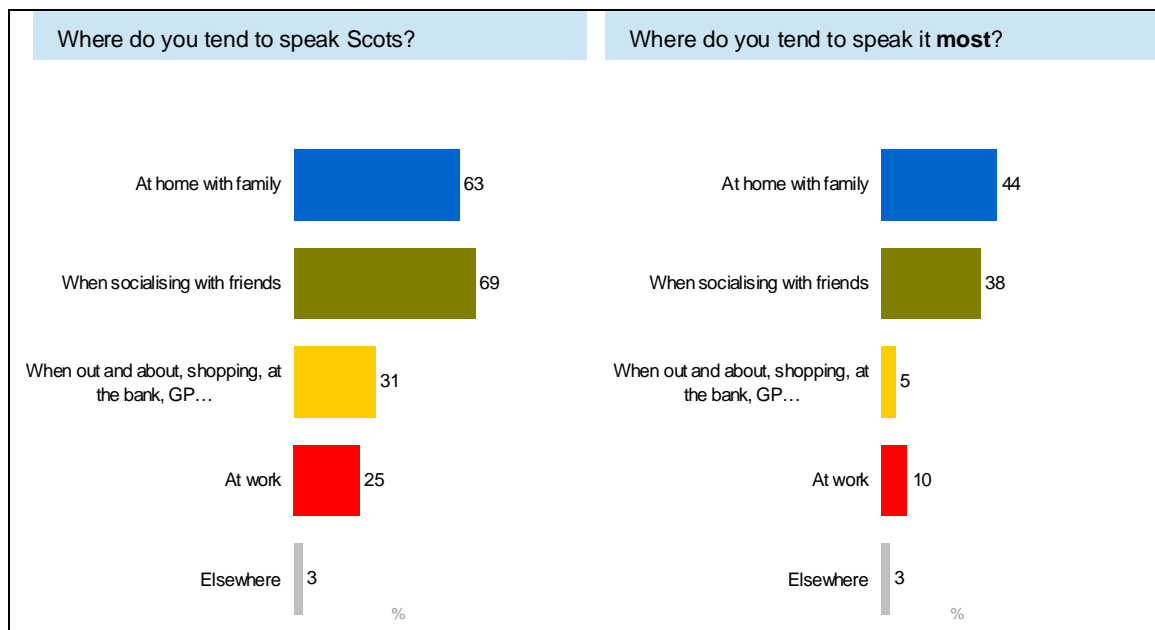
3.15 The results are overwhelmingly positive, with 90% claiming to have a good understanding, and only 5% rating their understanding as poor. Comprehension of Scots, in those areas where it is widely used, is therefore not a problem for the vast majority of adults.

3.16 Moreover, even amongst those who never speak Scots themselves, or who only use it occasionally or rarely, the level of understanding is generally good (68% of non-speakers and 86% of irregular speakers rated their understanding as good).

3.17 The final measures in this section on usage examine where Scots is used. Firstly all respondents were asked to indicate, from a list, where they tend to speak Scots, and secondly they were asked to specify, from the same list, where they tend to speak it most. The results for both these measures are shown in Figure 3.6 overleaf.

Figure 3.6: Where tend to speak Scots

Base: All who ever speak Scots (867)



3.18 At a total level, Scots is much more widely spoken when socialising with friends and, to a marginally lesser extent, when at home with the family, compared to in more formal situations such as dealing with shop/bank or GP staff or when at work. Around two thirds of speakers use it with friends/family compared to less than half this number when out and about or at work. The family environment was most widely endorsed as the most popular place for speaking Scots (by slightly under half those speaking Scots), just marginally ahead of the social environment.

3.19 However these figures do mask some interesting variations when the results are analysed in a more detail. For example, female speakers are much more likely than males to speak Scots at home (68% compared to 58% of males), whereas it is spoken more commonly at work by males (31%) than females (20%). The gender difference is even more pronounced with regard to place where Scots is spoken most: 54% of females endorsed 'at home' compared to just 32% of males.

3.20 There is also a strong age effect, with 16-34 year old Scots speakers less likely than other age groups to be speaking it with the family (58%) but using it much more widely than any other age group when socialising with friends (81%). Arguably the emphasis on the social arena amongst younger people reflects a more active social life generally, but nevertheless the figure also highlights the strength of the Scots language amongst young people today. Males are also generally more likely to use it most when socialising (44% compared to 32% of females).

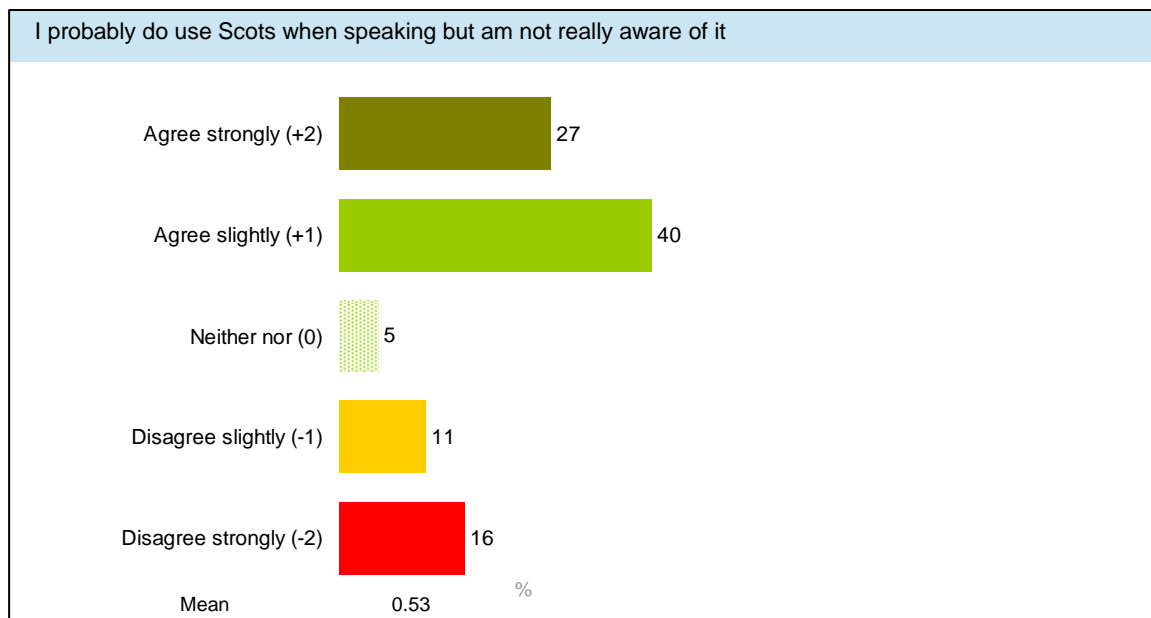
3.21 The other significant difference at this measure emerges according to geographic region⁴. Whilst differences at regional levels have to be treated with some caution as the base sizes are low (c100 respondents) and the demographic profiles not consistent, the percentage of those in the Glasgow region claiming to speak Scots when socialising with friends is sufficiently higher than all other regions to warrant mention. 84% of Scots speakers in Glasgow indicated that they speak it when socialising with friends, compared to percentages in the low 60s for Highland and Islands, Mid Scotland and Fife, and the Lothians.

Perceptions of Scots as a language

3.22 At the very start of the questionnaire, after playing a short recording of some examples of Scots, respondents were asked to consider four different aspects of Scots as a language. However the term ‘language’ was deliberately avoided in the opening introduction so as not to influence the respondents’ views.

3.23 Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with four statements, the order of which was rotated, using a five point rating scale. The results for the statement, *I probably do use Scots when speaking but am not really aware of it*, were as follows:

Figure 3.7: % agreeing/disagreeing that I probably do use Scots when speaking but am not really aware of it
Base: All respondents (1020)



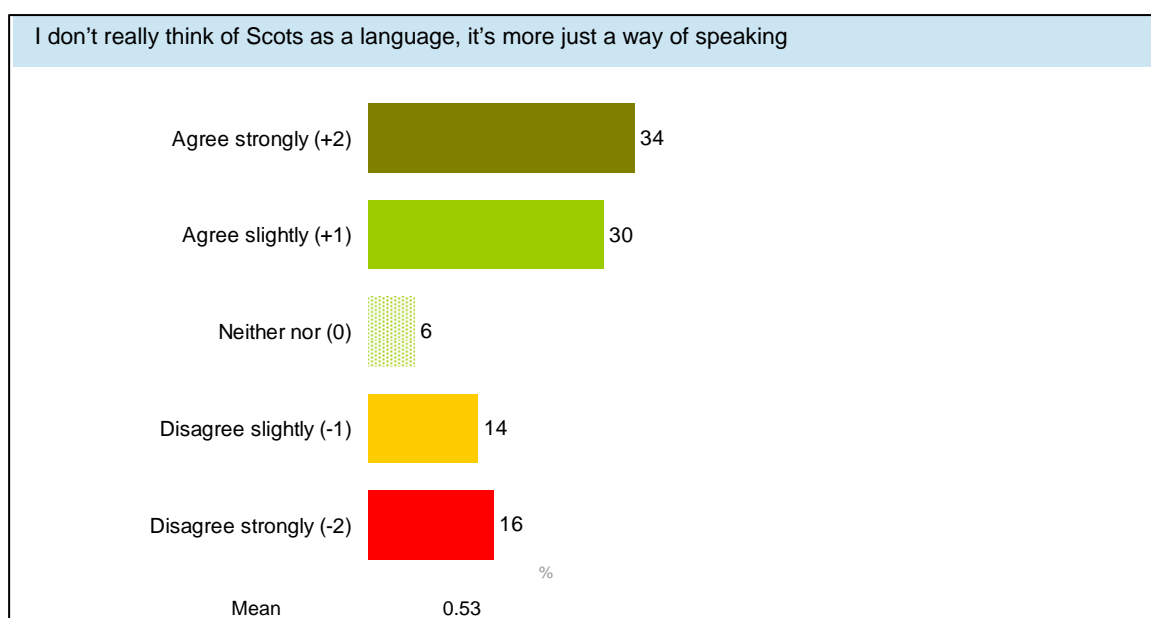
⁴ Highlands & Islands, North East, Mid Scotland and Fife, Lothians, Central, Glasgow, West and South

