

Scottish Language and Literature Research Project : Abstract / Summary ¹

A comparative analysis of the use of Scots language and literature in selected primary and secondary schools in Aberdeenshire (2006 – 2008/2009)

Using results obtained from two primary schools – two P 7 classes, one P3 and one P4 and one secondary school – one S1, one S2 class, along with smaller samples from S4/5 and returns from two further primary schools and two secondary schools, all in the Westhill area apart from the main secondary school in Laurencekirk and another secondary school in Banchory, this study provides a picture of the state and status of the Scots language as used and viewed by a wide range of pupils. The research describes, compares and analyses pupil responses to different aspects of Scots, opening a window on the use of Scots by those selected primary and secondary school pupils and their teachers. A number of Tasks examine pupil views on Scots as a language, its status and use, when, where and with whom and how frequently it can be used, their own use, knowledge, understanding, recognition of Scots and views on its preservation as a distinct, dynamic and actively used language and focuses on knowledge, understanding, recognition and use of specific parts of speech – nouns, adjectives, verbs, prepositions, special/”older” vocabulary, also employing contexted and uncontexted work to test effect on responses, with and without help, assessing relative difficulties of translation of Scots into English and vice and versa. Doric forms are also examined, rather in passing, particularly the “f” for “wh” phoneme.

A number of Worksheets and Tasks were devised to suit early and later stages and to obtain results which could be usefully compared and analysed. Methodology involved a series of class visits, warm-up sessions, individual and group responses to Tasks and Worksheets, discussion, reporting back. Extracts were read to classes. Classes were divided at times into different groupings to allow for further comparison of key aspects, for example the differing effect of translating from Scots first or translating into Scots from English.

A further methodology – the questionnaire – was included and circulated to Principal Teachers of English in three Secondary schools in Aberdeenshire, including Mearns Academy and to Primary Head Teachers in the four Westhill Primaries – Elrick, Crombie, Westhill and the more rural Skene. Full responses were received from Mearns, and the current PT Banchory submitted an individual reply as did the former PT of Westhill Academy. Elrick and Crombie submitted full responses and Westhill and Skene primary Head Teachers gave oral replies on behalf of their staff. The Questionnaires covered all secondary years and all primary levels to be completed by the individual teachers as circulated by the Head Teachers/PTs. The questions concerned use of Scots literature with different classes and stages, which texts were used, when and why, plus comments on effectiveness for teaching and learning.

¹ The full Report, including Bibliography, Appendices of statistical Tables and Worksheets is archived with the Elphinstone Institute at University of Aberdeen. References in the form of footnotes are generally not provided in this Abstract : sources and references are fully footnoted in the body of the Project and in the Bibliography.

Analysis of Primary 7 Results

A number of conclusions and recommendations may be made with regard to responses by P7 pupils to the first Tasks set (on the status of Scots).

Overall pupils gave Scots high status as language or language with dialect or accent variables. It is reassuring to find that most pupils here do NOT regard Scots as slang² Recognition of linguistic terms (e.g. dialect, accent, slang) was reasonably sound, sound enough to give a working knowledge, with some assistance/clarification on request during the Task while it was apparent that a level of confusion or unsureness prevailed in that pupils asked if they could check terms in the dictionary or directly asked the researcher or teacher about a specific term. The indication therefore is that these terms need further teaching and reinforcement to meet 5 – 14 requirements. (Presumably these requirements will be repeated in the final *Strategy for Scotland's Languages* document, subsequent to the consultation recently conducted). It is clear that this can be delivered through lessons involving Scots, thus killing two birds with one stone, the 5 – 14 linguistic requirements and the promotion and protection of the Scots language in schools, outwith and beyond annual poetry competitions and concerts, valuable though these be.³

It is worrying to note how few references to Doric appear, pupils either not knowing the term and avoiding it or much less likely, genuinely seeing it as an unimportant feature. The indication here clearly is that further reinforcement of Doric as a term and as a valuable teaching tool is necessary. Exposure to the many lively poems and stories in the *Elphinstone Kist* by Sheena Blackhall and Les Wheeler among others and to the marvellous *Itchy Coo* materials by Matthew Fitt and James Robertson is recommended. The usefulness of group discussion as an effective exploratory methodology in mixed ability groupings is clear.

When pupils were given the chance to review their views a clear willingness emerged to consider and weigh answers deeply and to engage with the concepts of language, accent, dialect, slang, Doric. Responses were thoughtful and perceptive. The percentage changing views was small.

Use of context in the form of stories in Scots was highly effective : pupils greatly enjoyed the story reading. Increased use of Scots in connection with language work and *per se* for enjoyment as well as to enhance understanding and use of Scots among pupils is recommended.

It was heartening too that the use of Scots is deemed possible in many locations and for many occasions by large percentages in both schools, with perceptive reasons

² This differs from Itchy Coo's Education Officer, Matthew Fitt's findings recorded in *Matthew Fitt's Speech at Literature in Learning Seminar*, Scots Learning Festival, Sept., 2008, at www.scotseducation.co.uk . Matthew Fitt's findings here refer to a primary school within the Falkirk Education Authority.

³ Since I completed my research project a specially commissioned and valuable audit (by the Scottish Government) of current Scots language in Scotland provision has been published, usefully covering seven different categories of public life, including the education sector. Its findings are heartening and happily a number of my findings cohere with different aspects of the audit. *Audit of Current Scots Language Provision in Scotland*, Rhys Evans, 2009 at www.scotland.gov.uk/social/research

given for both positive and negative answers and sensible provisos and reservations expressed. Reassuringly there is quite a positive response to use of Scots in the classroom, both Primary 7 classes producing significantly high percentages. Responses to use of Scots in other milieus reveal pragmatic assessment of the need to differentiate formal and informal purposes, with Scots generally relegated to the informal, English designated for the formal. Thus not unexpectedly Scots is deemed inadvisable by sizable percentages in both schools for interviews though positive responses also appeared in significant numbers accompanied by stipulations and reservations. Court and parliament yielded similar responses and percentages. Newspapers produced near balance of negatives and positives, the latter appearing always with reservations. A very large percentage of P7s believed that they could be taught lessons in Scots by their teachers speaking Scots. Perhaps a little surprisingly the playground was not chosen as a location for speaking Scots though in fact it is rarely spoken in the playground nowadays. Pupils are perhaps more directly influenced by emanations from the USA : they are not so much speakers of Scots as recipients of Scots who can speak a little Scots in certain circumstances. Pleasingly this includes at home, with older peoples and with friends in reasonable percentages.⁴

It was worrying to find answers, albeit only a few, that indicated that pupils thought use of Scots would be disallowed. This was common practice in the 50s but I had thought that such discrimination had been eradicated by the encouragement of the “mother” tongue in the 5 – 14 programme. It was, however, satisfying to find that most pupils knew when to switch codes and to suit the use of Scots and English to the circumstances though the occasional stereotype popped up to the effect that Scots is not suitable for formal, serious situations and is perhaps best for a laugh. Nevertheless this observation by those pupils is realistic and indeed perhaps inevitable in today’s world. It also reflects the fact that pupils are exposed to very little Scots and know so little of the language’s history and literature that they can hardly be expected to know that historically Scots was indeed viably deployed for formal and serious purposes. Pupil fairness was revealed in the answers stipulating that Scots could be used provided it was understood by those addressed and that if you naturally spoke Scots, then you could use it whatever the circumstances.

It should be noted that many pupils were overwhelmingly positive about the preservation of Scots while a smaller number expressed a wish to explore Scots more fully in future though in later Task responses this increased. All respondents claimed to have enjoyed previous encounters with Scots.

Scots is perceived to be more viable in certain circumstances than in others. Its status is clearly not as high as English, especially for formal situations but many answers reveal a strongly positive attitude towards Scots. Clearly this should be built on for the protection and promotion of Scots, in keeping with the new proposed Executive Proposals for Scotland’s Languages in the recent consultation document issued by the Executive. Many thoughtful, perceptive and realistic views were expressed, revealing insight into teacher attitude towards and facility with Scots, for example which has implications for the use/ teaching of Scots in schools.

⁴ Statistical tables of results are provided in Appendices to the Project.

Pupils knowledge of Scots was checked at an early stage in the project via Word Lists where pupils produced lists of significant size regardless of whether or not they were Scots speakers at home. Clearly a common stock of Scots parts of speech remain available to most children. Some special Scots vocabulary also remains. The typical Doric phonemes cling on tenaciously although not widespread. Some transference from wall word displays and from reading of the Cinderella story (in the Scots version by Matthew Fitt) and opening warm-up sessions appears to have occurred. Home background appears to be important and influential in that a linguistically-aware pupil will remember words given from home and reproduce them. Other pupils will hear at least some Scots spoken at home. A number of pupils may not speak Scots themselves although it may be known or even spoken at home. They may not wish to do so or in some cases they may be discouraged by parents from speaking Scots.

Primary 7 Responses to Worksheet 2

A number of Worksheets were deployed to test pupil knowledge of different parts of speech in Scots – nouns, adjectives, verbs, prepositions, special, more literary vocabulary – and to assess the nature of the surviving Scots among the selected pupils. In addition two designated groups tackled the work in opposed order to help ascertain the relative difficulty for pupils and their related skills of translation from Scots into English and vice versa. Later comparisons with secondary pupils and Primary 3 / 4 pupils in these areas was afforded. Unsurprisingly translation from Scots into English was generally sounder than prosing English into Scots though certain specific quirks are revealed in analysis of different translation sequences.

