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THE SCOTS NORTHERN SUBJECT RULE IN CONTACT

The Northern Subject Rule (NSR) is a subject-verb agreement pattern, historically distinctive of Scots, Irish English, and Northern English. In the Older Scots version of the NSR, the present tense verb is inflected with *-(i)s* unless it is immediately adjacent to a 1sg or any plural pronoun subject, such as: "*the girls sing-is*" while *"they sing"*, and "*I sing and dance-s*". The emergence and trajectory of the NSR is shaped by language contact; the plural *-s* inflection has roots in Northumbrian, while the 1sg inflection can be traced to Scandinavian *-r* inflections (Rodriguez Ledesma 2013: 152), and the NSR pattern has spread via Ulster to North America (e.g. Montgomery 1994; Schneider & Montgomery 2001; Pietsch 2005).

We investigate the NSR in 16th-18th century Scots, using syntactically annotated (parsed) correspondence data from the *Helsinki Corpus of Scottish Correspondence* (CSC; Meurman-Solin and VARIENG), from 1540-1750; the period of *anglicisation* of Scots. Previous research finds the *adjacency* condition less strong than *subject type* in modern Scots (e.g. Buchstaller et al. 2013), and in Northern Early Middle English (Fernandes Cuesta 2013), suggesting that the *adjacency* condition is weaker overall (e.g. de Haas 2011), while Rodriguez Ledesma (2013) finds *adjacency* to be as strong a condition as *subject* type in 14th-15th century Scots data, supporting earlier findings by Montgomery (1994) on 17th century Scots. With correspondence data from the new parsed CSC, we can uncover syntactic outcomes of the contact between Scots and English which shaped what we recognise as Scots today, and hopefully access a more personal language of people in Scotland during this time.

Preliminary results show high frequencies of inflection in clauses with full NP and 3sg pronoun subjects, indicating an operational subject type condition, but the frequencies of inflection are lower than expected from a categorical NSR grammar (peaking at 75-85%). There is no apparent difference in frequencies of inflection between subject-adjacent and non-adjacent verbs, suggesting a weak adjacency condition. We will explore whether this NSR pattern in the CSC can be traced to outcomes of language contact in the anglicisation period.

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