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Scots Language Centre Centre for the Scots Leid

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The Lowing Study

'[Ane Instructioun for Bairnis to be Learnit in Scottis](#)' is a co-constructive participatory study of Scots language and literature use for social inclusion in the Scottish secondary classroom. The research is largely concerned with describing children, teachers and their community's attitudes to Scots and the place of same in the classroom. It also seeks to discover which particular individuals and social groups participants associate with Scots and overall considers why participants' attitudes regarding Scots and Scots speakers may have emerged, and perhaps remain. Lastly, the research considers the possible challenges, benefits and ultimate caveats teachers, children and their communities face by including Scots in schools.

The project focuses on the incorporation of Scots in the Scottish classroom and links with inclusive practice in schools.

Throughout the project it has become apparent that some students who normally display disaffected behaviours in the classroom, have become engaged and animated when they discover that they can positively add to the Scots lessons being carried out. Indigenous minority languages and bilingualism in schools for inclusion is a central theme of the project. As one student states: 'if people speak Scots they've got their own rights, so then the language should have its own rights'.

Emerging results from the project so far suggests that a dichotomy appears to exist between at least some Scots speakers and their attitudes to the Scots language. Participants state of Scots: 'it's alive in the playground, it's alive in the classroom but as soon as you start to teach it, it suddenly becomes a different story ... the norm is that you have to accept Standard English and that anything other than that is wrong'. From baseline data it has become apparent that many children state that they speak English or a combination of Standard English and Scots, yet from observational data it seems that some students speak a form of Scots when not in audible range of the teacher. Issues of power, social capital and group identity are areas to be considered in further detail throughout the study.

Overall, from findings so far, it seems that a 'schizoglossia' may exist in Scots speakers, an insecurity in their language, where a form of Scots is spoken in Scotland today but paradoxically perhaps Scots is considered by its speakers as 'slang' or a dying language. Therefore, it is interesting to consider Scots, within the framework of language ecology and language rights theory, as being an endangered or dying language, where speakers'

identity, culture and community (Hornberger, 2008), their "soul" and "mental individuality" (Westermann, cited in Whitehead, 1995: p4) are compromised.

Future work deriving from the research includes a collaborative project with Salford University, to produce an introductory set of animated classroom materials for the incorporation of Scots and the inclusion of its speakers in the Scottish classroom.

Karen A Lowing would welcome any views related to the project, and any opportunities for encouraging work on Scots in similar areas. She can be contacted at the University of Newcastle, either by e-mail: K.A.Lowing@ncl.ac.uk or by phone: 0191 222 7593.