The words listed in each category were *largely* chosen as a result of my own knowledge of Scots as a “native” speaker, words I would have known at primary and secondary school in my time and words derived from my knowledge of pupil use and knowledge of Scots words over more than thirty years of teaching which had included Scottish poetry, literature and Projects which “tested” pupil knowledge of Scots. These were words which pupils might be expected to know/recognise or at least retrieve. They were *largely* common words in each category but the final list comprised more specialised Scots diction, more traditional/older Scots vocabulary which pupils might find difficult or daunting. This would enable me to assess the nature of the surviving Scots among the selected pupils. The more common word lists also contained a few older, more specialised forms.

A certain core of common nouns for different parts of the body, people and objects/places remain current and available to most pupils – again with a number of quirks. For example, *heid, mou, shudders, airms, fit, lug* are very well-known, followed by *ee, een, broo* which cause more difficulty. Under the category, People, the affectionate term, *hen*, caused most difficulty while *quine* and *loon* also posed difficulty for a number of respondents. Nevertheless it was pleasing to note *quine* and *loon* surviving in reasonable quantities. Words found easiest to translate were *mither, faither, brither, wifie*. For Objects/Places the common core was again available to most – *hoose, windaes, hame, fitba, grund* while *skweel/skail, jyle, craw, steen* posed more difficulty.

In summary, most common nouns in Scots are well-known. Some common nouns seem to be unfamiliar – sometimes Doric words (e.g. “quine”, “jyle”), sometimes more specialised vocabulary (e.g. “ee”/“een”) and sometimes, more surprisingly common domestic terms (“hen”, “wifie”) or simple common places/things – “wa, ba, steen”. Pupils in general cope more successfully with translation – translating from Scots into English though there are exceptions where vocabulary appears to have been successfully learnt after the initial translation process, boosting the scores for rendering English into Scots, the more difficult task. In both Primary 7 classes pupils have considerable facility for picking up Scots, the vocabulary apparently falling on prepared ground. It is pleasing to note the extent to which the Doric survives, albeit somewhat depleted.

Tasks focussing on Adjectives yielded fascinating insights. For example, accuracy was high for a basic core of common adjectives, in particular certain colours and attributions – *yalla, reid, broon, bonnie, cauld, auld* but while *crabbit* and *peelywally* fared rather well, especially with one Primary 7 class, *thrawn* suffered total defeat in one class. Rather alarmingly *glakit* and *gypit* appear to be disappearing.. The most highly endangered adjectives are : **gallus, thrawn, gypit, crabbit, quate** and the Doric **fite**.

Adjectives have also clearly waned further than Nouns though a few have perhaps been “restored” through familiarity with the new placemats, mousemats and coasters – e.g. “crabbit”. There appears to be a certain patchiness or degree of irregularity between and across categories in results for individual adjectives, somewhat more noticeable than for nouns. Perhaps this is further evidence that Scots adjectives are more endangered than nouns. Detailed results for the different sequencing of the different types of adjective translation are analysed in the report along with full comparisons of the responses of the two different classes.

In both Primary 7 classes the more specialised verbs were found difficult to translate and again results were affected by the sequence of the Task – Scots before/after English. For example **dirl** was totally unknown and **skirl, haver, girn, grat** are endangered. In one school **loup** and **blether** fared badly when taken first for translation from Scots although known to nearly all pupils at the other school. As ever there is a core of available, familiar verbs – *hae, hid, skelp, gae/ging, dae*. Serious difficulty was encountered when tackling translation from English into Scots first. More so than with nouns or adjectives, translation from Scots into English proves far easier for pupils than rendering English into Scots. Overall there has been considerable falling away of the more difficult and specialised verbs, more so for one class than the other though the common verbs survive fairly well though less strongly than nouns and adjectives. This may indicate that fluent spoken Scots is also fading somewhat, given that verbs are the glue of language. Without a range of verbs pupils will struggle to speak Scots or to use it fully, with the resultant danger that Scots becomes a collection of quaint words that pupils have heard, rather than a fully usable language. Nevertheless the survival of the commoner verbs is reassuring. Pupils continue to cope much better with translation of Scots into English, than English into Scots. Here too understanding Scots is stronger than actively using or composing in Scots – or indeed speaking Scots.

Certain key prepositions are still fairly widely known and can be translated – *oot, roond, doon, tae, fae*. As ever rendering prepositions into Scots proves difficult. There are signs, however, that although prepositions are not very well known, they are easily learnt.

In both schools and more especially at one of the two, most of the special vocabulary has vanished. For example, **bairn, neep, nae, aye** are best known : many words are completely unknown – **glakit, sweir, kist, wabbit, thole** among several others. In a few cases it may be that pupils were unable to complete the Tasks in time and rushed this last list. Possibly it is partly a literary list and these specialised words will be picked up later by pupils when (if) they are exposed to more Scottish literature throughout secondary school. Nevertheless there is urgent need for more Scottish literature, both older and more modern to be covered in both primary and secondary schools though to be fair both try to include some Scottish literature usually in January around Burns time or Scottish poetry recitation time.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Nouns would appear to be best known by pupils, with adjectives also sound. Verbs overall appear rather less secure and Special Vocabulary is endangered.

Translation from Scots into English is almost always stronger than rendering English into Scots though in some cases, pupils are quick to learn and benefit from the mirror translation exercise they have done first. Translation done second can sometimes be strongest of all, possibly “assisted” by the mirror type layout of the lists, with translation done first a close rival.

There are interesting results for particular words and for Doric survivals.

There is some danger of Scots becoming a collection of quaint words, rather than a vibrant language as indicated in the loss of verbs though certain common verbs are still current in reasonable numbers.

There is urgent need to encourage greater use of Scots literature and language in schools to help protect and promote Scots, ideally connecting with the Scottish Executive’s plans to establish a new policy for Scotland’s Languages. Teaching of linguistic terminology (language, dialect, accent, slang, Doric) requires reinforcing and ideally could be delivered through use of Scots in the classroom which would also help lessen the over-crowding of the curriculum. It might be harder to include Scots specially and uniquely than to “use” it to deliver required language elements.

Pupil enthusiasm and facility for picking up Scots remain positive features on which to build the advancement of the Scots language. In addition Scots clearly emerges as an enhancing element in pupil acquisition of language and linguistic concepts. Pupils who know two terms for one object or concept have a clear advantage over those knowing only one term! For example, a pupil may be “fed

up” and/or “scunnert” and increasingly aware of the nuances and increasingly adept at working with language.

In Summary :

- **There is need to preserve, protect and promote Scots language and literature *per se***
- **Preserving, protecting and promoting Scots is beneficial to pupils culturally and as an enhancer of their language skills**
- **Scots can be used to deliver essential curricular elements and ease over-crowding the curriculum.**
- **The health of Scots as a language can be advanced at the same time.**

Context Tasks.

A short task, using a narrative extract to test the usefulness of context in translation of Scots including Doric variants, was set. Time was short and responses were patchy for a number of reasons specified in the full report. However, context appears to be variable as a helpful factor, helping pupils to translate more effectively than cold Word Lists in certain categories and circumstances only. For example pupils may have known a word already or were able to guess it both with/without context as with the word “loup”. For other pupils the context was undoubtedly useful. Yet again some pupils may simply have been very successful at Close Reading. In other responses, context appears to have been unhelpful. Another task using a Doric poem as context revealed many pupils coping well with Doric relative pronouns. However, in a question designed to elicit the term Doric itself only 35% were able to produce the term.

A Review Unit was provided for end of Project re-assessment, allowing pupils to reflect and review previous responses and evaluate the Research Project itself. Part of Review Unit also allowed pupils to clarify work in progress. Both proved illuminating and yielded interesting responses. For example at the start of the Project most pupils claimed to know “a few Scottish words” and by the end a significant number of pupils claim to know “Lots more Scottish words” though the numbers vary across the two schools’ Primary 7 classes. Specific word examples at the start of the work cover nouns, adjectives, verbs, a sprinkling of prepositions and other parts of speech, with both classes knowing roughly equal number of adjectives and verbs and one P7 class citing more nouns. “Heid” is the most listed word and “blether” and “greet” appear as verbs known to a few pupils. Taking both P 7 classes together “fit” is cited 21 times though it is difficult to ascertain whether the noun or relative pronoun is meant. At least 7 of the 21 do relate to “fit like”. By the end the number of words learnt/picked up is modest but there are signs of linguistic facility with Scots. The positive approach, enthusiasm and willingness to learn demonstrated by the pupils are the most encouraging aspects of the research.

The review section on speaking Scots – when, where, with whom and how frequently proved interesting. One pupil avoided all specific options and wrote : “I speak Scottish with all of the people but I don’t constantly use it. I do little words like fit”.

Scots appears to be more alive as a language for the pupils of one of the schools, with larger numbers having some involvement. At least four of these pupils had strong Scots/Doric family background, noted in their explanations : a couple had Edinburgh or Glasgow family backgrounds. It was heartening to note that 12 of the pupils claimed to speak some Scots in the playground : only 1 from the other school. (Sheena Blackhall finds a gloomier picture in the Deeside schools she surveyed). Fairly large numbers of Crombie pupils spoke some Scots at home, with granny, with older people in the family at least some of the time, for example 12 Crombie pupils out of 25 = 48%. Many pupils ticked more than one option (from 8 options) at Crombie, revealing the strength/weakness of family background in the nurturing of Scots. (This finding coheres with that of Blackhall in Deeside schools). Noticeably it is again Crombie pupils who speak Scots most often, with 52% claiming to speak Scots “Sometimes”. It was rather sad to note 38% of Elrick pupils claiming they “Never” spoke Scots. However, the reasons given were illuminating, touching on the problems of code switching and active discouragement of Scots for children and revealing a crying need to raise awareness of Scots as a language, to ensure that pupils hear Scots spoken in a number of different milieus and to encourage the speaking of Scots in school and elsewhere. ⁵ I will quote one example here:

Never – because no-one else speaks it and I’ve grown up with the English language. Everyone talks to me in English, even my grandparents. Even though they speak Scots to other people they still talk to me in English. So I talk to them in English but never speak it except when asked to speak it.