3.24 In total, two thirds (67%) agree that their use of Scots is sub-conscious; that they are really not aware of speaking it. Moreover, a quarter agree strongly that this is the case. Reflecting lower levels of speaking Scots amongst ABs their mean score value (based on ascribing value of +2 to -2 to each of the points on the scale) is considerably lower at 0.21 compared to other socio-economic groups. These mean scores increase from 0.52 for C1s to 0.71 amongst DEs.

3.25 The results for the second statement, *I don't really think of Scots as a language, it's more just a way of speaking*, are as follows:

Figure 3.8: % agreeing/disagreeing that I don't really think of Scots as a language, it's more just a way of speaking

Base: All respondents (1020)



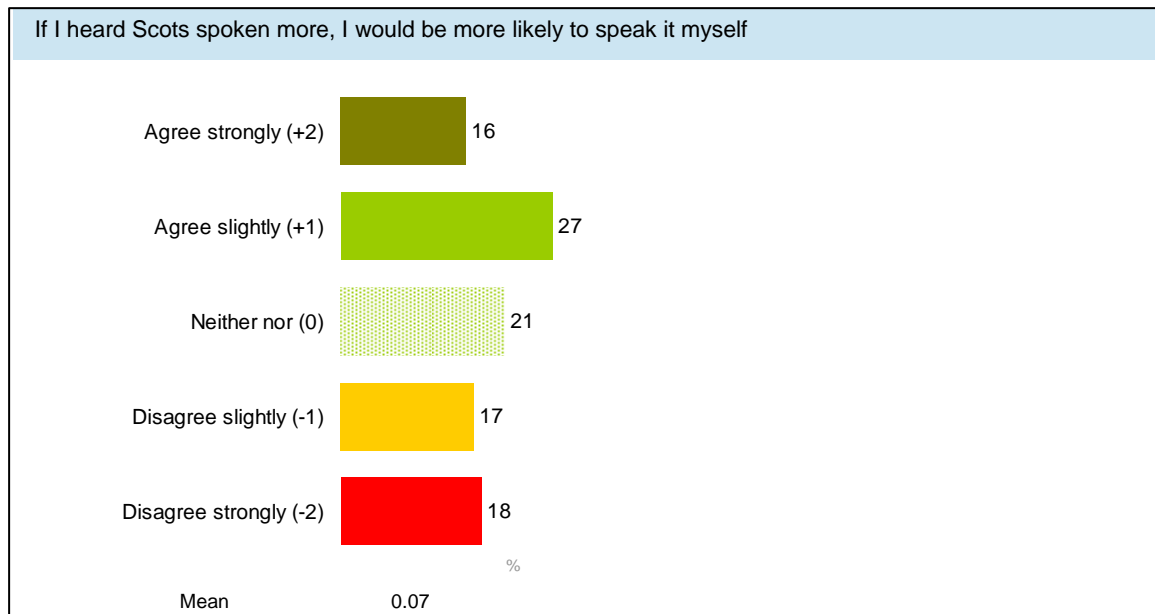
3.26 The majority of adults in the sample (64%) agree that they do **not** think of Scots as a language, with around half of this group holding this view with conviction (34% of the total sample). However many of those who disagree (30%) do so strongly (16% in total) highlighting the absence of a real consensus on this issue.

3.27 Perhaps not surprisingly, views on whether or not Scots is a language differ significantly according to how frequently it is spoken: the most frequent speakers are least likely to agree that it is not a language (58%) and those never speaking Scots most likely to do so (72%). For those who speak it occasionally/rarely the level of agreement was 67%.

3.28 The statement, *if I heard Scots spoken more, I would be more likely to speak it myself*, was included in the attitude battery in order to establish whether or not people would be encouraged to speak Scots themselves, if it was more widely spoken.

Figure 3.9: % agreeing/disagreeing if I heard Scots spoken more, I would be more likely to speak it myself

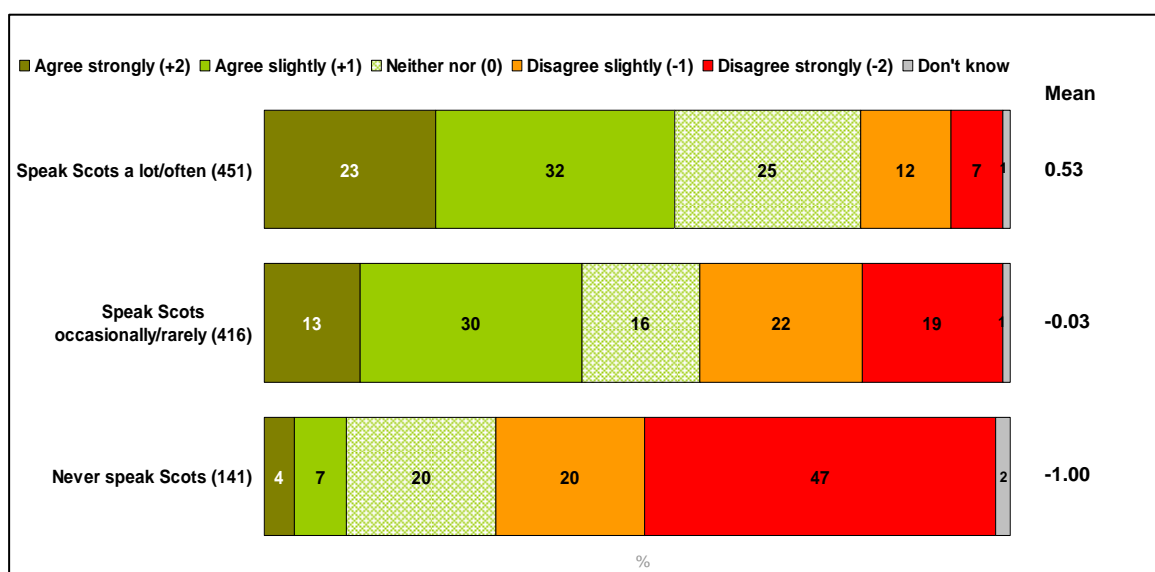
Base: All respondents (1020)



3.29 At the total level the results are very polarised, with 43% agreeing and some 35% disagreeing; therefore it is difficult to conclude one way or the other what the impact would be if Scots was more widely spoken. However, when the results are analysed according to current level of usage a completely different pattern emerges, as Figure 3.10 below shows.

Figure 3.10: % agreeing/disagreeing, if I heard Scots spoken more, I would be more likely to speak it myself by frequency of speaking Scots

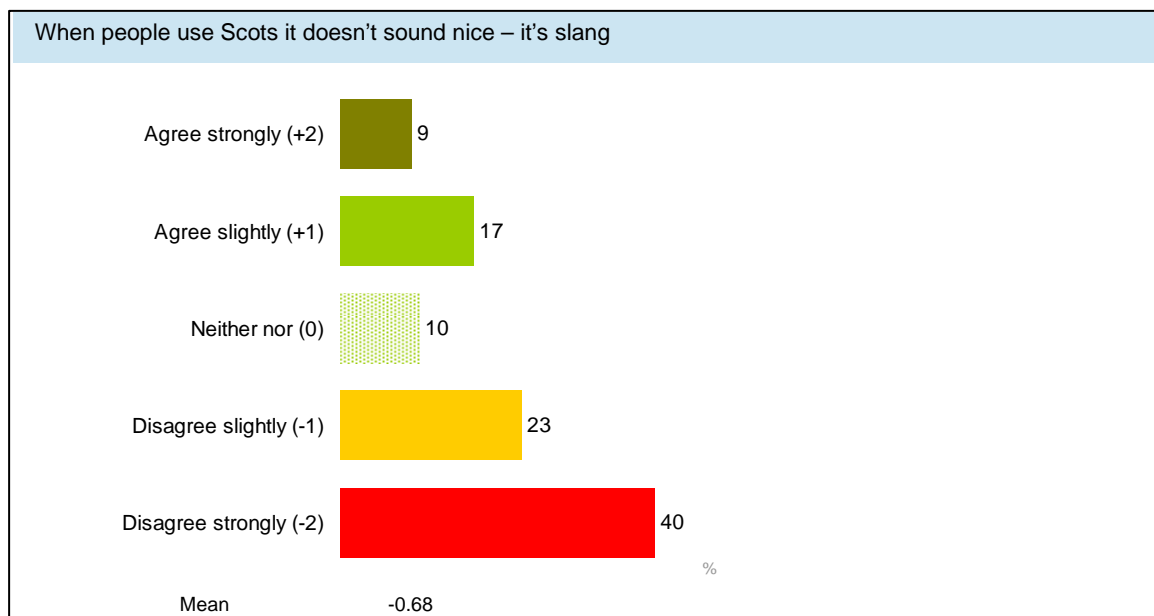
Base: All respondents in each sub-group



- 3.30 On the basis of this evidence, it is those who are already speaking Scots, and in particular those who use it regularly, who would be encouraged to use it further if they heard it more. Conversely, it appears that hearing Scots spoken more widely would not encourage the non-speakers to speak Scots. This is perhaps not surprising however, as previous results have highlighted that non-usage often stems from a lack of connection with Scots either because of up-bringing or origins: relatively few are not using it because of issues of understanding or lack of access.
- 3.31 The final statement sought to gauge, at a prompted level, the extent to which Scots is regarded negatively on the basis of how it sounds and specifically with regard to whether or not it is considered to be slang.

