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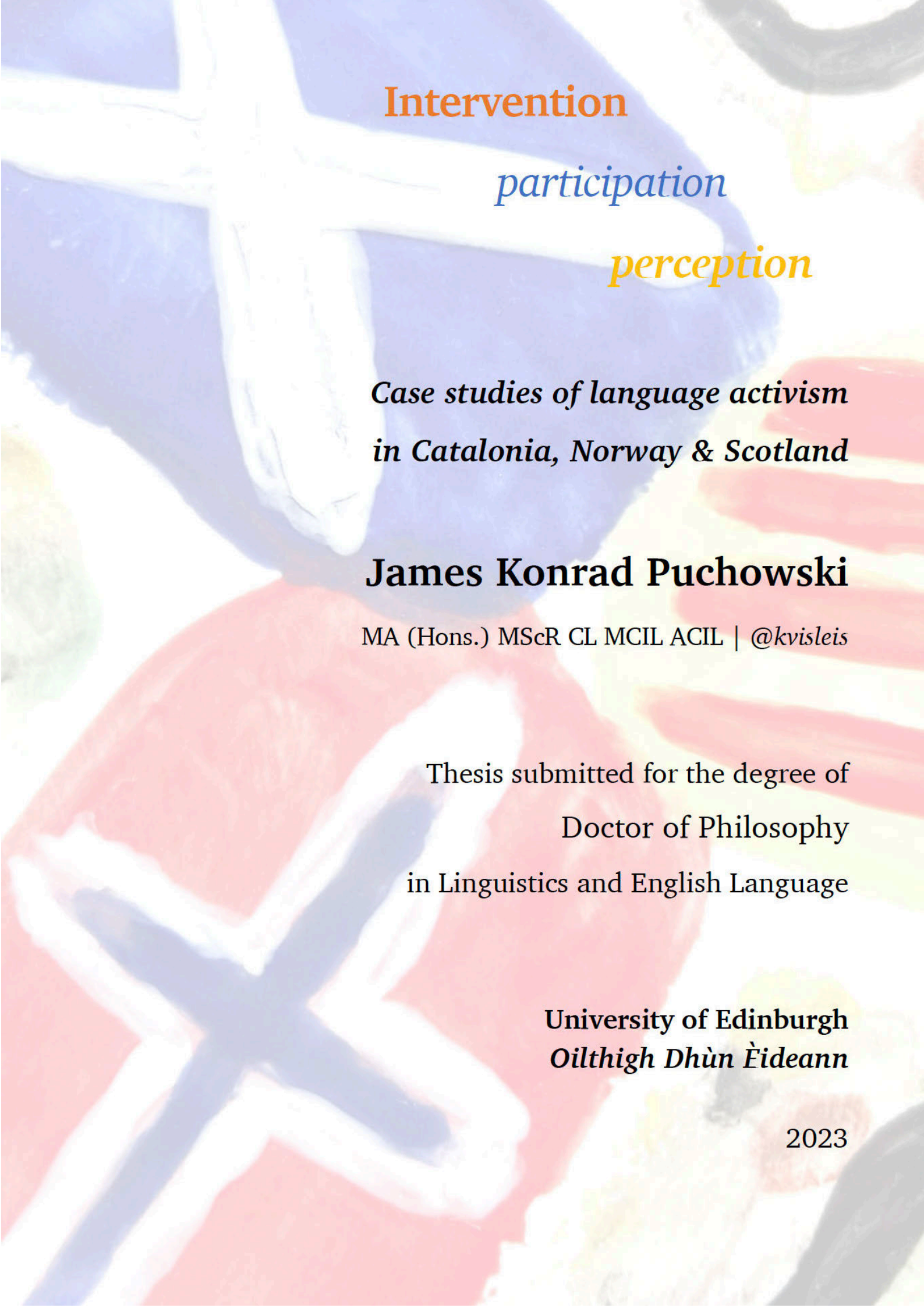

Intervention

participation

perception

Case studies of language activism in Catalonia, Norway & Scotland

James Konrad Puchowski

MA (Hons.) MScR CL MCIL ACIL | *@kvisleis*

Thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in Linguistics and English Language

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Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann

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I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for any other professional degree or qualification.

One of the three article manuscripts presented in this thesis was previously published in issue 6 (2022) of the *Journal of Postcolonial Linguistics*.

31 August 2022

James Konrad Puchowski

I am grateful to my mother for putting up with frequent, almost-daily phone calls since I became a student, and to my father for telling me to “work hard—play hard”, even though it has often appeared I often like to “play” by spending time vegetating in bed, getting absorbed in politics, or sitting in too many pubs and cafés (and not doing any work).

This thesis is dedicated to both of them.

Puchowski, J. (2023). *Intervention, Participation, Perception: Case Studies of Language Activism in Catalonia, Norway & Scotland*. PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh.

Abstract

This thesis brings together and contextualises three papers, each examining a case-study of language activism. The corresponding research project presents linguistic ethnographic and discourse analytical research in the socio-political contexts of contemporary Catalonia, Norway, and Scotland, examining metadiscourses of Catalan, Norwegian Nynorsk, and Scots language activists, and touching also on how these metadiscourses are embedded dynamically in wider social talk.

Emerging out of this research project is a broader theoretical discussion around existing definitions and approaches to document language activism in language studies; insights are drawn from (1) an observation of "non-native" Catalan language activists, (2) an analysis of the extension of Norwegian Nynorsk activist metalanguage to encompass Sámi and Kven language issues, and (3) an evaluation of the role of linguists and other academics in the institutional legitimation of the Scots language.

Drawing on theories and frameworks in linguistic anthropology and sociocultural linguistics, the conclusions of this thesis offer a springboard for further discussion regarding how language activism may be both deconstructed as a linguistic idea, and viewed as instances of metapragmatic intervention, without essentialising who can, or who cannot, be a language activist within a given sociolinguistic context.

Lay summary

In a previous dissertation submitted in 2018, the author described and analysed the work of an organisation which works to promote and defend the interests of users of the Nynorsk written standard of the Norwegian language as well as Norwegian dialects. This doctoral research, presented across three article manuscripts, is a continuation of fieldwork in minority language settings which sets out to describe examples of Catalan and Scots activism in addition to consolidating his Nynorsk research.

As linguists have begun to focus more on the so-called "social life" of language assessing language activism in its wider context allows us to better understand not just the language used to talk about language (metalanguage) and the discourses about language (metadiscourse) that are prevalent in contemporary societies, but also how to conceptualise exactly *who* contributes to these metadiscourses.

The author uses linguistic ethnography (a qualitative approach to social scientific research that where the researcher both observes and participates in a given social setting over time) and discourse-oriented methods to describe and evaluate each of his case-studies, examining the language that is used by activists and other social actors to describe various sociolinguistic situations and contexts. He presents: (1) an observation of "non-native" Catalan language activists in Catalonia; (2) an analysis of the extension of Norwegian Nynorsk activist metalanguage which encompasses issues surrounding minority Sámi and Kven communities in Norway; and (3) an evaluation of the role of linguists and other academics in how the disputed Scots language in Scotland is legitimated.