By the end of the Project more pupils were planning to speak more Scots than before, including those with and without Scots family background and those who had found it awkward/embarrassing to speak Scots at the start. Pupils chose the option “Use Scots for fun” in large numbers. It seems clear that the Project had raised awareness and encouraged pupils to be bolder and more confident in their use of Scots and speaking of Scots. This was further attested in responses to views on Scots and Scots literature where responses were thoughtful, perceptive and positive about the advantages of Scots, showing linguistic awareness. I will quote a couple of examples:

“Scottish words sound better and also sound quite comical”

“That I now know more Scots words now and I now realize that Scots used to be a language and is now an accent to most people but in people’s hearts it is still a language. In old Scottish people’s hearts and maybe even they still use Scots because they don’t want it to be used as an accent”

Further there was a significant rise in terming Scots a language by this review stage at both schools. The review of the use of Scots in everyday life threw up some thoughtful conclusions, in particular reinforcing the sensible differentiation by pupils of formal and informal circumstances affecting the use of Scots and their perceptive insight into the need to switch codes. Pupils at both schools were resoundingly in favour of preserving Scots, seeing its loss as a shame. Some of the reasons were

⁵ A recent visit to Gourdon Primary School was heartening in that the every pupil in the school had learnt by heart a poem in Scots, some very short, some longer and could recite it to the others in their class. (I was there to judge their recitations and find winners for each stage).

passionate as well as perceptive and pupils were clear about the strengths of Scots. Pupils claimed to have learnt a great deal from the Project work.

Various conclusions are offered throughout the report. focusing on attitude towards Scots and its status, on knowledge of different parts of speech, on facility with translating and prosing, on the usefulness of context, on the survival of Doric forms, on the effects of exposure to Scots of the Project itself and on pupil response and enthusiasm for the Scots language. Useful indicators are noted which may have relevance for Primary 7 classes in Aberdeenshire and furth of the Shire. Various recommendations are offered derived from the research results which will be valid for the schools concerned and more widely as indicative of the needs of pupils in general with regard to Scots in the curriculum.

The results obtained from S1 and more sparsely from S2 at secondary school provide interesting comparisons and confirmations.

Analysis of Secondary materials

Analysis of the final Task, the Personal Checklist where pupils were reviewing their opinions and word lists and where responses from S1, S2, S4 (a “bottom stream” class) and S5/6 Higher were available, affords useful opening comparisons with Primary 7 responses in the Checklist. Analysis of S1 Worksheet 1 proceeding through the Tasks in order also provides interesting primary/secondary comparisons as does analysis of Worksheet 2 and other Tasks. Briefer analysis and comparisons are made with S2 where a more impressionistic approach is taken, largely because of time and work constraints.⁶

Examples of comparisons (taken from the Report)

Before I started this project I knew :

	S1 (26)	S2 (27)	S4 (11)	Higher (12)
• Lots of Scots words	8 : 31%	11 : 41%	9 : 82%	2 : 17%
• A few Scots words	12: 46%	13: 48%	2 : 18%	8 : 67%
• One or two Scots words	4 : 15%	2 : 17%	0	2: 17%
• No Scots words	0	1	0	0

Comparison and Analysis: Secondary /P7

These responses are very high, noticeably for **Lots of Scottish words** and particularly with S4. In comparison with P7 at both Elrick – 0 and Crombie – 8%, Mearns Academy pupils in their own estimation know lots of Scots words – 82% of S4 and 41% of S2, with S1 not far behind : the response has dropped considerably by S5/6 when the Scots speakers have presumably diminished or non-Scots family backgrounds dominate. For **A few Scots words**, scores are still high at Mearns, with both S1 and S2 reaching the 40s, similar to Elrick P7 though Elrick had no pupils responding to Lots of Scots words. Crombie P7 soared here to 76%, compensating for the mere 8% claiming to know **Lots of Scots words**. Mearns Higher presents a similar picture to Crombie P7s. Naturally **One or two Scots words** have fewer takers at Mearns with most pupils selecting **Lots or a Few: 77% of S1 ; 89% of S2 ; 100% of S4 ; 84% of Higher.**

Secondary Word Lists cover quite a wide range, including some more unusual words, more traditionally Scots, particularly colloquial Scots than the P7 examples though there is not a great deal of difference overall. Words not used by P7 include – *doup, lum, bannock* while verbs and adjectives overlap with P7 - *greet, haver, ken, dinna, canna, wheesht*. Not used by P7 notably is the verb *bide*. The appearance of Doric *fit, fit like, fa, loon, quine* in secondary is reassuring. The surviving Scots appears to be rather stronger among a number of Mearns pupils even at S1 level than with Primary 7 pupils. It may be that confidence for Scots is stronger by secondary level or perhaps simply that the Merans area is richer in traditional surviving Scots than garden suburb, Westhill. The picture is the same for S2 responses. More pupils

⁶ See Appendices 1 and 2 for full tabulation of percentages.

appear to speak Scots too, with “mates” and at home. There are also rather more colloquialisms and phrases derived from popular Scots comedy programmes such as *Chewin the Fat*. One very unexpected term appeared from one respondent – *reid lichty* = an Arbroathman, usually an Arbroath fisherman, from the red, warning light used on their boats

Words from additional listings later when pupils were encouraged to extend their Lists include – *lang, bide, lugs, crabbit, greetin, fa, far, quine, loon, div, cloot, scunner, loch, burn, moose, heid, nicht, twa, min, atween, affa, grund, aye, taak, gid, yin, reek, in atween, oot, doon, lang, intill, toon, erm, heid, mair, dinna, dicht, watter, rowies, breid, het.*

Phrases provide insight into the vitality of the language as a spoken force – *morn’s morn, nae bather, fit like, da ken, how nae, mighty, och*

Again – *bide* appears, plus *reek* and *dicht* - and several prepositions, not usually listed – *in atween, atween, intill*

Higher Word Lists

Higher pupils included similar examples as well as some specific teenage “jargon” words masquerading as Scots – *stonkin, mingin* – which bear vital testimony to an important point; the dynamic survival of Scots, shown to be developing and changing to suit life in the 21st century! Pupils clearly regard these words as Scots and use them alongside older, traditional standard Scots words and terms. “Gid een” – “good one” is also in this category and used by S4 too. Although only small numbers recorded such words and terms, the evidence is interesting and significant as an indicator of the dynamism of Scots today

Comparisons – Primary 7/Secondary Word Lists from Checklist.

There is not a huge difference in vocabulary from Primary to Secondary though Secondary lists are rather more wide-ranging and extensive, with a few more traditional Scots words, more phrases/idioms and rather more colloquialisms and idioms. Words currently appearing on Scottish artefacts – mugs, tea towels, coasters, mouse mats are included by both Primary and Secondary pupils.

Doric vocabulary and phonemes survive at both levels, perhaps more widely at Secondary where “quine” appears but is not included by P 7 pupils at Crombie or Elrick in Checklists though it makes brief appearance by one pupil at Elrick P7 in a second Worksheet 1 list along with “loon”.

There is also greater awareness among Secondary pupils that words such as *loch* and *burn* are “Scots”. Old Scots words such as *bide, cloot, dicht* survive at Secondary but not at Primary. More verbs and prepositions survive at Secondary level too while nouns are similarly apparent. The appearance of more specialised vocabulary, including verbs and phrases indicates the language’s survival actively as a spoken language, covering a range of expressions useful for daily intercourse, rather than the

preservation of Scots as a list of “quaint” words, to be found currently on coasters, mugs and mouse mats or as a “museum piece” or “historical artefact”. There is evidence for the dynamism of the language.

Not unexpectedly more Primary 7 than Secondary pupils claim to know “Lots More Scottish Words” at the end, given the larger secondary numbers claiming to “Know Lots of Scottish Words” at the start. As with Primary pupils Secondary pupils are quick on the uptake of Scots from the Tasks or perhaps certain words were already in their recognition vocabulary.

An interesting aspect emerged from Checklist Section 3 when secondary pupils helpfully amended the location, “In the playground” to “With my mates/hanging out”. Significantly large numbers of secondary pupils at Mearns speak Scots at home, with family, grandparents and older family members, similar to the more qualified Crombie responses. S1 did not feel the same need to qualify the kind of Scots spoken at home which appeared to be spoken more freely and fully.

In S4 five pupils registered specific respondents – two “with mates”, two “with everyone/aabody”, one “when I feel like it”. Not unexpectedly the spoken Scots element is high/highest in this year group, notably for “in the classroom” (64%) which is unusual among Primary and Secondary cohorts but not for this stream of pupils. Mates and family options score very high, granny and older family more modestly but still higher than S1/2 and P7. It should be noted that 82% ticked “at home with my family”. This is exceptionally high but reflects a pattern where pupils from this stream tend to be those with the strongest Scottish backgrounds

Four Higher pupils registered specific aspects, two mentioned Scots singing and one of the two also noted, “I sometimes use Scots with random people because it comes out, e.g. “gid een”, a third noted “with anyone”, a fourth “with Lyndsey, toonser” – rather unexpectedly if a rural pupil might be expected to speak more Scots than a toonser. Clearly “toonsers” are being identified as Scots speakers here. There is an interesting balance here, with classmates/family/and special aspects, usually “mates” . However, if class mates, option 2 and special mates are taken together, it emerges that Higher pupils use Scots most in social and informal situations with peers – around 68%.