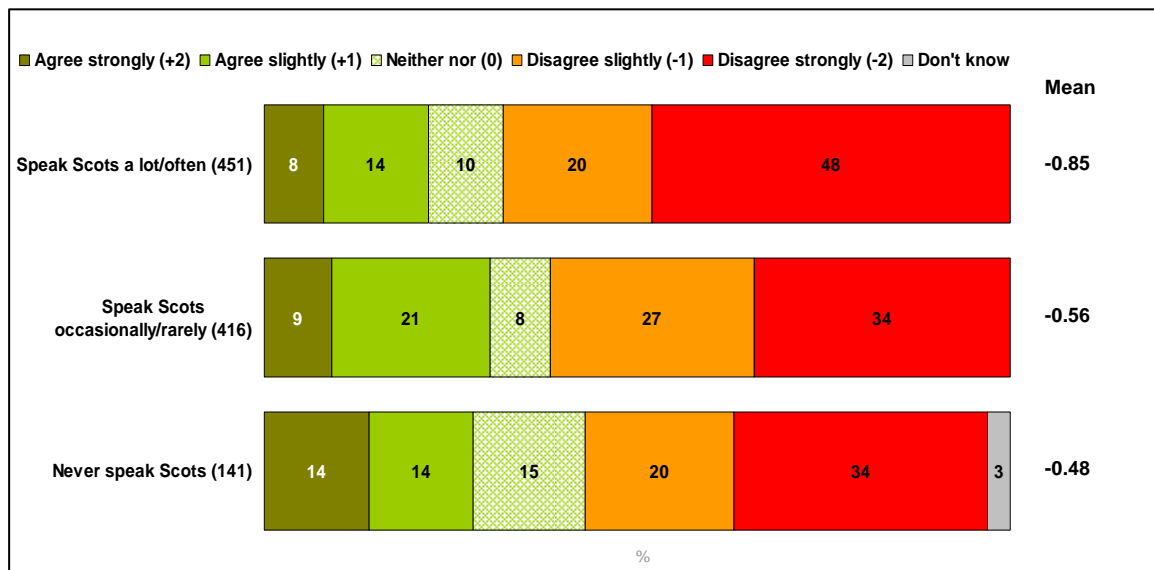
Figure 3.11: % agreeing/disagreeing that, when people use Scots it doesn't sound nice – it's slang

Base: All respondents (1020)



- 3.32 This statement was posed as a negative –“it doesn't sound nice, it's slang”. The high level of disagreement therefore highlights that the majority of respondents do not think of Scots as slang. Moreover many (40%) are strongly against the view that Scots is slang.
- 3.33 The differences in opinion by demographic sub-groups highlight that males (23% vs. 29% of females) and ABs are the least likely to consider Scots as slang (15% vs. 25% of C1s, 32% of C2s and DEs (32%). Furthermore, it is also noteworthy that whilst, as expected, levels of agreement are lowest amongst frequent speakers of Scots, non-speakers also generally disagree that Scots is slang, as shown in Figure 3.12 overleaf

Figure 3.12: % agreeing/disagreeing that, *when people use Scots it doesn't sound nice – it's slang*, by frequency of speaking Scots
 Base: All respondents in each sub-group



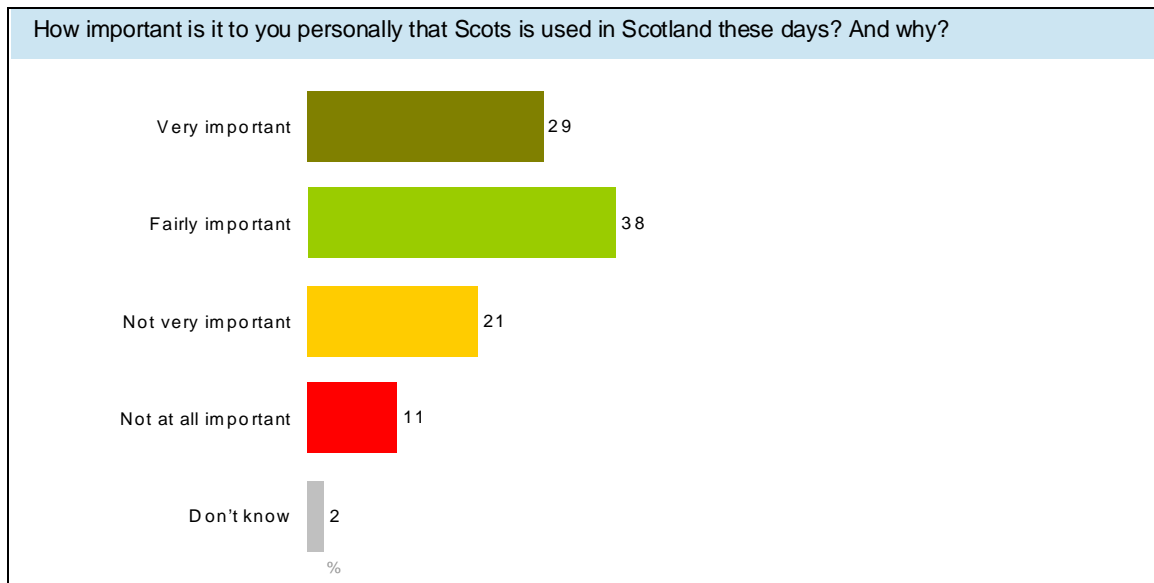
3.34 Thus although frequent speakers have the most hardened attitudes against viewing Scots as slang, many non-speakers also do not consider it negatively in this sense. This too, is in line with the previous findings which suggested that concerns regarding the ‘quality’ of Scots as a language are not a major influence on levels of usage.

Importance of Scots nowadays

3.35 Moving onto attitudes towards the value of Scots nowadays, respondents were initially asked “how important is to you personally, that Scots is used in Scotland these days?” The main results, based on responses to a 5 point rating scale, are shown in Figure 3.13 overleaf.

Figure 3.13: Importance of using Scots in Scotland these days

Base: All respondents (1020)

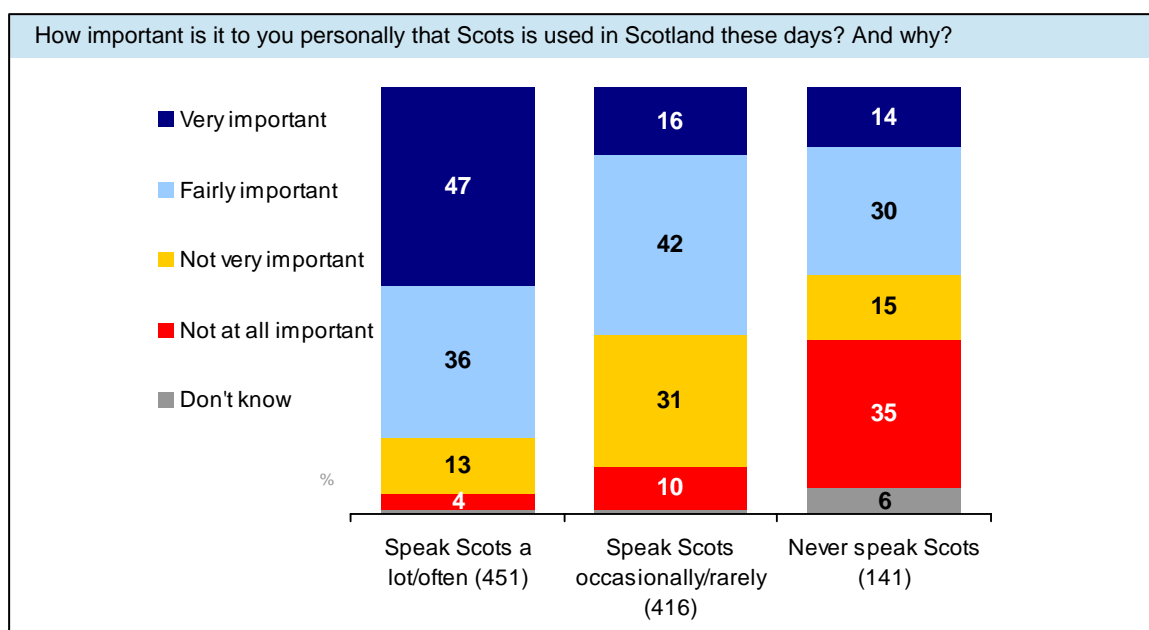


3.36 Two thirds of adults thus indicated that they believe Scots is important, and indeed over a quarter regard it as very important. Whilst a substantial core takes the opposite view, most of this group rate it as not very rather than not at all important.