By presenting these cases together in this thesis, the author attempts to critically examine language activism from a theoretical perspective; what do linguists and other academics potentially mean when they use the terms "language activism" or "language activist" in their work; what differentiates language activists from other social actors in society; and how might his ethnographic observations help to illustrate the complexity and multifaceted nature of language activism overall? This leads to an open discussion about how activism is the site of nuanced participation in social debates around language, how various forms of social action could be perceived by wider society as activism regardless of one's intentions, and that the term "language activism"—theoretically speaking—could refer more broadly to instances of "metapragmatic intervention" in discourse about language.

Article titles and publication details

Puchowski, J. (2022). '*No em canviïs la llengua*: Non-Native Catalan Speakers and the Construction of an Informal Language Activist Platform'. *Journal of Postcolonial Linguistics*, 6. 160-185.

Puchowski, J. '*Mål* means *språk*: Young Norwegian Nynorsk Activism and Indigenous Language Advocacy'.

> First sent to *Multiethnica* (2021 special issue)—blind peer reviewed, later withdrawn;
> revised and sent to *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, January 2022—blind peer reviewed, revised version to be submitted September 2022

Puchowski, J. 'Linguists, academia, and the legitimation of the Scots language'.

> Sent to *Ampersand*, June 2022 (under review)

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Preface

My parents will recall a period of obsession I had around the age of 10 where I would watch Welsh-language channel S4C on my own in the living room, often whilst waiting for dinner. I didn't understand a thing, but what I believe intrigued me was that our television in a commuter town in Buckinghamshire was able to receive broadcasts in Welsh in the first place. And every year there would be the Eurovision Song Contest, which was how I got introduced to words and sounds I wouldn't have heard anywhere else; I vividly remember being both confused and very much amused in 2003 whilst a strange-looking Austrian man, surrounded by cardboard cut-outs of animals, sung in his local Bavarian dialect about *die Frau Holle*, who (allegedly) *hot gern die Wolle vom Dromedar aus Afrika*.[1] I also didn't understand a thing at the time, but I was absolutely transfixed. I surprised my Catalan teacher in my first lesson in 2013 when I already knew that a possessive pronoun (*meu, meva, teu, teva*, etc.) needed a definite article (*el meu, la meva, el teu, la teva,* etc.). I only knew this because Andorra had sent entries to Eurovision in Catalan; I learned the lyrics, which in turn taught me some of the grammar. Anyway: this thesis isn't a memoir, nor is it about Eurovision. It *is* about language, however.

* * *

This thesis is the culmination of nearly ten years of doing linguistics at the University of Edinburgh—I've been able to put some of my language-related trivia to use, and it looks like this doctoral thesis is one way to top it all off. I actually came to this subject after being prompted by a high school teacher that perhaps an undergraduate degree in French and German wasn't the right route for me, mainly because of my aversion to reading fiction. This isn't to say that I was determined to look at the deep structural analysis of language instead—rather—my curiosity was piqued more by the politics of language, the social debates around a language's use, or the controversies surrounding whether a language was a *language* at all. What I have chosen to write about in this doctoral thesis is my attempt to engage with topics and language

[1] 'Weil der Mensch zählt' (*Because the human matters*) by Alf Poier, representing Austria. Performed second, came sixth. 101 points. Received 8 points from the United Kingdom.

communities that have come to the fore during my years as a young adult—namely, Norway's Nynorsk and dialect activists who welcomed me into their movement as a member, Catalan language advocates in the advent of the push for Catalonia's independence, and friends and acquaintances within Scottish civil society who have been promoting Scots following the 2011 national census and engaging with the political energy released since the 2014 referendum.

Whilst I have probably laboured over this question more than is necessary—whether my work is considered linguistics, linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics, or the sociology of language—it shouldn't really matter. I have tried my utmost to integrate what reading and methods I believe are relevant to discuss language activism, and I accept that there is always more to read and a multitude of ways in which a survey of language activism in the European or "Western" context could be undertaken. Fundamentally, I have tried to stress at conferences and in personal conversations that no-one should consider my work thinking that what they are reading, or hearing, is somehow exhaustive or a full review of what will always be complex and multifaceted. To survey and describe language is to engage in something personal, communal, and political, and involves at its very core the study of people; languages themselves do not exist out in the ether. Language-users, on the other hand, do exist. I believe they can be very interesting.

I am incredibly fortunate to have been able to finish writing this thesis under the supervision of Haley De Korne at the University of Oslo/MultiLing, with the financial support of both the Carnegie Trust and the Norwegian Government. From the very start, I have been supported and encouraged throughout at the University of Edinburgh by John Joseph and Guy Puzey to push forward with my interest in not just language politics within each of the case-studies listed, but also to consider the deeper philosophical, ontological, and historical contexts of my engagement with linguistic topics. I hope that this thesis does that, at least to a certain degree. All remaining mistakes in this thesis are ultimately mine.

Thanks also go to Robert McColl Millar, Joanna Kopaczyk, Pavel Iosad, Jelena Ćalić (as well as all my other colleagues at University College London), Piotr Węgorowski, Bernie O'Rourke, Arne Kruse and Roser Vich-Gallego for their support and encouragement at various points over time. *Takk òg* to Jenny Gudmundsen, Mari Johanne Wikhaug Andersen and Nindi Endah Arum for being incredibly friendly, kind and *trufaste kontorvener* in Oslo during my writing period.

As I will explain later, the social and political rupture experienced after March 2020 has significantly altered my research plans, as it did for many of my colleagues. As much as this thesis is no longer a fully comparative study due to the constraints of the pandemic, I have attempted to make it a broader sociolinguistic commentary on the object(s) and people of study in question and use insights from exchanges I've had the fortune to engage in, not just at home in Edinburgh, but in Berkeley, Toronto, Oslo, Stockholm, Glasgow, Stirling, Barcelona, Copenhagen, and virtually via Warsaw.

Writing a doctorate can be a lonely affair, and this was particularly the case as the world came to grips with social distancing and trying to reduce the harm of widespread infection. Words on a page will not do justice to stress how grateful I am for sustained friendship during these past few years, although I want to thank in particular Jakub Musil, Ivo Youmerski, Matthew King, Carl Pierer, Javier Moreno-Rivero, Alex Cairncross and Julian Tiffay for keeping me sane in various ways—mostly via the medium of internet messaging services, playing board games and/or visiting various drinking establishments as we have emerged out of the trauma of 2020. Naturally, this has also been accompanied with several coffees or beers at home, alongside isolated, long sessions playing open-world video games (as well as finding solace in watching national finals for the Eurovision Song Contest).

Perhaps I'll leave it at that then. I'll let my serious-sounding academic ramblings over the next few pages do the talking instead.