When asked about the frequency of their speaking Scots, secondary pupils generally chose the “Often/Sometimes” option, with nearly 100% of S4 opting for “All the Time” The comparisons with the findings of Blackhall and Hendry in their Aberdeen University Dissertations are interesting as are the comparisons with Primary 7s.

Conclusions:

The above comparisons from S1/2, S4 S5/6 Higher and Primary 7 reveal an emerging pattern with family and home influences, still strong at P7/S1 , sliding towards mates, in and away from the playground in S2, strongly angled towards “mates” in bottom stream S4 and socially towards “mates” also in S5/6 Higher. Scots is not widely spoken in the classroom at any level, Primary 7 or Secondary though S4 recorded a fairly high percentage – 64% (the same as for the playground) - not unexpectedly though it should be noted that no Secondary pupils took the chance to mention using

Scots for their own writing at this point. (Elrick Primary 7 recorded the highest return here) Not did they mention studying Scots in literature or extracts of any kind though two girls did mention Scots song, outwith the English classroom. By and large the same applies to Primary levels, P3/4, P7 though Primary 7 Word Lists did reveal the influence of Scots poems studied occasionally – e.g. “houlet” and Elrick pupils planned to use Scots in their writing more after the project. All pupils were quick to pick up Scots from the Tasks and use “new” Scots words appropriately and include them in later Lists/Tasks as needed and as if the words were their own. It appeared that many of the Tasks were falling on “prepared” ground and words were emerging almost subliminally –perhaps from words fleetingly heard at -home, with friends or from the media. It should be noted that results for P 3 for where/when Scots is spoken are no longer available and somewhat sparse from P4 where speaking Scots at home appears to rate highly as does in the playground but when taken into account with Frequency of Use, the figures appear “exaggerated”, with 38% the highest figure for “Sometimes” speaking Scots in comparison with 73% claiming to speak Scots at home. The Task was also modified for P3 /4 and somewhat different (See Primary 3 /4 Analysis, pages 16/17).

On frequency of Scots use the facile conclusion might be that secondary pupils feel more secure in speaking Scots or that this particular Mearns Secondary School was reasonably strong in Scots. Further the S4 class was of a type particularly likely to speak Scots as already contended and that speaking Scots was regarded as conferring a degree of status at Mearns Academy

Overall, scores at the different levels from Blackhall, Hendry and my own project are reassuring and reveal considerable reserves of Scots, a useful foundation to be built on, along with strongly positive attitudes towards and enthusiasm for Scots from the large majority of pupils, confirmed in their reasons and responses. The influence of home and family is clear – “I speak Scots often because it’s what I was brought up to speak and my family speak it” - also at Secondary school, status among “mates” a notable feature at Mearns Academy, with some pupils in the Higher class seeming to apologise for not being able to speak more Scots. The wish to speak Scots seems uniformly strong at Mearns for all year groups and again speaking Scots with mates/peer identity is strong. One pupil code switches to Scots in contrast to the “normal” process whereby Scots speakers switch to English to suit circumstances. It is to be noted that reasons are sensible and logical whether positive or negative.

Indeed at both Primary and Secondary schools there is a strong wish to speak Scots, with some lamenting lack of exposure to Scots, expressing the desire to be taught more Scots, admiring Scots as a language. At Mearns Academy peer identity/mates is a powerful factor in the issue especially in senior years, leading numbers of pupils to use Scots with friends, to “hang out”. Issues of national identity and family loyalty/background also loom large. Pupils at all levels demonstrate considerable insight in their reasoning, advance sensible explanations, tackle the issue logically. The positive response is reassuring. The negative response is muted – not strident, rather factual and logical.

Summary

Primary 7 pupils had been encouraged by the end of the project to be bolder and more confident in their use of Scots and speaking of Scots whereas Mearns pupils were often already confident in larger numbers. Nevertheless they too, especially in S2 planned to speak Scots more often. Elrick P7s remained unique in the numbers planning to use Scots in their writing. Primary pupils had sometimes expressed embarrassment about speaking Scots whether from home discouragement or stereotyping or innate reticence which they had now overcome by the end of the Project. Secondary pupils very rarely expressed such feelings. Indeed their desire to speak Scots, especially with mates was prominent, almost a status symbol.

Responses to the final Checklist questions yielded similar positive comments as from Primary 7s. Scots was approved as “fun”, “funny”, “entertaining”, “challenging”, “brilliant”, “enjoyable”, “excellent”, often in a patriotic and passionate terms. There was one “boring”. S1 went on to record a massive 75% view that Scots is a language – with a few perceptive specifications – “Scots is a language with dialects and accents” ; “A dying language” ; A language or dialect but more a language”. Both S1 and S2 were positive (68%) about using Scots in every situation, more so than Primary 7s who gave the matter careful thought, giving sensible and logical reasons for their reservations., perceptively differentiating informal and formal circumstances affecting use of Scots, similar to the concerns over viability expressed by some of the Mearns Higher pupils. Mearns pupils (like their primary counterparts) were resoundingly in favour of preservation of Scots, feeling it would indeed be a shame to lose Scots and expressing a number of heartfelt and patriotic explanations at their different secondary stages, Secondary and primary pupils were clear about the strengths of Scots, with one Higher pupil advancing a strong view about the enhancing power of Scots, allowing for “... a rich culture as words that come from Scots develop the English language” and another summing up tersely; “tradition – trademark of Scotland – tourism”.

Across all levels, Primary to Secondary, S1 – Higher, I was impressed and reassured by the perceptiveness and passion in the pupil responses. A large majority of pupils feel very positive about Scots as a language and about using and preserving it.

Worksheet 1 work by secondary pupils (S1) provided further interesting responses and useful comparisons with Primary 7 responses.

Unlike Primary 7 classes, a fairly large majority of S1 pupils regarded Scots at the start of the project/ Worksheet 1 stage simply as a language though other combinations were also specified. Overall at both levels but more strongly and clearly for Secondary, Scots was accorded high status as a language or language with dialect or accent variables. Recognition of linguistic terms was reasonably sound but Doric remains rare at all levels, perhaps as a term, rather than as an entity. Individual and group reasoning for options was fascinating at both levels. When given the chance in Worksheet 1 to change/confirm views, most did not change – “I still think it is a language and definitely not slang”. As with Primary 7 classes, the Secondary Worksheet responses include more combinations and variables than the Checklists, indicating that by the end of the project pupils had firmed up their original views. For example by the end/Checklist stage both primary and secondary pupils recorded significant increases in the Scots as a language category as well as refining other combinations

The citing of many locations and circumstances for using Scots by S1 – anytime, anywhere etc is similar to the Primary 7 Worksheet 1 responses (Elrick 75% ; Crombie 63%). There is a stronger emphasis on “with friends and family /at home” options at Secondary, however. Only Crombie P7 recorded two reservations, citing informal situations. However, at Checklist stage the two Primary 7 classes dropped these Worksheet 1 figures considerably – Elrick from 75% anytime/anywhere to 30%, with 60% deciding this was not possible : Crombie scores also dropped though less severely from 63% anytime/anywhere to 48%, 24% deciding this was not possible while some 29% specified “sometimes”.

S1 Checklist figures for using Scots in all situations were high – 68% rising to 75% with provisos in S1. Secondary Worksheet 1 responses compare favourably here, giving a variety of situations when Scots can be used.

Both Primary classes were realistic about the viability of Scots in modern life while coming to different conclusions. Secondary classes feel more strongly that Scots is widely viable.

Worksheet 1 unlike the final Checklist specified different locations for use of Scots and all pupils seemed reasonably happy about using Scots in the classroom, with a few reservations. Perhaps the question should have differentiated between using Scots to chat to friends in class and using it for a lesson.⁷ However, a question about the teacher using Scots to teach elicited very positive responses from all levels. When it came to use of Scots for job interviews, most Secondary pupils focussed on the need to be formal and professional which Scots was not rated to permit. Their responses were realistic and more strongly negative than those of the two Primary classes. Secondary pupils were more positive about use of Scots in the Scottish Parliament but

⁷ Having recently visited Gourdon Primary school and Westhill Academy to work with pupils on the Scots language and on the poetry of Robert Burns, I must record how readily pupils responded to spoken Scots, showing little difficulty in following poems and stories in Scots, resonating with the project results from the schools within the project *schema*.

less positive about Scots in newspapers than Primary pupils. Other locations for use of Scots included – *at home and with older people* among other choices. The playground scores are very low, perhaps replaced by the friends/mates option. It is reassuring to note that pupils at all levels deem Scots viable in many different situations while expressing sensible and perceptive reservations about the use of Scots in formal situations. As with Primary pupils there was an overwhelmingly positive Secondary response to the preservation of Scots and some interest in pursuing Scots more fully in future. Secondary and Primary pupils had positive memories of earlier exposure to Scots.

S1 pupils like their P7 counterparts produced Word Lists of significant size and range. The S1 lists covered parts of speech in large numbers, including some special vocabulary and some Doric terms. More unusual S1 nouns include – *eejit* and *skiver* (from tourist items perhaps?), *gollach*, *corbies* and *puddock* (perhaps from poems though in my own time *gollach* was a common creepy-crawlie term), *semit*, *doup*, *skelf* and *beastie*, possibly from Burns' *To A Mouse*. *Semit* did not appear at Primary and perhaps belongs with domestic use along with *claes*. Adjectives included – *cauld*, *weet*, *bonnie*, *scunnert*, *braw* and the colloquial term – *the morn's morn*, with its possessive adjective. The more unusual verbs included – *birl*, *greet*, *dingin doon*, *blether*, the colloquial *mind* for “remember”.