3.37 There are no significant trends on this measure by demographic sub-groups but in line with findings on previous questions, the extent to which Scots is used appears to be strongly influential. For example, amongst those regularly speaking Scots, reading it and writing it, levels of importance increase to 83%, 90% and 93% respectively. Furthermore, even amongst those who never speak it themselves, usage of Scots today appears to be valued by substantial numbers, as Figure 3.14 below overleaf.

Figure 3.14: Importance of using Scots in Scotland these days by frequency of speaking Scots

Base: All respondents in each sub-group



3.38 As expected, agreement that using Scots today is important, increases as the amount of Scots spoken increases. Nevertheless, slightly under a half of non-speakers regard it as important that Scots is used these days (43%).

Reasons for Scots being important/not important.

3.39 Respondents were also asked to cite, without prompting, their reasons for rating Scots as important/not important. The results in respect of the positive attitudes are shown in Figure 3.15 below.

Figure 3.15: Reason for Scots being important

Base: All saying it is important (687)

Why it is important to that Scots is used in Scotland these days?	%
It's part of their / our identity, who we are	23
It's our/their heritage	22
To keep the language alive	15
It's part of our culture	14
It's our / their natural language	9
Because they/we are Scottish	6
It's traditional	4
Don't know	4

- 3.40 The two main themes to emerge are those of identity and heritage. These were each mentioned by around one in five of all those believing Scots is important. Additionally, culture and the need to keep the language alive were also mentioned by sizeable numbers, the latter highlighting that Scots is not just associated with the past. Secondary reasons for the importance of Scots include the idea that it is the natural language and because “we are Scottish”. A number of other points were also brought up, although each by only very small percentages. These include factors such as liking the sound, making Scotland unique and being part of one’s upbringing.
- 3.41 The overall picture provided by these comments is therefore one of a language that is considered to have a legacy but remains a key part of being Scottish today.
- 3.42 The main spontaneous comments given by those rating Scots as not important are shown in Figure 3.16 below.

Figure 3.16: Reasons why Scots is not important today

Base: All saying it is not important (311)

Why do you say that it's <u>not</u> important that Scots is used in Scotland today?	%
Not required / no point	19
Sounds like slang	8
Can be difficult to understand	7
English is universal / understood everywhere	7
Outdated / old fashioned / rarely used	6
Should be taught proper English	6
Important to be understood	5
We are a multi-cultural society	4
I'm not Scottish / I'm English	4
Don't know	12

- 3.43 The most noteworthy finding from these results is the relatively large percentage (19%) who commented on the lack of relevance of Scots; its pointlessness. This emerges quite clearly as the most likely reason for regarding using Scots today as unimportant.
- 3.44 There were a range of other factors cited too, but by relatively small minorities of less than 10% in each instance. Some 8%, for example, referred to Scots as slang, thus confirming that this is a cause for concern for some. Small numbers also noted that it was difficult to understand and that it was old fashioned/out of date. References were also made to English being the universal language, to the importance of being understood, and to need to learn “proper English”. None of these however were mentioned by significant numbers, and indeed over 10% gave a 'don't know' response.

3.45 Overall, there do not appear to be any particularly strong or widespread criticisms of the use of Scots today; rather, many are simply not engaged with the language nor interested, often due to their not being of Scottish origin or simply not being brought up with it.

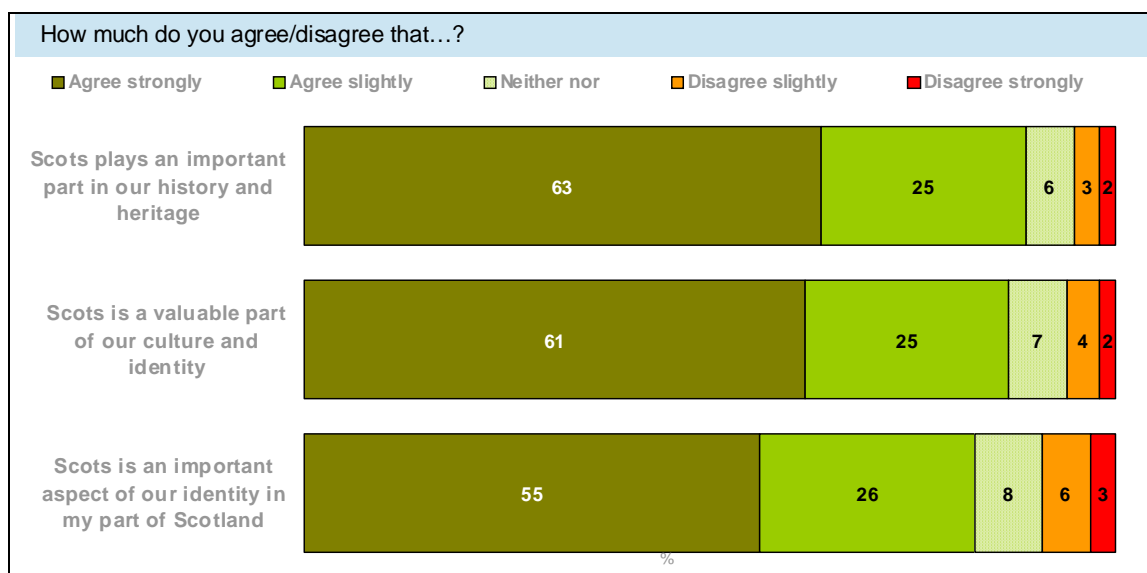
Perceptions of Scots generally

3.46 In addition to seeking spontaneous comments, the survey sought to gauge opinion towards some specific aspects of Scots. Four such aspects were included in the questionnaire, and respondents were asked to agree or disagree with each using a 5 point rating scale. The order in which they were rated was rotated.

3.47 The results obtained with respect to three out of the four statements are very similar and these are shown in Figure 3.17 below.

Figure 3.17: % agreeing/disagreeing with different aspects of Scots

Base: All respondents (1020)



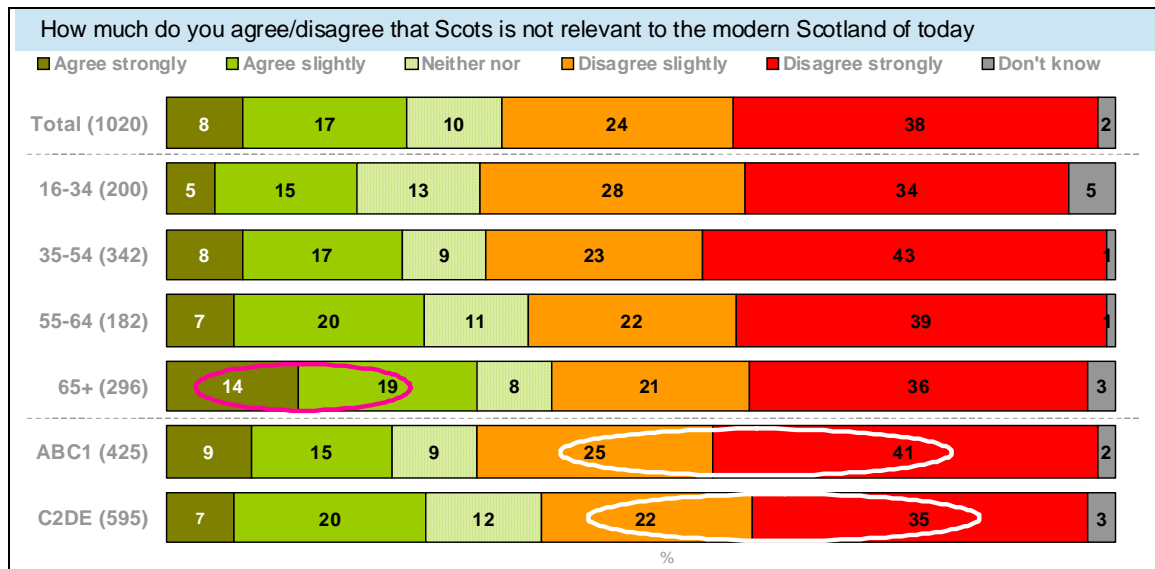
3.48 With agreement levels of around 80-90%, these findings confirm the value that is placed on the historical and cultural role of the Scots language, as well as its significance to local identities across Scotland. Moreover, the majority also agree strongly with each of these, highlighting the strength of positive feeling towards Scots.

3.49 As a consequence of the consensus of opinion there is little variation by demographic sub-group. However it is worth noting that even amongst non-speakers of Scots the majority agree with these views, with two thirds to three quarters agreeing with each statement. Likewise, respondents who had previously indicated that Scots was not important also tend to support these values of Scots, with two thirds to three quarters agreeing across the three statements.

3.50 The findings obtained with respect to the fourth statement, 'Scots is not relevant to the modern Scotland of today' are slightly more mixed, with some demographic differences also emerging. Figure 3.18 below summarises the results for the total sample and by age and socio-economic status. As this statement is in 'the negative', the higher the level of disagreement the greater the positive opinion of Scots.