Oslo, 31 July 2022

I would now like to take the opportunity to thank my examiners, Professor Julia Sallabank and Dr. Pavel Iosad for a challenging but rewarding viva voce in December 2022. I am grateful for their feedback and for giving me enough flexibility—both in terms of time and in terms of instructions—to amend the final part of this thesis. As before, any remaining errors are my own.

Edinburgh, 5 May 2023

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

> Just checked in. Apartment is in central Oslo where the two events I am attending are scheduled to take place. A few anxieties are going through my head—it's not clear how many or who will turn up tomorrow, and I wonder who will be there that I know/am friends with. […] I've optimistically printed out 20 consent forms, but I doubt I'll get anything greater than 5. Let's see. Tomorrow is a full day from 9:30 until late. I will try to eat something filling and get an early night. 19:17 [2]

What you have in your hands—or more likely on a screen in front of you—is a little different to the thesis I had in mind when I submitted my proposal in 2018, for some pandemic-related reasons that should be obvious, and other reasons I will later explain. A now slightly tatty notebook of field jottings, a bound heft of transcriptions and subsequent translations of twelve semi-structured interviews, and an overabundance of print and digital media feed into my dataset, although these data will never be wholly exhaustive of the people, organisations, and events that I had intended to examine and observe. Looking back at my very first fieldnotes from September 2019, I realise that a lot of the ideas I had behind my doctoral research, and the plans I had made in order to get it all done, have changed considerably.

Nevertheless: this thesis presents ethnographic and discourse-oriented research on cases of language activism in Catalonia, Norway, and Scotland, and altogether forms an open discussion about extant approaches to research on both the language *activism* that is being done, and the language *activists*

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[2] Fieldwork diary, page 1 (20 September 2019).

who do it. Whilst the papers that form the body of the thesis are indeed based on ethnographic fieldwork and semi-structured interviews prior to the start of the pandemic in 2020, my broader conclusions are meant to be an open discussion and springboard for further research. Each case-study engages with language activism both in observational terms and as a theoretical sociolinguistic concept. Specifically, each of my papers examines different sides to the study of language activism: (1 – Catalan) how we conceptualise language activism when notions of speakership or nativeness are challenged; (2 – Nynorsk) what we might consider to be the ideological or practical limits of language activism; and (3 – Scots) how wider social action and participation in metadiscourse may constitute activism in context and over time.

My doctoral research builds on conclusions and reflections from my 2018 MSc by Research dissertation which presented an annotated ethnographic diary of my observations of young Nynorsk and Norwegian dialect activists between 2015 and 2018. The case-studies presented over the next few chapters are therefore ethnographic "extended case studies" (see Jerolmack & Khan 2018), designed in the format of journal article manuscripts and presented as chapters in the order they were written. I will first summarise the background of my research, relevant methodologies, analytical methods I have used, and the thesis is concluded by a brief summary and discussion of the content of the papers. The reader should therefore note that I have modelled the contents and length of the thesis on other article-based doctoral theses in linguistics submitted to the University of Edinburgh.

As one way to test the water and speak openly about the theoretical outcomes of this work, I am particularly grateful to the *Centre for Multilingualism in Society across the Lifespan/Senter for fleirspråklegheit* (MultiLing) at the University of Oslo for allowing me to give a lecture on 25

May 2022 which presented these conclusions alongside my research trajectory, a recording of which is available for posterity.[3]

1.1.1. The matter at hand: language activism in sociolinguistic research

> Speakers are the agents of change. It goes without saying that speakers change language and that the term 'language' is an abstraction over the collective behaviour of a speech community […]. (Hickey 2012: 404)

As language varieties are observed to undergo structural change over time, and language policies are both created and instituted through various power structures such as state governments, sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists alike have been drawn towards the study of external agency and the social life of speakers [sic]—perhaps more correctly, users of language (Milroy 2009; Hickey 2012).[4] By examining language attitudes and language ideologies in any given society, we in effect pay attention to "feelings and ideas about various languages and linguistic forms as a critical factor in understanding language change, language and identity, and language in its socioeconomic context" (Kroskrity 2016[5]). Fundamentally, how these ideologies and attitudes are broadcast, interpreted, behaviourally negotiated,

---

[3] James Konrad Puchowski, "*For ein språkaktivist det kan jo mange vera*: theoretical reflections on ethnographies of Nynorsk, Catalan and Scots language activism", (paper presented to the Multilingualism Research Forum/Fleirspråklegheitsforum, University of Oslo, 25 April 2022); https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrLoNx-i4pI

[4] The reader will notice the use of the term "speaker" throughout this thesis in reference to language-users. I am conscious of the implications of using this term given its capacity to erase the experiences of users of non-spoken language as well as brush over the multimodality of language-use; this is also relevant in the case of Nynorsk, which is a written standard and not technically a spoken from of the Norwegian language

[5] No page numbers given.

internalised and propagated/re-broadcast through cultural practice outlines how social debates and discourse about language are sites in which various actors and organisations vie to promote and/or counter sociocultural beliefs about language.

Consequently, language attitudes and ideologies (as overt and covert behavioural orientations towards language) are not just espoused through debate and discourse about language (i.e., metadiscourse), but also culturally embedded in how language is used, where language has an indexicalising function, and where it is seen as a reflexive system where meaning is both situated and dynamic, and linguistic variation also embodies the construction of language ideology in real time (see Eckert 2018; Dynel 2020). Speakers, as actors in social life—you, me, everyone—are inherently involved in the construction of how linguistic behaviour becomes meaningful in everyday life, as explained by Gal & Irvine:

> Ideology, for us, is not like a miasma that hovers over a community, or like a rock that hits someone on the head. Instead, we understand it as productive – as part of people's creative interpretations of their situation and part of their consequent social action. (2019: 14)

This conceptualisation of language ideology accepts that we as actors in social contexts are involved in the reception, renegotiation, and retransmission of ideologically laden behaviours. Language ideology should not always be interpreted as some sort of powerful, authoritarian control from above that we are all subject to—rather, it is always cross-communal and cultural by nature, which Gal and Irvine also describe as "the active making of social life" (ibid.).

Over at least the last two decades, sociolinguistic research has turned considerably more towards the examination of topics in language policy and

planning “from below”, where language policy can be conceptualised not just as laws, texts, and legislation, but as dynamic and regimented beliefs about language and linguistic behaviour (see Linn 2010a). This has meant incorporating a broader evaluation of how language is used within social life, and the way that individuals, and their capacity to group themselves into collectives, pressure groups and grassroots organisations, may try to engage in social action to counter prevalent language attitudes and ideological currents. Much of this work has also incorporated anthropological approaches to the social study of language, such as the implementation of linguistic ethnography, a method centred on informed observations of behaviour and individual linguistic biographies; such methodologies allow us to illustrate how “language use is considered a form of social action, [where] issues surrounding power and agency become central” (Ahearn 2017: 302).