There are clear parallels between Primary and Secondary Worksheet 1 lists though the Secondary lists appear to be *marginally* more wide-ranging and more colloquial. Both primary and secondary include Doric phonemes/ words and “older”, more specialised Scots vocabulary. One interesting aspect is provided by S4 responses in the Checklist Word Lists – S4 did not complete Worksheet 1. S4 provided more prepositions and more unusual ones at that – e.g “atween”, “in atween”, “intill”, indicating a strong level of spoken Scots, revealed in the one-off, summative Checklist Task. Worksheet 1 provided the more common prepositions such as “oot” and “doon”. Interestingly one S2 pupil also provided the phrase “ben the hoose” in a home-generated Word List as an addition to the Worksheet 1 list. Similarly in P7 one home list also provided the phrase “ben the hoose”. It is interesting to see such phrases/idioms survive at both Primary and Secondary levels. It is also reassuring to see a certain number of verbs, both common (“ken”, “dae/dee”) and more specialised (“birl”, “greet”, “blether”) survive at both levels too. Verbs give clear indication that the language is alive and operational as opposed to being a mere collection of “quaint” nouns. Full details and comparisons of Worksheet 1 and Checklist Word Lists are provided in the full report.⁸ The homework assignment provided some interesting Home Word Lists, showing that some S1 Mearns pupils have benefited from a rich Scots language background and are keeping the tradition, albeit diluted, alive while losing some of the less common traditional and colloquial words, verbs especially but also some nouns. In one case where the father had an extensive Scots vocabulary there appears to have been a considerable falling off from the range and richness of his vocabulary to that of the typical pupil. It is rather sad to speculate that *the father* has a wide range of vocabulary enabling him to deploy Scots fully whereas

⁸ One S1 pupil provided a huge Home Word List when this homework assignment was set, words listed by her father. – of around 150 words which appeared to be his spoken vocabulary, containing a large number of verbs, some rather unusual, for example, the nouns – *foggy bummer*, *deil*, *partan*, *snotter*, *besom*, *ingin*, *semit*, *spigot*; the adjectives – *gleckit*, *barkit*, *tapsalteerie*, *stervin*; the verbs – *haver*, *slaver*, *fleg*, *keek*, *dreep*, *spew*, *smit*, *pech* and Doric *jine*.

his daughter would appear to possess more of a collection of certain Scots words, than fully working Scots – a clear decline. Both Primary schools also produced some Home Word Lists, exemplifying some unusual terms – e.g. “ganzie”, “dachlin” . At Least four Crombie pupils also had rich Scots backgrounds.

A number of S2 pupils also responded to Worksheet 1, in general confirming the results obtained from S1 and P7. It is worth noting that S2 appear to be more strongly negative about use of Scots in interviews than S1 and certainly more so than P7s. They seem very aware of the need for formality and of giving a good impression which Scots will not allow in their view. Of course these considerations were also voiced to a fair degree by P7 and S1 but it may be that S2 have had to make course choices and had to focus on their future careers, including job interviews, thus increasing their awareness of the formality/informality of Scots issue.

Their views are realistic in modern Scotland and echo in a way the feelings we may imagine held by James VI’s courtiers in England post 1603, desperately trying to sound less Scottish and “countrified” or David Hume, taking pains to remove the Scotticisms from his speech in 18th century Edinburgh, in order to sound more “serious” and “formal”, more English.⁹ It was also interesting to note a response from S2 on the potential use of Scots in court or Parliament concerning the possible lack of seriousness in the sound of Scots, tying in with the idea of Scots as informal and inappropriate for formal situations. This idea was also expressed by S1 and P7 but less strongly. Again on the use of Scots in newspapers, S2 responses echoed S1 and P7 views, tending to confine Scots to the local, the comic and quotation of direct speech. S2 also had a strongly positive response to the preservation of Scots. It may be worth noting an emerging point from S2 where pupils cite Scots done in primary school, rather than secondary which may indicate a secondary gap, requiring to be filled. S2 Word Lists echo the findings from S1 already noted.

Secondary Responses to Worksheet 2

Because Secondary pupils from time considerations completed only one set of the Worksheets, the translation of Scots into English, thus providing information purely on translation/understanding of Scots and of different parts of speech, fewer comparisons with Primary results are possible but the results themselves are revealing.

Problem Nouns :Comparisons with P7 Problems

The “problem” Parts of the Body Nouns are similar at Crombie Primary 7 – the confusions between “ee” and “een”, singular and plural in particular but also hiccups

⁹ David Murison, *The Guid Scots Tongue*, Blackwood, 1977, p. 6.

Janet M. Templeton, “Scots : an outline history”, in *Lowland Scots*, Association for Scottish Literary Studies, March, 1971, pages 4 – 12. (“In 1752, David Hume published a small collection of Scottish usages, with their English equivalents from the ‘best authors’ “, page 9).

Billy Kay, *Scots The Mither Tongue*, Grafton Books, Collins, 1988. (“David Hume was so embarrassed with what he considered to be his inability to speak or write perfect English, that when he died he is said to have confessed, not his sins, but his Scotticisms”, p. 88). See also, *Scotland and the Lowland Tongue*, ed. J. Derrick McClure, foreword by A.J.itken, Aberdeen University Press, 1983

with “broo” and reading “fit” as “what” instead of as a body part noun. Elrick primary 7 is also similar, with “ee”, “een” and “broo” posing some problems of translation.

The best known body nouns in P7 and S1 are not unexpectedly “heid”, “shudders”, each with 100% accuracy in P7 and S1 and the highly placed “airms”/ “fit” and “mou”. “Lug” does particularly well in S1, with 80%. Elrick Primary 7 managed 91% accuracy for both “fit” and “airms” to Mearns S1’s 76% “fit” and 100% for “airms”

Nouns for the body are clearly extremely well-known and easily translated from Scots into English by high numbers of pupils at P 7 level and at S1, with *heid*, *shudders*, *airms*, *mou*, *fit* and *lug* coming top, followed by the more problematic *ee*, *een* and *broo*.

The easy/difficult People Nouns are similar across Primary and Secondary, with “mither”, “faither”, “brither”, “wifie” being easiest and “lassie”, laddie, “bairn” following on closely though “mannie” appears to have fared better at P7 than with S1. “Hen” (as a term of affection) caused most difficulty.

It is pleasing to note the Doric forms being recorded in decent numbers by P7 and S1 though certainly by considerably fewer than the more common People nouns at the head of the lists. S1 appear to cope just a little better than P7 with these Doric forms.

The best known Places/Things Nouns are not unexpectedly – *hoose*, *windaes*, *hame*, *fitba*, *shoppie*, *grund*, *sweeties*. Although Doric forms and phonemes cause certain difficulty and appear to be waning a little, they nevertheless survive in reassuring numbers. At Crombie Doric phonemes caused some problems – “jyle”, “steen/speen and even “craw/snaw” which caused fewer problems at Mearns. “skweel” and “picture hoose” also were a little problematic at Crombie. Likewise Elrick found similar difficulties, even with “snaw” – 64%, 55% “jyle”. Most difficult were “speen/steen”, with the Doric “ee”, also “wa” and “craw”, with “ba/ha” lowest at 18%.

Adjectives

For adjectives there are again interesting similarities and differences across P7 and S1 responses, both for “difficult” and “easy” items. Both P7 classes managed 100% accuracy on the three colours – *yalla*, *reid*, *broon*, perhaps partly because of the warm-up sessions which had a colour focus, not used with S1 which managed 100% on two of the colours – *yalla* and *reid*, not *broon* though it was close behind *yalla*, *reid* with 92%. S1 also had 100% accuracy with “cauld”. Crombie P7 had 100% with “bonnie”. Elrick P7 had 100% accuracy also with “auld” and “cauld”. S1 had 92% accuracy for “broon” and “auld” and 86% for “bonnie”. Elrick P7 had 91% for “bonnie”. Crombie P7 remains top for translation of “braw” (93% in the translation from Scots- first category) and “crabbit” and the unusual “peelywally” (both 50%). The more “esoteric” adjectives and the more strongly Doric adjectives cause the greatest problems – e.g. “fite”, “glaiokit”, “gypit” though “quate” fares reasonably well with S1 at 36%, being totally unknown with the two P7 classes. All levels drew total blanks with the “Glaswegian” “gallus” but one S1 pupil translated “thrawn” fairly accurately as “headstrong”.

Verbs

A short Task on older forms saw “fa” and “pu” fare reasonably well in the List format while “ca” did badly. Given context “ca” fared rather better but overall context did not appear to have assisted much. On the main Verb Task, it is immediately apparent that pupils were able to respond much more accurately to nouns than to verbs, the percentages for nouns being far higher in all categories. There were no pupils with 100% accuracy in the verbs section unlike the nouns. Verbs would appear to be closer to adjectives in the compass of S1 pupils but even with adjectives, one pupil managed 100% accuracy. Nevertheless similar lower percentages appear for both adjectives and verbs among S1 pupils. There is evidence that adjectives proved harder overall than verbs, in fact, with 60s more common percentages than 70s for adjectives.

Nevertheless it is somewhat worrying to find verbs having a relatively low profile, given that verbs “action” the language as a living force, rather than as a store of recognised, known nouns, names for “things” which might indicate the language at an early stage of development among the pupils OR in a state of decay where certain words are treasured and “paraded” without extensive knowledge of the language as a whole.