Figure 3.18: % agreeing/disagreeing that Scots is not relevant to the modern Scotland of today

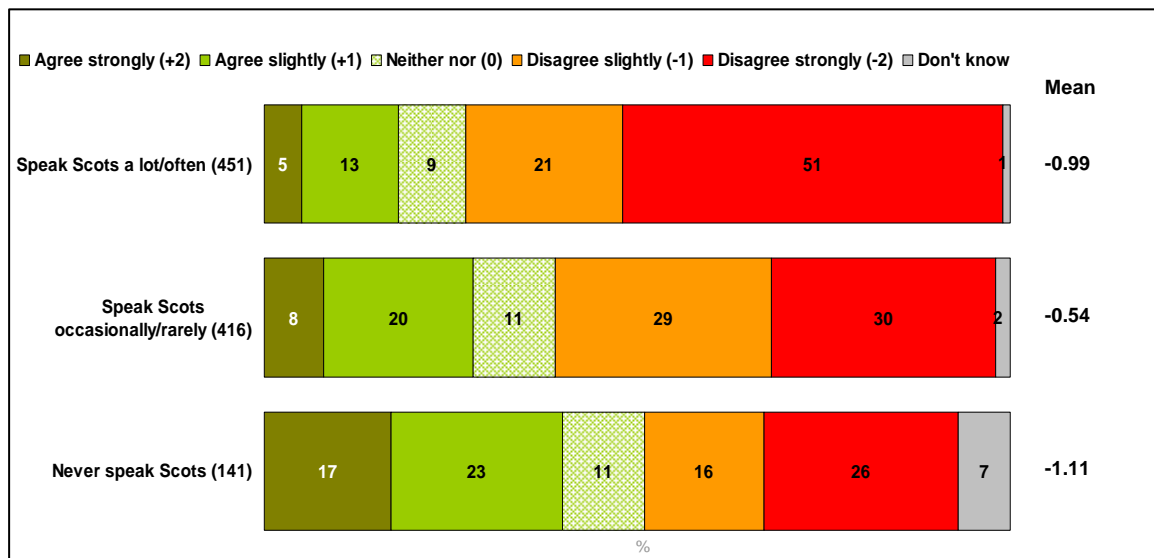
Base: All in each subgroup



3.51 Whilst the overall balance of opinion remains positive, with slightly under two thirds disagreeing that Scots is not relevant, a quarter of the sample agree with this view, and some 10% are unsure either way. The findings for age highlight a slight increase in agreement as age increases, with over 65s significantly more likely to agree compared to those under aged under 34 year (32% vs. 20%). As regards socio-economic status, ABC1s are significantly more likely to disagree that Scots is **not** relevant compared to C2DEs (66% vs. 56%).

3.52 Whether the respondent is a Scots speaker, and the extent to which Scots is spoken, also appear to have a strong impact on attitudes towards the relevance of Scots in modern Scotland. The levels of agreement/disagreement according to this variable are summarised in Figure 3.19 overleaf.

Figure 3.19: % agreeing/disagreeing that Scots is not relevant to the modern Scotland of today by frequency of speaking Scots
 Base: All respondents in each sub-group



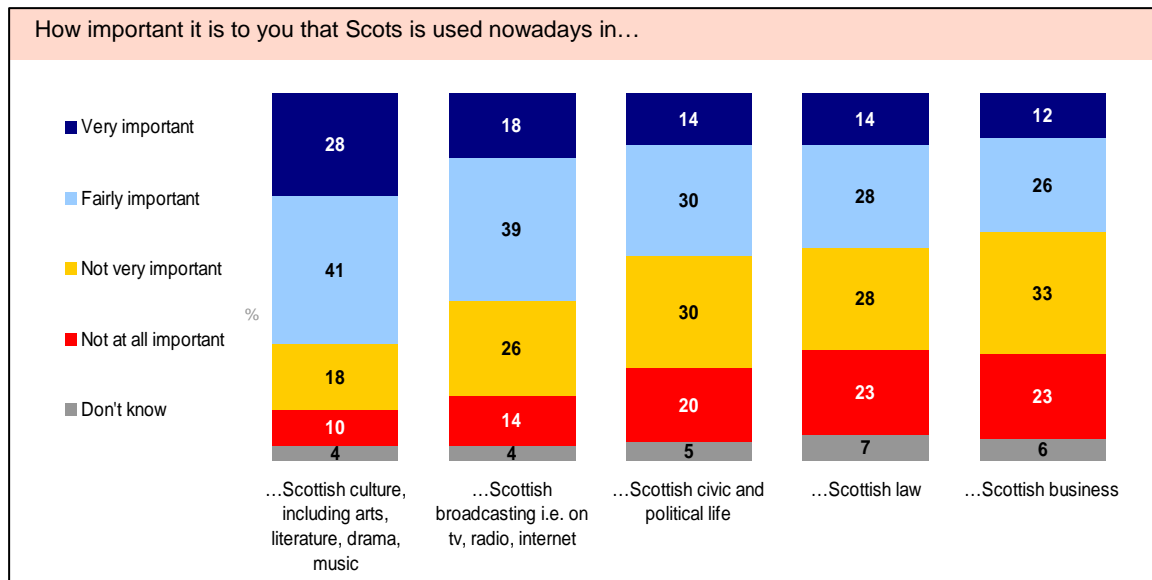
3.53 There is a very clear pattern of increasing agreement with the view that Scots is **not** relevant as the level of Scots spoken declines; from 18% amongst regular speakers to 40% amongst non-speakers. However even amongst non-speakers, the proportion supporting Scots is significant, with 42% disagreeing.

Expectations of the use of Scots today

3.54 A further key objective of the research was to determine the level of support for usage of Scots in different aspects of Scottish life, including elements such as culture and broadcasting and the more formal worlds of civic/political life, the law and business. In the first instance respondents were asked to rate the importance of using Scots nowadays in each of the five areas, and the results obtained are shown in Figure 3.20 overleaf.

Figure 3.20: Rating of importance of Scots across different aspects of Scottish life

Base: All respondents (1020)



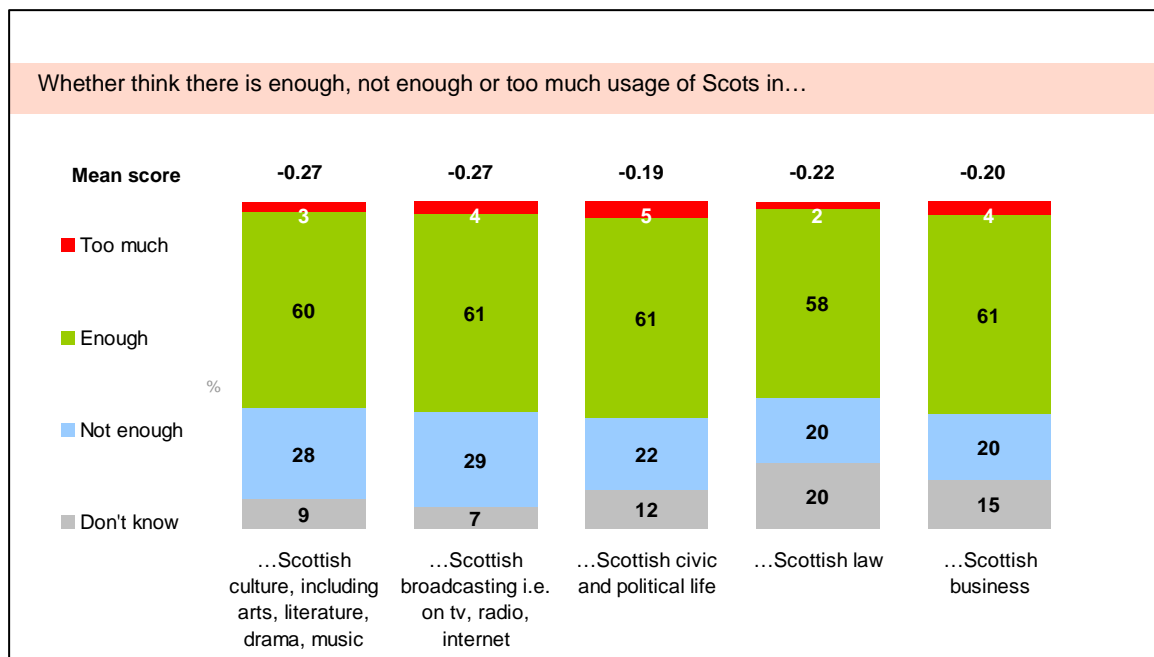
3.55 Not surprisingly perhaps, given the high level of support for the usage of Scots generally, attitudes towards its use in some specific aspects of life in Scotland are also fairly positive, although attitudes are by no means similar for each. Support for the usage of Scots in culture (arts, drama, music, etc.) is particularly widespread, and strong (69% in total rate it as important). Overall support for usage in broadcasting is also more positive (57%) than negative (40%) although clearly views are more variable. Comparatively though, the proportions claiming that Scots is important in political life, the law and business are therefore much lower, but by no means insubstantial (at 44%, 43% and 38% respectively).

3.56 The lower inclination to support Scots in these formal settings is very much in line with current patterns of speaking Scots, with most claiming to do so when with friends and family, with only a minority speaking when out and about or at work.