General linguistic research has, in turn, increased its focus on notions of agency and language’s cultural capital; besides studying language’s propositionally communicative function, now “we must go beyond the study of [grammar] and venture into the world of social action where words are embedded in and constitutive of specific cultural activities” (Duranti 2009: 1), with the understanding that language is also used as a cultural resource and a marker of identity, status and belonging. Language-users therefore are sociocultural agents by virtue of their behaviour and use of the meaning-making tool that is language, further embedded in discourse that, in essence, *creates* language:

> Was (eine) Sprache ist, wird nicht dadurch bestimmt, wie wir sprechen, sondern wie wir über Sprache sprechen—oder anders formuliert: Sprache wird, als konstitutive Bestandteil sozialer Wirklichkeit, diskursiv konstruiert.

> [What (a) language is, is not decided through how we speak language, but how we speak about it—or put another way: languages are discursively constructed as a constitutive component of social reality] (Dorostkar 2014: 22) [translations are my own]

Language is consequently inseparable from its cultural context—in other words, language is not a "reflection" of society (Williams 1992: 66; see also Blommaert 2018)—and is the domain of various of social actors involved in the (re)transmission of ideology about language. Accordingly, this thesis presents papers that examine language as a site of discourse and social action. In this exciting, dynamic, yet complex world where language is used in a range of socially meaningful ways, one might still want to ask what researchers continue to mean when terms such as "language activism" are used to describe examples of social action concerning language, and there are many various documented definitions, perspectives, and interpretations. To begin this discussion, I refer to Bernard Spolsky's *Language Management*, where he writes that language activists are "significant participants in language management" (2009: 204). What makes these participants *significant* is not particularly elaborated upon, although this framing does suggest that a language activist is identifiable in social life and is someone whose actions are considered a specific (or "significant") form of action. This has also meant that some refer to language activism as a component in the "mechanics" of ideology and language change (see Shohamy 2008) but still without going detailing who the activists are, what their aims are, and how they are differentiated from other participants.

Besides Spolsky's definition—which, whilst potentially authoritative or useful for some researchers, is by no means the only one out there—the body of work on language activism is vast, and the term "language activism" can

appear interchangeable with a range of related terms such as “language advocacy” (see Jaffe 2007: 59ff; also Heller, Pietikäinen & Pujolar 2018) in cases of perceived endangerment, or “language revitalisation” where cultural resources may be developed and institutions work alongside speakers of a language to raise the status and use of a given language variety (Urla 2012: 9ff; Putra 2018: 26ff). These two terms in particular would appear to focus their attention on different aspects of social action with regard to language-use and other cultural practices, but both also share related “artefactually oriented practices, such as linguistic description and documentation, and politically sensitized attempts to affect patterns of everyday language use, language socialization, as well as language policy more generally” (Karlander 2017: 15).

So as to distinguish “language activism” and related terms from everyday language-use, narrowing down its attributes—in other words, having a more essentialised definition—may be desirable within sociolinguistic theories of language variation, change and shift. Since language varieties vary not just due to typological and language-internal tendencies, if languages undergo structural change, and if language-users are known to use different language varieties in varying contexts and points in time, being able to highlight who exactly is acting, who might catalyse change and shift, and who acts “significantly” (to paraphrase Spolsky), may prove both interesting and useful from a theoretical perspective. At least, if the term “language activism” is a point of reference in sociolinguistic discussion, openly reflecting over *what* exactly we are referring to and *how* we have used the term to distinguish categories of social actor would be an engaging exercise of examining language activism not just as a tangible thing or activity that exists out in the world, but also a theoretical concept. This does not refer to language activism solely as a language planning process that is external to language-use

itself, or something that is limited to the development of language status through the mechanics of government or other "top-down" institutions—rather, there is a social reality that "language activism" is an illustration of how social action such as language-use and ideological discourse is indicative of how "every language practice carries a social cost, and status is the product of social contestation in a context defined by scarce symbolic and material resources" (Hill 2010: 52-3). What, then, is inferred by "language activism"? Who *are* the language activists? What do they want, and how do we locate them in social life? Are they politicians, educators, authors, poets, journalists? Are they located within grassroots, bottom-up organisations, or also outwith them? Do they work alongside "top-down" actors? Where academics have become more aware of their role in the legitimation of voices and challenging dominant power structures (cf. Avineri et al. 2019), can they also be linguists and others within the academy? What is their focus in the work they do? And who can they *not* be—as in, how would we distinguish them from other categories of actor, especially in frameworks of variation and change?

These are not questions that necessarily need answered. It may not be even necessary to want to have a strict definition of language activism on the grounds that, from an alternative perspective "activism manifests differently at different times and in different contexts" (Combs & Penfield 2012: 461). Alternatively, one may just admit that there is more than one "type" of language activism:

> The myriad instances of language activism reflect a shared desire of the activists that the homeostasis of their languages be perceived as healthy, with a mission to expand the social functions and the linguistic structures of expression within their language communities and greater societies […] The activists articulate a

> feeling that their languages have been ignored by the larger society and often by the minority group itself. (Peltz 2017: 664)

The questions I bring up are therefore not a discussion that represents an existential crisis amongst linguists, nor a particularly contentious debate—*however*—I propose across this body of work that attempting to reflect over these questions will allow researchers to engage more critically with the terminology and concepts that inform our description of (often, minority) language issues and our current understanding of language and social action in sociopolitical contexts. To this extent, this thesis is a theoretical reflection, chewing the proverbial cud about language activism across different accounts and representations in sociolinguistic research.

Where definitions of language activism have been proffered by others, my own observation over the course of at least five years of postgraduate study is that they express different flavours of the original case-studies which have informed a researcher's attempt at a definition. I would also argue that this leads to a situation where some interpretations are not always applicable when compared with other potential case studies of activism. For example, in one chapter by Florey, language activism is defined as "[undertaking] language-related activities ranging from documentation, training and skill-sharing, to materials development, language programmes, raising community awareness and encouraging participation in language work" (2008: 121). However, this framework is informed by documentation of endangered languages, and as a matter of illustration, application of this framework would not necessarily extend as easily to larger language communities such as Catalan, the Swedish language in Finland, or Kurdish (Hakulinen 2018; Junyent 2020; Lewis 2020). The cases mentioned, whilst not necessarily endangered languages—and not undocumented either—are still the site of discourses of minoritisation,

discrimination, domain-loss, or movements which lobby "top-down" institutions. However, this should not be a surprise:

> Since different kinds of minorities face distinct threats from state nation-building, their corresponding minority rights claims will also differ. (Kymlicka 2001: 1-2)

Our terminological situation is complicated further if one tries to focus on language activism primarily as a phenomenon within Indigenous and/or post-colonial contexts; the introductory paper of a special issue of *Multilingua* on language activism in 2017 operates with an interesting interpretation of the term, in that it is frequently referred to in opposition to "Western" structures of power and hegemony (Makoni & Criss 2017: 534ff). Whilst not irrelevant or even particularly erroneous given the insightful and important work in the settings that are featured in this issue, such a rhetorical framing has the potential to deemphasise potential case-studies of language activism in such "Western" and presumed socioeconomically privileged contexts. This factor is in part the rationale for writing this thesis, where my case-studies of Catalonia, Norway, and Scotland are sites of minority language metadiscourses in 21st century Europe, and also sites of comparable activist movements both historically and in the modern day (see also Puchowski 2017; 2018). I go into some detail about this shortly.