Problem verbs

The more specialised verbs are again the ones causing greatest difficulty. “Thocht” which sounds like “thought” comes top with S1 but is much lower down the list for both P7s, scoring only 30% - 45%. It is perhaps socially significant or even worrying that “skelp” is so well known in S1! Percentages are only a little lower for P7! Most familiar verbs at Crombie were – *blether, sweem, hae, skelp, skive, loup, gae/ging, ken, kent, dince* and large numbers could also translate – *hae, hid, dae*. Most familiar verbs at Elrick were – *hae, hid* (91% - cf 50% in S1), *skelp, gae/ging, dae* (55%) while verbs known by fairly large numbers at Crombie are known by far fewer at Elrick – *greet, sweem, dince, ken/kent, thocht, gyan*. Most familiar S1 verbs were – *thocht, skelp, ken, dae, sweem, hae, loup, lauched, skive, greet, lauch, dince*.

In general the simple present tense of the verb is more familiar to S1 than past or participles whereas the picture for P7s is rather more mixed, with present tense sometimes posing problems too. In one case, Crombie pupils seem almost equally familiar with both present and past tense of “greet/grat”. In general S1 are more secure with the verbs where the Task covers two tenses than the P7 classes. It may indicate that S1 actually speak more Scots, rather than just recognise or translate Scots.

Certain specialised verbs were practically unknown across the board –

S1 – *skirl, girn, dirl*

Crombie – *skirl, haver* and totally unknown – *dirl*.

Elrick – *loup, haver* and *dirl* were totally unknown

- *skirl, girn, grat* – virtually unknown

Skirl and dirl – fare worst, with “girn” close behind with S1 and Elrick, scoring 50% at Crombie.

Blether fared very well at Crombie – 93%, 23% at Elrick and 63% in S1

Haver fared badly – 29% at Crombie ; totally unknown at Elrick and 39% in S1.

It appears that the current tourist items, e.g. mouse mats, with “specialised” Scots vocabulary may have assisted some pupils, possibly Crombie pupils with “blether”. It may also be that the primary warm-up sessions assisted some pupils. Primary pupils were grouped to tackle the translations in different order and while this sometimes helped pupils, in general it was far easier for pupils to translate verbs from Scots into English. English verbs into Scots proved hard, especially when tackled first. Strongest and most accurate responses came from translating Scots into English first.

It is in fact reassuring that so many verbs are still current.

Prepositions

As with P 7 the best known prepositions include : *doon, oot, roond* in that order, the same as Elrick P7 whereas Crombie’s order was : *oot, roond, doon*.

However, both Crombie and S1 pupils knew these prepositions in greater numbers than Elrick pupils

Certain key, common prepositions are still fairly widely known and can be translated. However, nouns still reign supreme among parts of speech most familiar to the pupils in P7 and S1 at Crombie, Elrick and Mearns.

Special Vocabulary

As with Primary 7 classes, S1 scores were not unexpectedly low in this category. A rather larger number of S1 pupils from Mearns Academy know or have an inkling about more of the unusual words. It may be that there are more home / family / parental speakers of Scots in the background of these pupils, that they have managed to pick up rather more of the more specialised terms. There are little hints that the terms are in active use in the kind of translations given – e.g “not getting up “ for “sweir” and generalised translations of “gomeril”, “gowk” etc. while the P7 classes struggle even with the relatively more common “lum” which was translated by 12 S1 pupils (48%) in comparison with only 2 at Crombie and none at Elrick. Nevertheless there are nearly always one or two pupils at all levels who have managed to translate some of the difficult words though a large number of words remain untranslated or untranslatable, a larger number for the Primary classes than for the Secondary class. Best known words from S1 are given in far higher numbers than the P7 responses – *aye, bairn, na/nae, neep, lum, skive* – with *neb, glaikit, gype, doup* known by a only a few. Left as untranslatable were - *fankelt, ferfochen, thole, contermashious, agley, drouthie, ingle, sark*.

It should be remembered that time available for this Task was limited and that pupils had to rush to finish, tempting them to leave more and more blanks in order to leave at the end of the period!

Note

Nevertheless it must be noted that at primary, much of the specialised vocabulary has vanished. Possibly certain more “literary” words will be picked up later if pupils are exposed to more Scottish literature throughout secondary school. However, use of Scottish literature, especially Scottish literature in Scots is often limited at secondary school and it would be desirable for the Scottish Executive to promote and protect Scottish literature more actively under its National Language Strategy/Curriculum for Excellence, rather just leave it up to teachers to perhaps use Scottish literature “where appropriate”, when they can fit it in. Teachers who lack confidence in the use of Scots, perhaps not having a spoken Scots background themselves may simply choose to omit Scots literature and activities or to pay it some lip service for poetry competitions and the like.

At secondary/Mearns S1 there is more residual knowledge of some of the more specialised Scots vocabulary but it clearly is fading and also requires active support, protection and promotion at national level, promoting and protecting Scots equally with Gaelic.

Summary/ Interim Conclusions – Worksheets1 and 2

Nouns would appear to be best known by all pupils, primary and secondary, with adjectives also sound. Verbs are less secure across the board and Special Vocabulary is endangered. Secondary/S1 appear to have the edge in most categories though occasionally Crombie P7 run them close. It is perhaps somewhat worrying that verbs which “action” the language and give it life are noticeably less secure than nouns among both primary and secondary pupils.

There are interesting results for particular words and for Doric survivals, for example of “quine” and “loon” and the “f” phoneme, in particular in relative pronouns.

Although Crombie Primary 7 in the heart of Westhill might have been expected to be less knowledgeable or secure in Scots than Elrick Primary 7 where the original village of Elrick might have been expected to have preserved more Scots, this did not prove to be the case. Crombie P7s had a rather sounder, more consistent grasp of Scots in the different Tasks completed. Mearns Academy in Laurencekirk in the Howe of the Mearns did provide rather more Scots, especially among certain classes and year groups – e.g. S1/S2 and one small S4 class – as might have been expected. There appeared to be a certain *kudos/status* to speaking Scots among Mearns secondary pupils of all year groups. There were also signs that Scots was dynamic and alive among even Higher pupils whose citing of teenage jargon terms as Scots was a healthy sign. There appeared to be a reasonably sound base knowledge of Scots words at the earliest stages too – in P3 and P4 where somewhat modest percentages of pupils claim to speak Scots at home and with friends at least sometimes.

Pupil responses to the status of Scots as a language were reassuring, given that in certain other parts of Scotland, there is greater uncertainty about this aspect and indeed unsureness over the very terms themselves – *language, dialect, accent,*

slang. The pupils at Crombie, Elrick and Mearns held Scots in esteem and expressed patriotic support for Scots as their enthusiastic and thoughtful comments reveal. Issues of stereotyping and code switching were raised and addressed perceptively. Most heartening of all, pupil enthusiasm and facility for picking up Scots remain positive features on which to build the advancement of the Scots language in both primary and secondary schools.

Use of Context

Brookit Story

For this Task, detailed comparisons with Primary responses are necessarily somewhat more impressionistic than exact, given slightly different marking schemes but yield some interesting aspects, particularly for the Doric phonemes – “far” and “fit”, which produced 68% and 50% for S1. P7 pupils also demonstrated a reasonably healthy knowledge of the Doric relative pronouns, mostly in the 40 and 50 percentage range. At both primary 7 and secondary (S1) slightly more pupils were successful with “far” than with “fit”. Comparisons with P3 / 4 are interesting but not “significant” in that their Task was modified and a little different in places. However, around 50% in P4 managed to translate both “fit” and “far”, plus one with “fit” only, one with “far” only. In addition not all pupils completed the Task. P3 pupils rarely managed to complete this part of the Task, possibly due to time factors. Only one pupil translated both “fit” and “far” and one managed “far” only. It would appear that context is helpful generally and that Scots/Doric language skills strengthen throughout Primary and beyond.

Use of Context : Conclusions

It is impossible to tell *accurately* just how much context helped those completely in the dark over the Scots words or assisted prior knowledge to any degree though there are signs in certain questions that context has indeed been helpful, in comparison with the raw word lists of Worksheet 2.¹⁰ However this was not consistent. For example, context appeared to assist Elrick pupils with “loupit” but not so much with “skelpit” or “bairns”. It may be that the primary meaning of “skelpit”/”smack” proved confusing when the context required “moving fast”. Nevertheless the Task does reveal S1, P7 and P4, and even P3 pupil facility with texts in simple Scots and confirms their delight in the use and sound of Scots itself. The reasonably healthy survival of the Doric relative pronouns at both primary and secondary levels is heartening. Again context *may* have assisted prior knowledge. Pupil facility to manage Scots/Doric should be noted.

¹⁰ Further rigorous context Tasks would have to be run.

Primary 3 / 4 Worksheet Responses

The simplified Tasks utilised for Primaries 3 and 4 provided a number of interesting results. The first (Loch Ness Monster) Worksheet revealed that most children know the word *loch* : most children can pick out *loch* as a Scots word ; most children cannot translate *loch* to English *lake*.

Most of the word lists supplied by the pupils are decent, rather modest, with a few more extensive lists, with some special vocabulary surviving and some N.E. phonemes. Parts of the Body provide the strongest area among Places and Things and People. Interesting survivals remain but among relatively few respondents – of Doric and N.E. phonemes. *Oxters* stands out. *Loon* and *quine* survive. *Kirk* has apparently gone. Basic nouns survive in a fairly modest way and verbs are scarce but are harder to test. One Primary 3 word list included the warm-up adjectives, *yalla*, *reid*, *broon* and *hoose*, *moose*, *clase*, *lugrings*, *troosers*, *laddie*, *lassie*, *fit*, *far*, *fas*, *dinna* among others, such as *froog*, a notable attempt to Scotticise “frog” when unable to recall “puddock” from the poem the class had done. One Primary 4 word list included *fit*, *oxters*, *heed*, *een*, *speen*, *fitba*, *lass*, *loon*, *quine*, *bairn*, *minger*, *fit*, *foo*, *fur*, *about*, *hungret* P4 are stronger than P3 in almost all areas though this could be purely developmental.