3.57 A further follow-up question sought to determine the level of support for increasing the amount of Scots used across each of the five areas. Figure 3.21 overleaf highlights, for each aspect, the percentage claiming that there is enough Scots, too much Scots and not enough Scots.

Figure 3.21: Whether usage of Scots is enough across different aspects of Scottish life

Base: All respondents (1020)

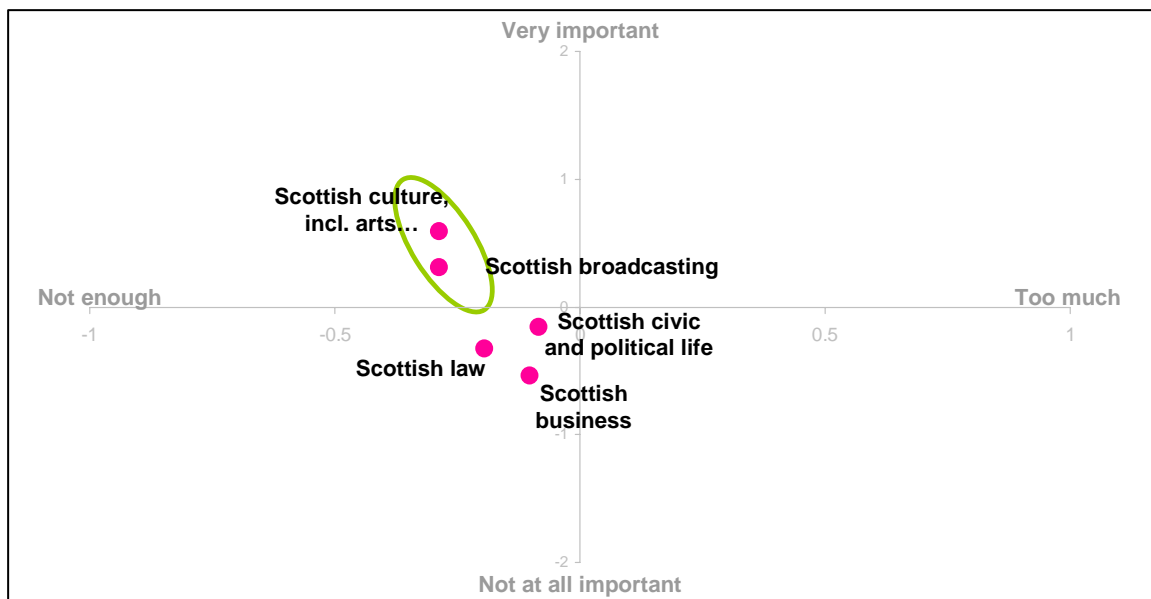


3.58 One of the key findings here is that the majority are content with the amount of Scots usage – indeed the percentage claiming that the amount is adequate is very similar across all five aspects. Secondly, although culture achieved the highest level of endorsement in terms of importance, there is fractionally more support for increased usage of Scots in broadcasting. Interestingly the percentages claiming there is insufficient usage are relatively similar for all areas – ranging from 29% to 20%. Only tiny minorities indicated that they felt there was too much Scots.

3.59 To illustrate these findings more clearly, each of the five aspects is plotted on a two dimensional grid in Figure 3.22 overleaf. The vertical axis shows the relative importance of usage, and the horizontal axis shows the level of support for more/less usage – both based on the mean score values of each.

Figure 3.22: Priority for change based on importance and support for increased usage

Base: All respondents (1020)



3.60 This highlights very neatly that current usage is slightly below what it should be for all aspects, and thus all aspects appear to the left hand side of the grid. On the other hand only two aspects, culture and broadcasting, are considered to be important and appear above the horizontal line. Furthermore of the two, culture stands out above broadcasting as the aspect of Scottish life which warrants most consideration for increased usage of Scots due to its greater importance

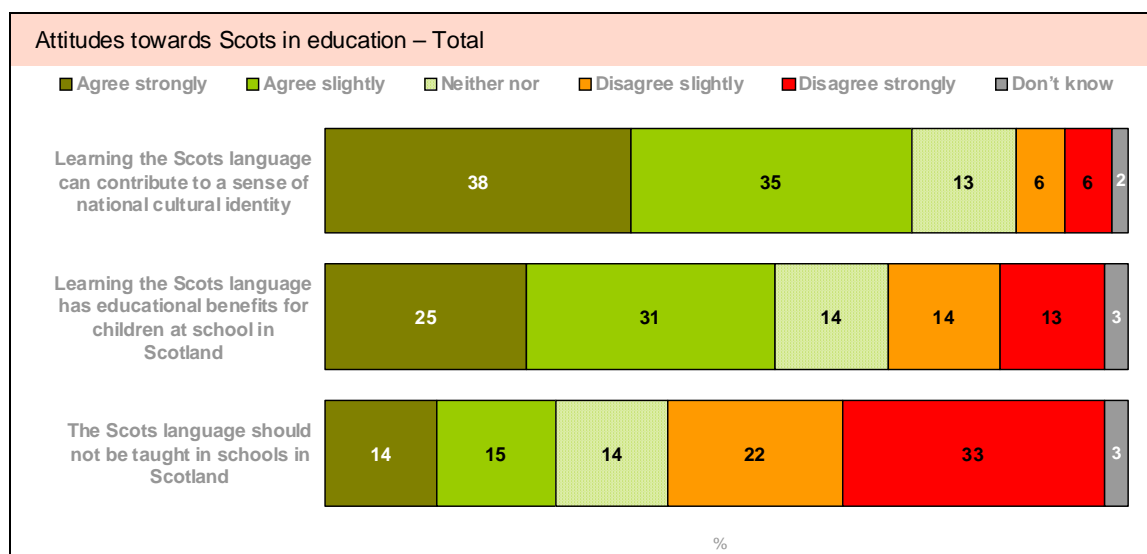
Scots in Education

3.61 This final section of the report examines attitudes towards learning Scots and Scots in education. Respondents were asked to agree/disagree with three statements, the first of which referenced the contribution of learning Scots to a sense of cultural identity and the second and third referred specifically to the benefits of learning and teaching Scots **in school**.

3.62 The full results for each, based on the total sample, are given in Figure 3.23 overleaf.

Figure 3.23: % agreeing/disagreeing with statements on learning/teaching Scots

Base: All respondents (1020)

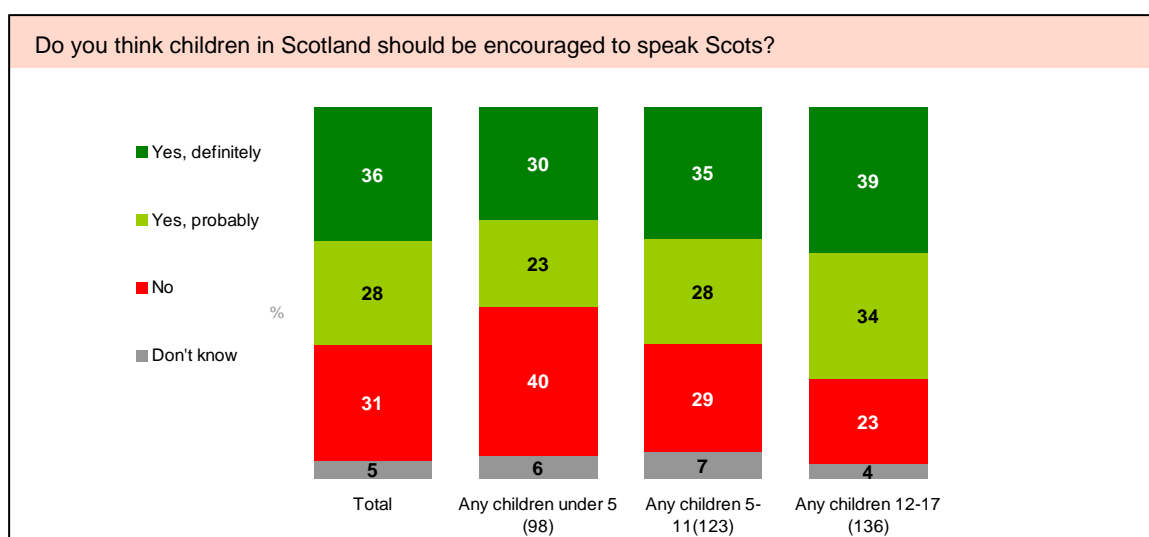


- 3.63 In line with previous findings that have highlighted the strong associations with the Scots language and Scottish culture, there is a high level of agreement with the first statement, *‘Learning the Scots language can contribute to a sense of national cultural identity’*: almost three quarters agree with this and approximately well over a third of the total sample agree strongly. Moreover, whilst some are unable to either agree or disagree, the percentage actively disagreeing is low, at just 12%.
- 3.64 The results for the second statement *‘Learning the Scots language has educational benefits for children in Scotland’* are significantly different however with only just over half agreeing (56%) and slightly over a quarter disagreeing. A similar proportion also disagrees that Scots should **not** be taught in schools in Scotland (55%).
- 3.65 It therefore appears that whilst many acknowledge that learning Scots contributes to cultural identity, opinions are more mixed when considering the educational benefits of learning/teaching Scots in school. This perhaps reflects that Scots is considered more as a way of speaking in Scotland rather than a language with the emphasis on the spoken element; this may suggest therefore that Scots is not regarded as a language that need or could be formalised in the educational environment.