Issues of interpretation and definition also extend to how language activism is understood outwith the academic ivory tower, where one might refer to "folk" discourse about language (Coupland & Jaworski 1998: 23; see also Albury 2017)—although, exactly where one is meant to draw the line between academic language specialists and non-specialists can be contentious (cf. Kulbrandstad 2008: 85). Nevertheless, as explained in by Maas in one

case-study, the politicisation of Welsh language politics has led to accusations from other civil society actors that Welsh language advocates are inherent nationalists, which Maas argues is a "failure to cognize society's diversity—failure to recognize either certain kinds of participants or their issues at all, or failure to distinguish between those participants and attitudes ascribed to them" (2012: 353). Consequently, participation in social discourse about language, and the indexical associations between language and concepts such as nationality and political identity, together run the risk of framing language advocacy as necessarily politically adversarial or being associated with social beliefs which for others may be either controversial or politically distasteful. As a further example, in a study on contemporary Basque, Heidemann (2010) considers language activism as activities specifically embedded in grassroots collective action and the development of linguistic rights, more specifically in education systems; that is to say that activism becomes the domain of the public educator. Indeed, there is the potential for significant blurring of what is general social activism versus activism specific to language, as Blackwood notes in his work the Corsican context:

> Although it is the case that there is frequent blurring of the distinction between the two groupings of activists, especially in the second half of the twentieth century, there are individuals, associations and movements who, *by their actions*, mark themselves out as Corsican language activists. (2008: 5) [emphasis my own]

Specifically in Blackwood's account, he mentions that other scholars have previously identified that linguistic authority in a community need not be necessarily associated with those who are in formal control, such as politicians (ibid.: 4), and conceptualising a language activist within the

European context has often required researchers to seek out those who have an overt and active association with an activist identity by virtue of their political action and associations with nationalist and/or regionalist movements that go beyond the conceptual boundaries of linguistic identity. Blackwood's work in particular is one illustration of showing that the linguistic reality on the island of Corsica is not the consequence of "top-down" political action—or, indeed, inaction—but that various examples of social action over time (explicitly activistic or not) have been able to maintain a Corsophone community, symptomatic of post-WWII developments on the island that necessitated "national unity" (ibid.: 44) due to with increasing demographic shift, the reorganisation of French state government structures and the manner in which mass industrial change affected the relative stability of social networks in Corsican-speaking communities—the use of Corsican in social life therefore attained different values and meaning in an ever-transforming society. There is consequently significant blurring between various social roles that developed on the island, and where language-use in and of itself becomes a contested practice, the situation Blackwood describes is illustrative of how language activists may not necessarily be best conceptualised as a contained, separable grouping or entity:

> […] W]e should acknowledge that squeezing under one umbrella term the spectrum of all the language activists who have given time, energy and even financial support to Corsican is potentially problematic […]. Language activism has meant differing things to different groups of people over the two hundred and fifty years of French rule. (ibid.: 133)

As researchers in language studies—be it sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, or the sociology of language—we are altogether presented with diverse understandings of language activism across multiple studies and theoretical frameworks. As stated, diverse conceptualisations of the prototypical language activist can at times lend themselves towards other terms to describe various activities: to add further terms to this list, there is language reclamation (Hornberger 2017), language documentation (Lane 2014; Bodó et al. 2022), or corpus planning (Di Biase 2018), amongst others.

1.1.2. Summary of grounded theory ethnography: Norwegian Nynorsk

Prior to the start of my doctoral research, I had been focused on language activism in Norway, looking specifically at organisations whose work concerns the Norwegian Nynorsk written orthography and use of dialects across the country. I spent ten months in Norway between August 2015 and June 2016 during a university exchange during my undergraduate degree and during this time joined *Norsk Målungdom*, the youth wing of the organisation *Noregs Mållag*. I also completed further fieldwork in January 2017 and again in January 2018, the cumulative results of which were presented in an MScR dissertation in 2018.

Norway is an interesting case-study in language policy and wider sociolinguistic research due to the marked dialectological and orthographical heterogeneity of the Norwegian language, in addition to its relationship with the wider Scandinavian dialectal continuum where there is considerable mutual intelligibility between contemporary Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish. In addition to two state-sanctioned written standards of the Norwegian language—Bokmål and Nynorsk—there is no one single spoken prestige standard, and therefore use of regional dialects in all areas of daily life and administration is noticeably commonplace (Kulbrandstad 2018). It is

important to highlight that because of the relatively recent full independence of the Norwegian nation-state in 1905, following the establishment of autonomous government during Norway's personal union with Sweden in 1814 after over 400 years of Danish rule, active language debates about the "Norwegianisation" of the then extant use of Danish spelling conventions in education and administration, and counter-cultural struggles towards the establishment of a *uniquely* Norwegian written standard have together fed into contemporary language ideologies and conceptualisations of the Norwegian language vis-à-vis Danish and Swedish, involving the input of various authors, academics, linguists, teachers, poets and politicians, ultimately culminating in the creation of civil society organisations such as *Noregs Mållag* and follow-on groups such as *Norsk Målungdom* (see Almenningen 1981; Vaagland 1982; Venås 1984; Bakke & Teigen 2001 for further discussion).

As a newer and more radical proposal within this *språkstrid* (language conflict; see Vikør 2018), contemporary Nynorsk (lit. New Norwegian) is founded upon the original proposals of Ivar Aasen (b. 1813, d. 1896) to create a written standard centred in Norwegian dialectal diversity outside of bourgeois, upper-class, administrative, bureaucratic, Danish-using urban population centres; notions of a Norwegian language at the time were tied with growing National Romantic sentiment and the desire amongst many to return to the unique and distinctive qualities of Norwegian speech rather than the stylistic and lexical prestige of Danish (Jahr 2014: 23-4). Estimates propose that about 600,000 people use Nynorsk in today's Norway, or about 15% of the resident population (Grepstad 2015: 52). Bokmål (lit. book-language) on the other hand is used by the overwhelming majority of people in Norway and is the standard used in all major population centres; it represents a written standard that is for the most part a continuation from Danish where lexical changes and Norwegianised orthographic conventions

have been incorporated over time (see Jahr 2014). Both standards have influenced one another over time, which was in part the consequence of attempts to assimilate both into a common Samnorsk written standard in the 20th century in an attempt to end the "parallelingualism" of two ideologically oppositional written standards (see Linn 2010b), although both Nynorsk and Bokmål have remained separable written alternatives, each marked by several decades of intense ideological debate surrounding what the Norwegian language had been prior to Danish rule, how the modern language was to be therefore differentiated from written Danish, and to what extent spoken language across Norway's vast dialectological landscape should be incorporated into newer spelling conventions and lexical choices (Mæhlum & Hårstad 2018; Sandøy 2018).