A useful Scotticising/sounds- similar principle emerges particularly with Primary 3. While these results are fascinating, it has to be remembered that the picture furth of these particular schools and nationally may be very different. It would seem, however, that either through Scots verse taught at school or through a rather rich Scots background, Scots is surviving as a language in its usual quirky way!

More extensive words lists were produced by P7 and S1 pupils, ranging more widely over different parts of speech though the core survivals are similar. For example, in P7 and S1 the best known Body nouns were “heid”, “shudders”, “airms”, “fit” and “mou”. “Lugs” did particularly well in S1 and P3 while P4 “oxters” remains outstanding. However, the Tasks did differ somewhat, making detailed comparisons somewhat impressionistic. (The full Report compares P3 /4 words with P7 and S1 offerings in detail).

The Cinderella Worksheet based on a reading of the story in Scots from the Fitt and Roberston Itchy-coo translation, also used with P7 and S1, revealed:

- Useful levels of recognition/use/understanding of simple Scots words in context.
- Useful levels of facility with translation/code changing from Scots into English, especially by P4 where accuracy levels are high.
- Good grasp of the general gist of the story at both levels (P4 and P3).
- Very positive attitudes towards Scots linguistically and as a medium for storytelling, demonstrating real enjoyment/delight and amusement.

Respondents regard Scots as reasonably easy to understand in context – with 57% in P3 finding it easy to follow. Even among those finding it difficult, this was generally described as “a little bit hard”. It did not detract from understanding and translation facility, demonstrated in the responses to the Task Questions where high percentages of pupils demonstrated understanding and translated with considerable accuracy. Impressive levels of linguistic awareness were demonstrated, revealing Scots as a

valuable enriching resource for teachers. Scots can be used not only for shorter pieces and poems but also at greater length in the form of stories to enrich linguistic skills. Scots in context is accessible and stimulating for pupils.

A few specific examples may suffice. In a very easy opening question to elicit Scots “neep” rather than English “turnip”, P3 surprisingly produced 96% correct answers to P4’s 81%. Once word- for- word translation and whole phrase translations were required Primary 4 shot ahead, with stronger, more accurate responses while Primary 3 tended to produce answers that gave the gist – e.g. on Cinderella’s three kind acts. However, pupils were responding to a reading of the story and could not refer back to text, thus bringing memory directly into play. Results were reassuring in the writing/opinion Tasks: there were few who did not like the story – only three at each level – and also few blanks. 82% of P3 liked the story, mostly for the funny bits, comparing the sisters’ faces to animal parts. 73% of P4 liked the story, with some sophisticated reasons. Typical P4 reasons for *not* liking the story were simplistic – “because it is not my story” – not “anti-Scots” and contained only one really negative answer – “Nothing at all”. P3s did not specify why they did not like the story.

The overall response is very positive and indeed it was obvious from the rapt attention to the reading that the story had fascinated and delighted everyone. P3 loved the references to the “cuddy” and the cuddy’s back end” in comparison to the faces of the ugly sisters. They would also have enjoyed these references in English but the unusual word “cuddy” added to the delight!

Sample reasons for liking the story and finding it easy/difficult revealed the different P4 / P3 focus, P4 tending to include some linguistic awareness and picking out actual words as evidence for views – “I liked how the sisters had crabbit faces” : “I use quite a lot of Scots at home” while P3 focused on the cow’s bottom, the donkey’s face and so on.

P3 surpassed P4 in their delight with the story. Whereas only 38% of P4 either preferred the Scots version or liked both equally, with similar thoughtful reasons – funnier, different, “Liked them the same. I know Scots so I find I like it and I like the English because I understand all of it”, “Half and half – both really good”, P3 preferred the Scots to the English version by a large margin – 68% (with two liking both equally) to 18%, largely because it was funny or “cool”. 50% of P4 liked the English version better – largely because it was considered easier/understood better/used to it/know what all the words mean. Perhaps a kind of linguistic adventurousness is needed for preferring the Scots version by P4 level whereas with P3 the sheer fun of the piece was the determinant

As far as the researcher was concerned the most important point was the sheer pleasure of working in Scots for both teacher/researcher and pupils. It was such good fun.

The final Worksheet, using the Brockit story yielded somewhat patchy responses and cannot be systematically compared with the rather different P7/S1 Brockit Task but yielded useful comparisons with the P3 /4 Cinderella Task. Responses to the Brockit extract reveal, sound understanding of story in Doric, along with some weakening of *f* for *wh* phoneme, a sound level of understanding of specific Scots vocabulary, clear

facility with translation/Close Reading in Scots in context, positive reactions to the story, positive reaction to accessibility – not found too difficult. In addition both stories were enjoyed to a high level, with Brockit preferred by P4, Cinderella by P3. Both stories were found to be relatively easy, with P 4 finding Brockit easier and P3 recording virtually the same level of difficulty for both. Context proves useful for certain specific words. Again a few examples will suffice.

There is some evidence from P3 responses to certain questions that this year group found the task/passage a little too hard for their stage. For example P4 coped quite well with Doric phonemes, with 50% correctly translating “fit”/”far” to only one P3 pupil translating both relative pronouns and a further one pupil translating “fit”. Perhaps caution should be exercised and not too much read into such results but it is tempting to adduce that by P4 Scots language skills have strengthened and/or that these particular phonemes have faded in the Westhill area. Relative responses to question 9 support these contentions. However, on individual Scots words “loupit” , “skelp” and “neb” both cohorts recorded high percentages, with P3 doing particularly well with “loupit”. Context has proved helpful with getting the gist too.

An attempt was made to assess when, where, how often and with whom P3 and P4 spoke Scots though the same Checklist methodology for P7/S1 was too complex to be used. However, the method used was not sufficiently individualised and there were problems with the returns from P3. Nevertheless something of a picture emerges though detailed comparisons with P7/S1 are not possible. Scores for Scots use in the playground, at home and for poetry lessons and Assemblies were high and reassuring but should be taken in context with Frequency of use which is much lower and perhaps more realistic. The “at home” result is interesting, given some accompanying comments – *Mum and Dad don’t like it, I don’t like to do it often – Aberdeen Doric gets slagged off but Glaswegian is acceptable* – testifying to continued stereotyping of Scots. Percentages were high for using Scots with grandparents, much lower for use with friends which does not co-relate well with 65% claiming to speak Scots in the playground though perhaps part of this score was simply hearing Scots there or being spoken to in Scots, not necessarily replying in Scots. Frequency percentages were low, with 27% Often, 38% sometimes, 19% Hardly ever. Perhaps all that can be concluded is that the picture is patchy but gives hope, with fairly large percentages hearing/speaking/being exposed to some level of Scots. It is clearly a task which deserves to be more fully carried out with much larger numbers of pupils in order to obtain a more accurate picture of the current status of Scots among younger Primary pupils.¹¹

Working with P3 / 4 was a great joy – very refreshing and reassuring. Their delight in the Cinderella story, for example was infectious. A simple point can be recorded that there is clearly scope for much more to be done using Scots stimuli, be it poems, songs, stories, plays, vocabulary work. Teachers are aware of the viability and appropriateness of Scots *per se* and as heritage. Finding time and money to include more in Scots is highly desirable and in keeping with the old 5 – 14 requirements and indeed with the new Language Strategy recently circulated by the Scottish Executive as it was termed at the time of issue.

¹¹ The full Report gives a detailed account of the methodology employed with all primary and secondary levels.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires were circulated to both primary and secondary teachers in the research project schools and a number of returns received, yielding information specific to those schools but also generally indicative of the use of Scots at this level.

Key Aspects : Primary Schools (Elrick, Crombie, with more summative responses from Westhill and Skene)

A key feature in the primary school inclusion of Scots focuses on the annual poetry competition/ poetry recitation in Scots/Doric. Usually this was the Burns competition though not always entered formally and not always featuring poems by Burns, rather Scots poems more generally. Crombie Primary runs an annual poetry recitation competition within the school, as opposed to the actual Burns Competition. St Andrew's celebrations were also specified (Elrick and Skene) and certain whole-school Assemblies might feature Scots poetry or "drama". In fact the P4 class I visited at Crombie School happily picked up the Sheena Blackhall poem, *Auld MacDonald* to add to their Assembly while I was researching there¹² : I attended their Assembly and they performed very well indeed. Their main "dramatic" contribution was a rendition of *The Billy Goats Gruff*, based either on the Scots version of the story by Matthew Fitt in *The Wee Book o Fairy Tales*, or on the version by Les Wheeler (*Elphinstone Kist*), edited by their class teacher. This too was excellent and very heartening. Having taught at Westhill Academy for over 26 years, I can also recall plays being performed in Scots by Skene Primary pupils at their annual concert, very much in the tradition of the Scots Primary School end of year concert. I also know that the former Head Teacher of Crombie Primary is regularly invited back to judge the Scots Poetry recitation competition. Another special use of Scots poetry related to sending materials to American penpals of Crombie P 4 /5.¹³

These events are encouraging in their traditional and innovative aspects. However, this alone cannot suffice for the promotion and protection of Scots in the curriculum. Rather, regular, timetabled slots could/should be found for Scots language and literature. However, given the current curricular strictures and formal requirements of 5 – 14 Assessment, still in use, along with the new Curriculum for Excellence outcomes, perhaps teachers are doing as much as they can at present. This rather resembles what was being done when I was at primary school in the 50s! It up to the Scottish Executive to provide for greater focus on Scots in the new Language Strategy Policy. I have mentioned already that important technical requirements for the teaching of linguistic terms and concepts, such as language, dialect, accent, slang,

¹² Their teacher was keen to incorporate it into their forthcoming Assembly along with the dramatic presentation she had prepared.

