

# Language shift and standardisation: evidence from France and Scotland

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Studies on language shift often focus on the abandoned language, but the target language is equally interesting. Different assertions are made about the type of variety acquired by the shifting population: some claim that this is a standardised variety (e.g. Catford 1957, Pée & Blancquaert 1946, Wiggen 2002), other claim it is a non-standard variety (e.g. Landrecies 2001, Pooley 2006), others again see a spectrum of varieties (e.g. Gal 1979). In this paper I explore possible links between shift and standardisation, by analysing the target varieties in two case studies where the literature seems undecided: the Scots of Shetland and the French of French Flanders.

I analyse the development of Shetland Scots in a framework of new-dialect formation (Trudgill 2004, see also Millar 2008). I chart different features of Shetland Scots from the dialects of Mainland Scots settlers and show how a process of koinéisation, in which regionally marked features are lost, leads to features that are more standard-like. This, however, is not the same as a targeted standardisation.

I then discuss data from French Flanders, taken from dialect atlases (Gilliéron & Edmont 1902–1915, Carton 1989–1997) and analysed computationally for phonetic similarity (Heggarty et al. 2005). The results suggest the target variety fits onto the Picard (non-standard) dialect continuum, but an analysis of individual tokens suggest any similarity to Standard French forms was targeted.

I conclude by linking the differences between the two case studies to different sociolinguistic circumstances and various mechanisms of second-language acquisition.

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