The organisations I have observed and written about before are representative of the broader Nynorsk and dialect movement in Norway known as *målrørsla* (the tongue/dialect/language-movement; see Nynorsk paper in this thesis for a broader discussion about the meaning of *mål*). In addition to promoting the use of Nynorsk and interests of Nynorsk-users, they have also worked to help develop Norway's pro-dialect use ideology (see Almenningen 1992; Bucken-Knapp 2003; Brunstad 2017), and at times (and as illustrated in one of the papers in this thesis), their language rights advocacy has also extended to other social justice issues as a site of counter-cultural discourse (see Puzey 2011), including the promotion and defence of other minoritised language varieties, especially the Indigenous, non-Germanic languages of Norway such as the Sámi languages and Kven.

My MScR dissertation was, for the most part, an annotated ethnographic diary of observations and events that took place during my time as a foreign-born "convert" to Nynorsk, being interviewed by the Norwegian media about my decision to no longer write in Bokmål and becoming a

member of *Norsk Målungdom* in addition to my local chapter, *Studentmållaget i Oslo* (Student Language Organisation of Oslo, where I had also been elected as a committee member in 2016).

At the time, my descriptive and chronological account of ethnographic insights into Norsk Målungdom—having included participant-observation, interviews, analysis of print/digital media and social media analysis—allowed for the underscoring of language ideological orientations specific to young Nynorsk activists. Feeding into a grounded theoretical understanding of contemporary language activism in Norway, the following ideological and attitudinal tropes were highlighted as part of an ethnographic thick description of Nynorsk language activism particularly within *Norsk Målungdom*, although insights were also drawn from my local chapter's work, as well as *Noregs Mållag*. Some of the points below may share thematic similarities with one another or could alternatively be grouped into other general points; given the relative timescale and subjective nature of this observational fieldwork, each theme represents a rough sketch of the activities and positionalities highlighted in my ethnographic research at the time:

1. **Educational institutions are venues for activist campaigning**: educational institutions overseen by the Norwegian state (schools, university colleges and universities) are treated as arenas for campaigning and outreach and member recruitment. As part of the rhetorical strategy used to reach out to young people, *Norsk Målungdom* expresses concern for the stability of current legislation that affects both the use and teaching of Nynorsk in these institutions, as well as the extent to which young people are made aware of what current legislation says about their linguistic rights—for example, students who move from a Nynorsk-using municipality

to a university where Bokmål is the main language of teaching and administration are made aware that they have the right to request that their assessments are in Nynorsk (further discussion in Thingnes 2020).

2. **Educational institutions are interpreted as sites of language ideology**: state institutions of all kinds are seen as responsible for their adherence to legislation and their consideration for local dialects and the two state-sanctioned orthographies of the Norwegian language. The particular focus on educational institutions is largely a result of *Norsk Målungdom*'s interaction with young people, whereas institutions in general are considered as forums that are instrumental in the spreading of language attitudes about dialects, linguistic diversity, and the role of Nynorsk in civil society (see Brunstad 2017).
3. **Discourse focuses on language "rights"**: the focus in written texts and in campaigning on language rights (*språkrettar/språklege rettar*) is indicative of a language rights discourse, where the organised efforts of *Norsk Målungdom* aim to highlight where rights have been violated by any institution or individual due to an emerging standard language ideology centred on the use of Bokmål (see Kulbrandstad 2018). Violations are called out in the public sphere, in press releases, and in social media, and campaigning aims to encourage change in state-actor behaviour and the enforcement of legislation mandating the use of Nynorsk.
4. **Nynorsk identity and stereotypes about Nynorsk are embraced**: Nynorsk activists can identify and (sarcastically) embrace the stereotypes that are associated with Nynorsk users and dialect-users, potentially disarming these stereotypes or subverting them, whilst

at the same time holding high esteem for cultural traditions and celebrations that bring the organisation and wider movement together. Language activism in this sense is not just a medium to express ideas and thoughts about language, but also an expression of a specifically Nynorsk history, its society, and its culture (*nynorsk skriftkultur*, cf. Grepstad 2006). Particular traditions and acts, such as holding a yearly ceremony at the grave of Ivar Aasen on Constitution Day (17 May) in Oslo, are particularly important to this group identity.

5. **Political centralisation and municipal reform are viewed as threats**: Linguistic issues related to Nynorsk, dialects and other minoritized language varieties in Norway are often associated with larger constitutional issues such as the centralisation of the Norwegian political system; this theme was particularly pertinent at the time of writing, as not all proposed changes had been implemented yet (*Språklova*, see Thingnes 2020: 4ff). Changes to administrative municipal boundaries are received with high levels of scepticism and concern, as officially Nynorsk-using municipalities (which are often smaller in population) are made to join up with majority Bokmål/"neutral" municipalities, changing the sociolinguistic dynamic and institutional mandate to use Nynorsk in signage and official communications. The Nynorsk community had been also sceptical of Norwegian membership of the European Economic Community and Union during national referendums on the membership of both groups, having historically represented a political counterculture against political disenfranchisement of rural and peripheral communities (see Almenningen 1981).

6. **Nynorsk & demographics; use of Bokmål and English is increasing**: Activists interpret Bokmål as carrying an inherent prestige and high level of economic and cultural capital, unmatched by any other language variety in Norway—save the growing role and visibility of English in business, education, and mass media (cf. Bakke & Teigen 2001; Buffetti 2020). The considerable use of Bokmål in the majority of contexts where the Norwegian language is used is associated with prevailing negative attitudes toward Nynorsk, especially in urban centres and national press.
7. **Political parties are lobbied, and policy proposals are responded to**: Activists work where they can with political parties and advocacy coalitions where a common interest in language and language policy is discovered (see Nynorsk paper for an illustration). Both *Noregs Mållag* and *Norsk Målungdom* engage in national and local discourses via both traditional and social media and urge sympathisers to engage, vote and campaign accordingly. The state and its institutions are understood to be the largest forums for active political change in favour of the linguistic goals of Nynorsk activism, and activists do not see themselves as separate from evolving political events.
8. **Nynorsk activism is able to engage in linguistic solidarity coalitions**: Nynorsk activists often work to show their support and solidarity with other groups and peoples considered to be marginalised and minoritized, both in Norway and internationally (see Nynorsk paper in this thesis for an illustration). The core values of promoting diversity and defending against the marginalisation of minorities are concerns and objects seen in tandem with more general linguistic attitudes and ideologies.