¹³ Further I recently visited my old primary school in Gourdon to work with pupils on Scottish poetry and Burns and to judge their recitations which were very impressive. Every child in the school had memorised poems, very short ones for P 1 / 2 and in some cases large chunks of *Tam O Shanter* by P7 pupils.

Doric, Standard English, can be met through use of Scots texts, meeting 5 – 14 requirements and covering key language features simultaneously.¹⁴

Another common aspect is the use of traditional texts (Burns, J K Annand, Charles Murray) across the four primary schools, along with the addition of some newer, up-to-the-minute pieces by Sheena Blackhall, Les Wheeler from the *Elphinstone Kist* resource, Dr Robert Stephen's Scots rendition of *Aesop's Fables*, and poems from the Itchy Coo poetry anthology, *King o the Midden*, a selection of funny, irreverent and affectionate poems in Scots often about "disgusting" things that delight a child's heart! One teacher (Crombie P 7) also mentioned using poems in Scots by other children, an interesting and effective approach.

It is also encouraging to note the use being made by primary schools of special visits from poets, writers, drama groups, including Sheena Blackhall, Teresa Breslin and the Saltire Music Group. Recently I had first hand knowledge of such events when I attended the Buchan Heritage Society's presentations at Johnshaven Primary School in connection with the Coastal Heritage Project based in Stonehaven. The co-ordinator of this project had arranged for the Society to visit the school in connection with a video the school is producing as part of the Coastal Heritage Project. The Buchan Society's input would focus the importance of Scots language. The Society presented poems in Scots by Lena Harrower, Scots dancing and Scots Bothy Ballads - and pupil response was enthusiastic. I had attended in connection with my contributions to the Coastal Heritage Project, in the form of oral history interviews with older (and one younger) fishermen and women in the area and as a Scots language enthusiast and researcher.¹⁵ The children loved Lena Harrower's Doric poems and quickly picked up words and pronunciation. The Coastal Project co-ordinator also arranged for training to be given to the pupils in audio/visual techniques – another visit by experts. In addition I also visited Gourdon Primary School to help the pupils make a video of the responses by my original oral history interviewees who had also been filmed for the Coastal Heritage project, contributing to a DVD/CD Heritage package. This time I was able to participate personally too, being one of those interviewed by the pupils about life in Gourdon in the past, along with two of my original interviewees, both well over 80. Being over 60 myself and the daughter of a fisherman/skipper, I could contribute information about the woman's role in line fishing. My mother had baited a line for my father for years. Needless to say the original interviews were conducted in Scots, Gourdon/Gurden(local pronunciation) Scots!

Teachers tended to refer to enhancing features of Scots when commenting on the reasons for and outcomes of their use/choice of Scottish texts, mentioning heritage, language development, enjoyment, richness of texts, learning new words, hearing/using words in Scots, not otherwise featured or honoured or seen in print,

¹⁴ This kind of approach can find a home also in the Executive's new Policy Document for Scotland's Languages (*op cit*), recently sent out for comment by the profession.

¹⁵ My Oral History interviews were originally for the Elphinstone Institute archive and are featured on the *Elphinstone Kist* website in extracts. Living in Stonehaven enabled me to contribute also to the current Coastal Heritage project being developed there. The interviews yielded fascinating information about different types of fishing in early days remembered by these men and one woman, now in their late 70s, mostly mid 80s, village life and World war II experiences and memories. As a native of Gourdon, my interviewees were mostly from Gourdon, with one from Stonehaven. The younger fisherman still lives in Gourdon but generally fishes out of Montrose, sometimes mooring at Gourdon.

benefits to pupil creative writing. Several teachers mentioned building confidence in general. In addition Scots was specifically useful for developing talking and listening skills and for the assessment of these skills, an endorsement of using Scots to meet 5 – 14 curricular requirements while simultaneously promoting and protecting Scots as a language. I was impressed to record one teacher at Crombie noting the effectiveness of Scots in teaching and learning “to discuss accent, dialect, Standard English” (Level D/E : 5 – 14).

Key Aspects : Secondary schools

Mearns, Banchory and Westhill Academies were the respondents, with a number of Mearns teachers responding. Only the PT at Banchory and the former PT at Westhill (myself) responded from these schools. A falling off from the input at Primary cannot be denied though again teachers were doing what they could in difficult circumstances. Secondary teachers made good use of Scottish literature (in English) in the novel genre in S5 / 6.

S 1 / 2 Conclusions/Key Aspects

Some interesting texts emerge, both older and more modern although the range and width is not extensive over the three schools. There is certainly scope for more comprehensive use of Scottish texts in poetry, prose and drama. Time- to -do remains a perennial problem : money in the department budget can be scarce and needed for a new set of Higher texts, rather than for a set of Scottish novels or plays.¹⁶ Yet there are ways of incorporating Scots more fully, covering 5 – 14 requirements using Scots and simultaneously featuring and promoting Scots in the S 1 / 2 curriculum. There are many new texts available from Itchy Coo publications in different genres while the *Elphinstone Kist* remains an invaluable, free on-line resource for poetry by Sheena Blackhall and many others as well as of prose by Les Wheeler and others.

Use of Scottish texts was thin at Mearns, included more modern pieces at Banchory, utilising the *Elphinstone Kist* - Les Wheeler and Sheena Blackhall poems and the popular Margaret Hamilton *Lament for a Lost Dinner Ticket*, more wide ranging at Westhill, including Burns and other favourite Scots poems, such as ballads and R. L. Stevenson poems (*A Child's Garden of Verses*), *Treasure Island* (play and novel), the *Silver Wellies* short story by Anne Donovan among others.

Conclusions /Key Aspects– S 3 / 4

Similar selections of poetry and short stories prevail and *Gregory's Girl* is a popular choice for drama. *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* and *The Cone Gatherers*, used for an S4 Credit class at Banchory, are Advanced Higher set texts, normally reserved for that cohort. The range across the genres is not wide and there is certainly room for comprehensive development of a wider range of Scottish texts to serve the requirements of Standard Grade Reading.

¹⁶ One Mearns teacher commented: “I would be very pleased to use only Scottish texts if there were more resources available in the Department”

Texts listed by Mearns included poems by Morgan, MacCaig and Carol Anne Duffy. Banchory listed the popular play, *Gregory's Girl*, Leonard and Lochhead poems as well as the Crichton Smith short stories, *The Telegram* and *Home*, and the short story anthology, *Shouting it Out*. Westhill added the L.G. Gibbon short story, *Smeddum* as well as *Killer Mum* from the *Shouting it Out* anthology and Anne Donovan's *Hieroglyphics*. Plays included *The Doctor and the Devils* and *Gregory's Girl*. Formerly a Scottish Project, covering Scots language and literature was an integral part of the S3 course, now fallen into desuetude. S4 texts included Morgan and MacCaig poems and *Smeddum*.

Higher and Advanced Higher

Scottish texts used were familiar and usually by Scottish writers rather than in Scots. For example, Mearns listed short stories by Spence, McIlvannay, Gray, Mackay Brown, Grassic Gibbon among others, *The Cone Gatherers*, and lamented the lack of takers for a Personal Study in Scottish language. Banchory listed MacCaig, Duffy, Lochhead and Crichton Smith, Grassic Gibbon and Rona Munro's *Bold Girls*. A host of Scottish novels was always recommended for Personal Study. Westhill was similar with poetry by MacCaig, Morgan currently and Crichton Smith, Lindsay, Muir and Burns available. Plays included *Bold Girls*, *Men Should Weep*, with *Willie Rough* also available. Novels included *Sunset Song*, *Cal*, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyed*, *The Cone Gatherers*. Grassic Gibbon, Crichton Smith and Spence short stories also featured. Scottish texts were strongly featured for Personal Study and were popular with pupils. *The Steamie* Textual Analysis was also mentioned by Westhill and Banchory. Only Westhill responded on Advanced Higher, covering the Scottish option for the Literature paper – *Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, *The Cone Gatherers*, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*.

Conclusions/Key Aspects - Higher/Advanced Higher

Again there is similarity of choice and again the range is not particularly wide but provides a base from which to provide more. There is a rich vein to be mined – particularly for the novel but also for poetry, ancient and modern, with drama not far behind.

Clearly Scottish literature is being kept alive as of old, particularly through the study of novels and poems by Scots in English. There is obviously a need to explore some of the early Scottish works and to focus more on texts in Scots of different varieties to ensure that the language too is kept alive.

I would advocate a fuller survey of the current use of Scottish literature in both Primary and Secondary schools, with a view to extending the provision in all genres from earliest stages through to S6. I also advocate CPD courses in Scottish Literature and language for teachers to raise awareness and increase confidence. Advanced Higher dissertations might also tackle a linguistic topic – on an aspect of Scots language – as an alternative to Literature Dissertations.

Although this Research Project is confined to the schools visited, I believe it has revealed important aspects of the current state and status of Scots language and

literature which are likely to be echoed in many Scottish schools. Several recommendations have been made. I hope they will be pursued and that the Scottish Government will be able to support Scots fully and unreservedly. It is well worth saving.¹⁷

¹⁷ There are two collections of Appendices, each containing a large number of items, individual Appendices. The first carries all the tabled of results from the Worksheets, the statistics. The second comprises all the Worksheets and Tasks used in the Project as well as a number of pupil exemplars and vocabulary prompt sheets.