- 3.66 Interestingly analysis of attitudes towards teaching Scots in schools highlights that those who do have school aged children, and secondary aged children in particular, are the most likely to be supportive of teaching Scots at school. Moreover it is those with pre-school aged children (any under 5 years) rather than those without any children that are the least likely disagree that it should not be taught: 62% of those with 12-17 year olds disagree compared to 58% of those with primary children and just 51% of those with any under 5 years. The corresponding figure for those without any children in the household (aged under 18years) is 54%.
- 3.67 Following on from the above, attitudes towards encouraging children to speak Scots generally also flagged up differences according to the age of children in the household. Figure 3.24 below summarises the findings at the total level, as well as for those with children under 5 years, children aged 5 to 11 years, and those with any 12-17 years.

Figure 3.24: Whether children in Scotland should be encouraged to speak Scots by presence of children in household

Base: All respondents (1020)



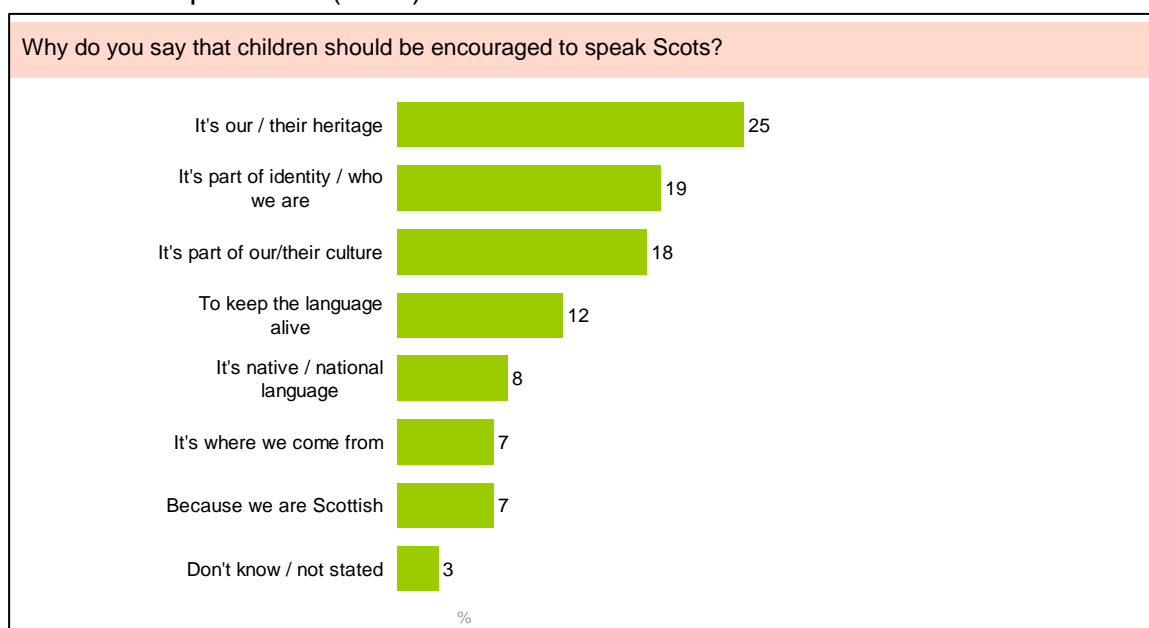
- 3.68 Overall the majority are in favour of encouraging children in Scotland to speak Scots, although it is not a huge majority – some 31% disagree. However, as found on the previous measure, whilst those with older children, and particularly secondary school aged children, appear particularly keen for their children to speak Scots, parents of pre-school children are more likely to have reservations. In total 40% of the latter are **against** encouraging children to speak Scots compared to just 23% of those with secondary children in the household.

3.69 Arguably, concerns stem from the fact that pre-school children are at a much earlier stage in their language development generally, and that to introduce the Scots language so young might negatively interfere with this process. It would be interesting to examine though whether there was the same level of reluctance amongst this age group to teaching / encouraging children a new language if the language in question was a foreign language. There is an argument that children can learn new languages easily, without necessarily jeopardising the ‘mother’ language and that in fact exposing children to additional languages can help all language development generally. The issue to explore would therefore be whether learning Scots is considered to offer the same benefits to language development as learning foreign languages.

Reasons for encouraging/not encouraging children to speak Scots

3.70 An open-ended follow-up question on the reasons for believing that children should be encouraged to speak Scots produced very similar responses to those obtained when respondents were asked why Scots is important generally. The main comments obtained are shown in Figure 3.25 below.

Figure 3.25: Reasons why children should be encouraged to speak Scots
Base: All respondents (1020)

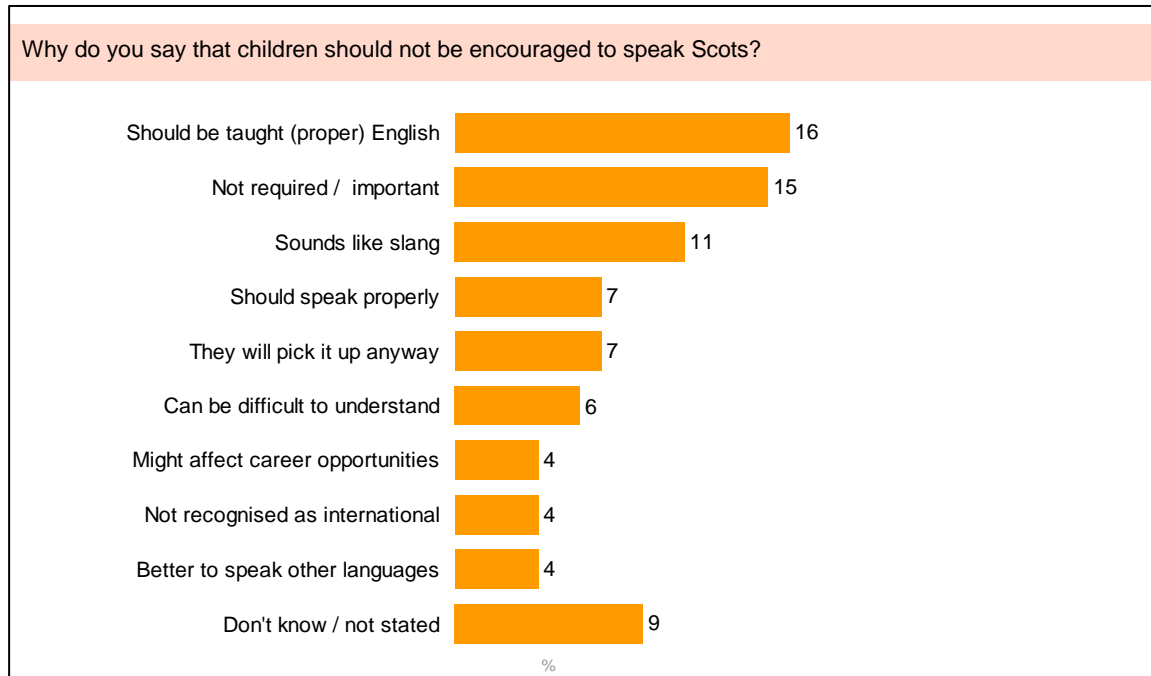


3.71 The responses generated at this measure also focus on the key themes of identity, heritage and culture. Additionally, comments were again made for the need to encourage usage in order to ensure that the language is “kept alive”. A number of slightly different but related comments were also obtained with regard to Scots being the language of Scotland, Scots being the national language and the language of Scottish people. These latter comments thus suggest that Scots is regarded by some as the ‘norm’ for people living in Scotland, and for Scottish people.

3.72 The reasons given for claiming that children should **not** be encouraged to speak Scots are summarised in Figure 3.26 below.

Figure 3.26: Why children should not be encouraged

Base: All who say children shouldn't be encouraged to speak Scots (305)



3.73 There were many different comments across a range of issues at this question – many mentioned by very small numbers; only those given by 4% or more are shown here. As highlighted before, those who are less supportive of Scots often regard it is unimportant/not relevant, and this also appears as a main reason for not encouraging children to speak it. The other reason offered by a significant proportion is that they should be taught “(proper) English”. Almost one in five of those answering this question gave this as a reason for not encouraging children to speak Scots, which suggests that there are concerns that Scots is not as good as English. Indeed a further 7% also referenced the need to speak “properly”.