1.1.3. Extended cases: Catalan and Scots

Following on from this work on Nynorsk and the wider *målrørsla*, the original intention of this project was to embark on comparative, extended case studies that examined organised language activism in Catalonia and Scotland. There were various reasons at the time to support a comparative assessment of Nynorsk, Catalan, and Scots language activism as my doctoral project, not least that I had long desired the opportunity to incorporate Catalan into my academic work five years after having studied the language as an undergraduate, and also the energy and activity surrounding the Scots language following Scotland's 2011 national census and the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence.

From a language policy and planning perspective, all three of these language varieties exist in domain-specific sociolinguistic conflicts with dominant acrolects: Norwegian Bokmål, Castilian Spanish, and Scottish Standard English. Set in three western European geopolitical contexts, all three minority languages examined in my project were also associated with language activist organisations, and I had set out to make comparative observations of *Noregs Mållag* with *Plataforma per la llengua catalana* (Platform for the Catalan Language, a major non-governmental Catalan language advocacy organisation; see Marco i Palau 2017; Dowling 2018) and the *Scots Leid Associe* (Scots Language Society, a comparatively smaller and less influential organisation, although known for its promotion of the Lallans literary standard; see McClure 1980; 2000). The sociopolitical realities in all three of these sites are clearly different, with Norway being a fully independent nation-state after several centuries of union with either Denmark or Sweden, Scotland being a devolved nation in a unitary state with an increasingly more influential body of voters seeking independence, and Catalonia being a Spanish autonomous community and "nationality" (but not

"nation", according to Spain's constitution; see Mar-Molinero 2000; Guibernau 2003) with a fervent nationalist movement.

Focus would have to be limited where possible; the organisations in Catalonia and Scotland would have to be examined with the proviso that Catalan and Scots are supported and used at varying levels and by different political communities when compared against what I had learned from several years of ethnographic study of the Nynorsk movement. Other factors would need to be accounted for, such as the reality of Scots not being a standardised language variety, also with related Ulster-Scots in the north of the island of Ireland (see Crowley 2006), Norwegian being a polynomic language with markedly diverse dialects, and Catalan itself being used not just in Catalonia, but in the Valencian Country (as "Valencian"; see Vila, Lasagabaster, & Ramallo 2017), the Balearic Islands, Andorra, and the city of L'Alguer on Sardinia in Italy. With these issues in mind, the thesis was to propose an informed research framework for language activism in response to the lack of any other theoretical, sociolinguistic approach to interpreting the social action and tangible policy achievements of language activist organisations in a European context in the 21st century. The aims of this project were to highlight commonalities between the three—given comparable aspects of the contested status and prestige of Catalan, Nynorsk, and Scots, as well as all three being the sites of nationalist discourse—where my work would ultimately contribute to a broad descriptive analysis. This project was to examine three language varieties that are deeply integrated into current national debates, utilising an emergent ethnographic research methodology, presenting findings not just relevant for sociolinguists but also other practitioners interested in active social debates about language.

1.1.4. Original aims and revised research trajectory

In my original proposal for this thesis, I had set out to examine cases of language activism comparatively, extending my linguistic ethnographic research on Norwegian Nynorsk to Catalan and Scots as explained above. The overarching research question in particular was an attempt to use a descriptive comparison of three western European sites of study to propose a general conceptual understanding of language activism within sociolinguistic theory:

> *To what extent can a (macro)sociolinguistic framework to research language activism be developed, based on a comparative analysis of language activism in Catalonia, Norway, and Scotland?*

In order to answer this main question, this thesis would have then presented chapters addressing the following objectives:

> ***Identify** commonalities between the three cases*
> ***Identify** main actors within activist communities of practice*
> ***Explain** who language activists are within each case*
> ***Explain** how identified language activist organisations operate*
> ***Explain** how sociopolitical context informs activism*
> ***Explain** how activism is portrayed in media and public discourse*

With the working title *Language Leagues, Platforms and Societies*, I had planned originally to orbit my research around three main identifiable organisations within each of the case studies; namely, *Noregs Mållag*, *Plataforma per la llengua catalana*, and the *Scots Leid Associe*, although these sites were by no means interpreted as fully exhaustive of language activism in each context. This project was altogether interrupted in March 2020 due to a

global pandemic; before we entered a period where were no longer able to conduct in-person research, I had only able to conclude the first set of semi-structured interviews in each of my case-studies, I had limited fieldnotes from a select few sites in each context, and all other international travel plans had to be shelved. Consequently, as opposed to writing a comparative monograph, this shorter article-based thesis allows me to still present research on each of my cases, but the comparative angle to my work has been de-emphasised. Each paper consequently delves into broader and open-ended meta-sociolinguistic discussions about language activism itself.

Over the course of these three papers, I build on the concept of language activism as inherently representative of specific cases of speaker participation—or *intervention*—in metadiscourse, although the reader should pay attention to the fact that this springboard for discussion is not oriented around traditional language policy and planning frameworks specifically. That is to say that my work does not talk directly about legislation, formal policy texts or analysis of institutions and the efficacy of their work, nor does it make any attempt to formalise its analysis of language activism. There are various valid approaches to research where language policy can be conceptualised in wider terms; policy may not need necessarily to be codified; we can refer to common ideological stances on language shared by a community. For example, we can speak of "declared" policies (see Shohamy 2006) or operate within a framework which views policy "as ideology" (see Spolsky 2004), or alternatively talk about "perceived" language policy (see Bonacina-Pugh 2012). However, such framings still lend themselves to a relative dialectic of authority and either symbolic or imagined "top-down" pressure, whereas I have attempted to engage in the complementary "sociocultural" approach grounded in other studies to examine language activism within a linguistic anthropological framework focused principally on the capacity of speaker

agency (see Kroskrity 2008; Hornberger & Johnson 2011: 284-5; Ahearn 2017: 292). This is in order to not formalise activism or the role of language activists explicitly in relation to perceived authority or institutions of the state, but rather examine case-studies as participative sites of reinterpretation and renegotiation of language ideology through the symbiotic construction of metadiscourse within broader cultural narratives.

The theoretical persuasion of my work is in part influenced by the approach taken in David Karlander's thesis on metadiscourses concerning the Elfdalian/Övdalsk language of Sweden, whose papers "align with a linguistic anthropological interest in the linguistic properties of social practice" (2017: 5) and are concentrated on discourse in relation to semiotic legitimation, how language-use including statements about language become meaningful within symbolic regimes, and perspectives on language are numerous and in constant flux. Language activism is therefore conceptualised in all three papers in my thesis within a "multiperspectival" account of language-use which does not just examine language ideology as a process, but how it is also embedded in cultural practice (ibid.: 57).