3.74 Other reasons for not being in favour of encouraging Scots amongst children covered concerns about it being slang, difficult to understand and of affecting careers, as well as references to Scots not being an international language and it not being as useful as other foreign languages. Overall none of these criticisms were raised by more than relatively small minorities but they again highlight that for some, Scots compares badly compared to English and possibly also to other languages too.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Scots emerges as a natural type of speech that most adults in Scotland use to communicate, with many using it on a regular basis. Its usage when writing and reading on the other hand is limited. It tends to be primarily spoken in informal settings, such as at home or with friends, but it is by no means unknown in the workplace too. It is also very much a language of young Scots.
- 4.2 The focus on the spoken word arguably partly explains why its usage tends to be unconscious with many simply not registering Scots as a language, but regarding it simply as the way they express themselves. For the frequent user though, Scots is very much a language.
- 4.3 Whether a speaker or not, however, there is widespread and strong recognition of the role of Scots in contributing to the culture, history and identity of Scotland. These three issues consistently emerge as the elements of the Scots language that make it important for Scotland today. Additionally there is acknowledgement that the Scots language is the language or expression of Scots and of Scotland, and by virtue of that alone should be considered important. Such views have arguably been brought to the fore this year, the Year of Homecoming, when the emphasis on what it means to be Scottish and to be living in Scotland are consistently in the public domain.
- 4.4 However, whilst most would agree on the important contribution of Scots in terms of how the language has shaped our culture, history and identity, opinion is more divided on its role and value to Scotland today. On balance, views are more positive than negative, but a substantial proportion are simply not engaged with the Scots language. For this group it is irrelevant and unnecessary.
- 4.5 Not surprisingly many who do not connect with it are not Scottish, and this certainly accounts for a significant proportion of the non-Scots speakers, whereas for others Scots has simply not been part of their upbringing. Thus it is not only those of a non-Scottish origin who might find it irrelevant, some Scots do too. Amongst those who believe Scots has no importance today a wide variety of views were raised including concerns that it is 'slang', that it is difficult to understand, that it is not universal like English, that it is not proper and that it is old fashioned. None of these were mentioned by significant numbers and, on prompting, most disagreed that Scots is slang. The comments do highlight however that any attempt to strengthen Scots as the language of Scotland is likely to meet with some resistance. On the other hand some of these concerns could be alleviated by stressing that Scots is not a replacement of the English language but is additional to it.
- 4.6 With regard to the specific issue of usage of Scots in education, opinion is at its most polarised. Few would disagree that learning the language contributes to a sense of national identity, but only a very slight majority believe it has educational benefits or that it should be taught in schools – primarily for the same reasons as those noted in the paragraph above.

- 4.7 Interestingly though, parents of school aged children, and secondary school children in particular are the most supportive of children being taught and encouraged to speak Scots – suggesting that the way that Scots is currently introduced in the curriculum is generally supported. Conversely, parents with pre-school children are more likely to have reservations, highlighting their concerns perhaps regarding children with poorly developed language skills being taught another language in addition to English.

5 APPENDIX 1 – QUESTIONNAIRE

Moving on to a different topic...

INTRODUCTION: INTERVIEWER READ OUT.

The next section of the questionnaire is on Scots.

Scots uses words, phrases and expressions that are different from standard English and it also varies across different parts of Scotland. Scots spoken in the North East, for example, the Doric, is very different from the Scots used in the South West of Scotland, or the East of Scotland or Lallans, the Scots used in Lowland and Central Scotland.

I am going to play you a recording of some examples of Scots that you might hear today.

PLAY RECORDING

SHOW SCREEN

Q1. Firstly I am going to read out some statements that other people have made about using Scots. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each one, using this scale.

Agree strongly
Agree slightly
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree slightly
Disagree strongly
(Don't know)

ROTATE ORDER OF STATEMENTS

I don't really think of Scots as a language, it's more just a way of speaking
I probably do use Scots when speaking but am not really aware of it
When people use Scots it doesn't sound nice – it's slang
If I heard Scots spoken more, I would be more likely to speak it myself

SHOW SCREEN

Q2. How much do you yourself speak Scots, if at all? Please choose your answer from the following scale.

A lot
Fairly often
Occasionally
Rarely
Never
(Don't know)

IF SPEAK SCOTS (CODES 1 TO 4) ASK Q3A, IF NEVER SKIP TO Q3C

SHOW SCREEN

Q3a. Where do you tend to speak in Scots? PROBE: Where else?

At home with family

When socialising with friends

When out and about, shopping, at the bank, at the GP surgery, library, etc.

At work

Elsewhere (specify)

Q3b. And where do you tend to speak it most?

ONE ANSWER ONLY

LIST AS PER Q3A

IF SPEAK RARELY OR NEVER AT Q2 ASK Q3C, OTHERS SKIP TO Q4

Q3c Why do you [INSERT RESPONSE 'RARELY' OR 'NEVER' FROM Q2] speak in Scots?

PROBE FULLY: Why do you not use it (more)?

OPEN

ASK ALL

SHOWSCREEN

Q4. And how often, if at all, do you ...

ROTATE ORDER OF STATEMENTS

use Scots when writing?

read news, literature, stories, etc. in the Scots language?

Please choose your answer from the following scale for each.

A lot

Fairly often

Occasionally

Rarely

Never

(Don't know)

SHOWSCREEN

Q5. Thinking more generally how important is it to you personally that Scots is used in Scotland these days?

Very important
Fairly important
Not very important
Not at all important
(Don't know)

Q6. And why do you say that it is [INSERT "IMPORTANT / NOT IMPORTANT" DEPENDING ON RESPONSE AT Q5] that Scots is used in Scotland these days?

PROBE FULLY

OPEN

SHOWSCREEN

Q7. I am going to read out some more statements made by other people about Scots. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each, choosing your answer from this scale.

Agree strongly
Agree slightly
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree slightly
Disagree strongly
(Don't know)

ROTATE ORDER OF STATEMENTS, EXCEPT E) WHICH SHOULD BE FIXED AS LAST

- a) Scots is a valuable part of our culture and identity
- b) Scots is not relevant to the modern Scotland of today
- c) Scots plays an important part in our history and heritage
- d) Scots is an important aspect of our identity in my part of Scotland
- e) Scots is spoken a lot in the area of Scotland where I live

IF AGREE AT Q7E ASK Q8, IF DISAGREE SKIP TO Q9.

SHOW SCREEN

Q8. How would you rate your understanding of Scots spoken in your area of Scotland?

Very good
Fairly good
Neither good nor poor
Fairly poor
Very poor
(Don't know)

ASK ALL

SHOW SCREEN

Q9. How important is it to you that Scots is used nowadays in ...

ROTATE ORDER OF STATEMENTS

Scottish culture, including arts, literature, drama, music, etc.
Scottish civic and political life
Scottish business
Scottish law
Scottish broadcasting i.e. on television, radio, internet

OBTAIN ONE ANSWER FOR EACH ASPECT

Please choose your answer from the following scale.

Very important
Fairly important
Not very important
Not at all important
(Don't know)

SHOW SCREEN

Q10. Thinking about how much the Scots language is currently used in these areas, do you think there is enough, not enough or too much use of Scots in ...

ASK FOR EACH OF A) TO E). OBTAIN ONE ANSWER FOR EACH.

ROTATE ORDER OF STATEMENTS

- a) Scottish culture, including arts, literature, drama, music, etc.
- b) Scottish civic and political life
- c) Scottish business
- d) Scottish law
- e) Scottish broadcasting i.e. on the television, radio, internet

Too much
Enough
Not enough
(Don't know)

SHOW SCREEN

Q11. Thinking now about education how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements.

ROTATE ORDER OF STATEMENTS

Learning the Scots language has educational benefits for children at school in Scotland
Learning the Scots language can contribute to a sense of national cultural identity
The Scots language should not be taught in schools in Scotland

Agree strongly
Agree slightly
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree slightly
Disagree strongly
(Don't know)

SHOWSCREEN

Q12. Do you think children in Scotland should be encouraged to speak Scots?

Yes, definitely
Yes, probably
No
(Don't know)

Q13 Why do you say that children [INSERT SHOULD/SHOULD NOT ACCORDING TO RESPONSE AT Q12] be encouraged to speak Scots?

PROBE FULLY

OPEN

6 APPENDIX 2 – TECHNICAL APPENDIX

Client	The Scottish Government's Culture, External Affairs and Tourism Analytical Unit and the Schools Directorate
Conducted by	TNS-BMRB
Objectives	<p>The overall research objectives are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Explore what people understand the Scots language to be; 2) Investigate public perceptions of and attitudes to the Scots language by adults living in Scotland; and 3) Examine behaviours and expectations in relation to the use of the Scots language in Scotland.
Sampling method	<p>The Scottish Omnibus Survey (SOS) was the vehicle of data collection. The SOS is designed to be representative of the adult population of Scotland aged 16+.</p> <p>This is achieved, firstly, by stratifying by the 8 Scottish Parliament electoral regions in order to provide geographic representation. Population data is then used to determine the correct number of sample points required in each region.</p> <p>At this wave, interviews conducted across 72 sample points. Interviewers are provided with block of addresses to ensure that all interviews are conducted within the correct sample point.</p> <p>A quota-sampling methodology is used, with quotas set on gender and household shopping status, working status and presence of children as shown below. Only one interview is permitted per household.</p>
Universe	Adult population (aged 16+) across Scotland
Sample size	1020 interviews conducted in total across Scotland
Fieldwork period	From 23 September to 2 October 2009
Data collection	Interviewing was conducted face-to-face in respondents' homes using multi-media CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing)
Incentives	n/a
Interviewers	64 interviewers
Interviewer validation	Face to face validation: A minimum of 10% of interviews are checked on every survey. Verification is carried out at TNS' head office, mainly on the telephone, by trained validators. Interviewer assignments are systematically selected.
Questionnaire	The questionnaire used can be provided by TNS-BMRB on request.
Analysis	Data weighted according to gender, age, working status and SEG. Weights derived from National Readership Survey 2006. Unweighted and Weighted sample profile can be found in section 2 of this report.

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