1.2. Fieldwork and methodologies

Data collection procedures and analytical methods are described in each of the papers. However, as each paper can be read as a standalone piece of work, I should stress that they represent three distinct fragments of a much wider body of ethnographic fieldwork; several interview transcripts as well as insights from many pages of ethnographic notes do not feature at all in the research presented here, and they shall have to wait for future publications. In order to frame my papers as products of the same research trajectory, I offer here a holistic description of my ethnographic research, the qualitative and

discourse-oriented methods involved, as well as a brief discussion of the metapragmatic analytical lens used across all three studies.

With my choice of methods and approach to analysis, I have for the most part chosen a critical sociolinguistic stance in my research, meaning that I "[take] a step away – or perhaps a step forward – from 'merely' descriptive approaches to language research [and instead] challenge the idea of objectivist sociolinguistic research" (Pietikäinen 2016: 264). In particular, the use of a critical sociolinguistic research approach when researching language, social context and discourse may allow the researcher to understand "why sociolinguistic phenomena are the way they are at the local level, with due regard to knowledge that might be a manifestation of a local ontology or epistemology of language or an instantiation of idiosyncratic knowledge [about language]" (Albury 2017: 4). In brief, I use linguistic ethnographic fieldwork and content analyses under a metapragmatic analytical lens.

1.2.1. Observing sites of social action: linguistic ethnography

As a research method grounded in anthropological tradition, ethnography is by both practice and application the simultaneous observation of, and participation in, a site of cultural behaviour, and then presenting an informed account. Statements that originate out of ethnographic fieldwork are not asserted from an objective standpoint but are meant to formulate observations that relate to wider theoretical understanding of a given cultural phenomenon. More specifically, ethnographic work is subjective not just on the grounds that it is grounded in the subjective "gaze" of the researcher as a participant-observer in a given context, but that it also concentrates on those other *subjects* (Gal & Irvine 2019: 169); in other words, *people*. Ethnography is therefore an account of subjectivities related to cultural practice, including the use of

language, discourses about language, and the treatment of language as a cultural object and discursive point of reference over time.

All content that is collected as part of an ethnographic study has the potential to be rich and substantive under an analytical lens, but this first depends on the willingness to participate of the researcher, and then the extent to which they are both involved and able to interpret the participative role of others; this takes considerable time, and the gaze of the researcher may be considerably restricted to this end, although ethnography is by definition an "open-ended" approach to social scientific research (Berg 2016: 4). Anthropologist Michael Agar describes ethnography as such:

> In ethnography […], you learn something ('collect some data'), then you try to make sense out of it ('analysis'), then you go back and see if the interpretation makes sense in light of new experience ('collect more data'), then you refine your interpretation ('more analysis'), and so on. The process is dialectic, not linear. Such a simple statement, so important in capturing a key aspect of doing ethnography. (1980: 9)

Within contemporary sociolinguistic research, *linguistic* ethnography has proven its utility in studies which examine linguistic variation and social meaning by including localised, subjective perspectives and examinations of interspeaker relationships from the stance of an informed outsider. With regard to interpreting the dynamics of language ideology, the implementation of linguistic ethnographic methods across sociolinguistic studies "shifts the focus from a 'top-down' to a 'bottom-up' perspective of the social structures in which language exists, [and …] it is possible to develop a more nuanced understanding of how language functions as a constituent part of social

differentiation and identity, rather than as an identity, rather than as a reflection of macro-social categories" (Lawson 2014: 202). A greater focus on the networks of "social information [or the] behaviours of speakers" is considered through ethnographic work and has been implemented in contemporary sociolinguistic research where before variationist studies had "[made] little if any reference" to it (Milroy & Gordon 2003: 8). As a result, a linguistic ethnography altogether is a theoretically informed approach to observe, speculate, and hypothesise about the performativity and situated context of language-use in daily life.

Whilst subjective, and only able to present a snapshot of a given context from the single perspective of a researcher, ethnography forms part of a diverse body of qualitative social scientific research methods that produces "thick descriptions" and grounded accounts of behaviour which together generate further hypotheses that can be trialled and tested through other methods (Tusting, Nikolaidou & Hållsten 2018: 10)—to an extent, linguistic ethnography is one method which is able to complement the research outcomes and feed into various sociolinguistic insights:

> Den språkvetenskapliga etnografin delar interaktionsparadigmets intresse för handlingar, men vidgår kontexten kring dessa. Man vill se sammanhäng genom att situationer binds ihop till kulturella mönster: till praktiker. I detta perspektiv blir det också naturligt att intressera sig för båda texter och samtal.
>
> [Linguistic ethnography shares the interactionalist paradigm's interest in actions, but it considers the context surrounding them. We want to see this context emerge when situations are linked and become cultural patterns: as practices. From this perspective, it also

> becomes natural to become interested in both texts and conversation.] (Karlsson 2016: 126)

However, as with all research methods, there are limitations to the epistemological scope of linguistic ethnography, both practical and theoretical. Indeed, some ethnographers appear at times to be quite self-deprecative due to how the nature of this research method may be received by the rest of the academic community; ethnography has been described as "a wonderful excuse for having an adventurous good time while operating under the pretext of doing serious intellectual work" (van Maanen 1995: 2) on account of the long periods of time required to collect and synthesise data in often faraway destinations, or "messy and chaotic" (Copland & Creese 2015: 9) by virtue of it collecting broad, qualitative data sets, with no specified system of coding (it can be done by hand annotation of jottings, using post-it notes and sketching hand-drawn diagrams, done digitally with contemporary software, or a mix of various alternatives; see McCarty 2015). Nevertheless, such self-aware acceptance of the reality of language and social life demonstrates that a close-up study of the intricacies of linguistic behaviour will necessarily illustrate complexity with rich data presented from the subjective perspective of a researcher. Regardless: ethnography is a highly suitable research method within critical approaches to sociolinguistic work. Importantly, it does not take an essentialist perspective on linguistic analysis and is designed to be an account of a highly dynamic and multisided phenomenon (cf. Wodak & Savski 2018: 95-6). This is advantageous if we are critiquing the use of an equally messy and chaotic term like "language activism" with its many iterations and interpretations.

The use of linguistic ethnography in various sociolinguistic studies has also been referred to as part of a wider participatory "ethnographic turn"

(Bodó et al. 2022: 11); as with other social sciences, sociolinguistic fieldwork occurs often in sites and contexts that are heavily localised, and positivist research traditions have often fostered approaches to fieldwork where researchers need maintain some form of perceived or artificially maintained distance between themselves and their objects/subjects of research. However, in doing so, this also restricts access to spaces and to other sites of knowledge and practices, and there have been consequent attempts to re-jig the research dynamic using participatory, observational research models such as linguistic ethnography. Related research domains also include "Citizen Sociolinguistics" (see Rymes & Leone 2014), where participation within a research context between both members of the academy and members of the project are valued and sets the scene for considering all users of language to be experts in their own communities. Situated ethnographic research requires us therefore to both observe language-use and participate as language-users simultaneously, and this is one way in which concepts and long-held definitions can be effectively critiqued by adding further nuance from the field where access to a research site is up-close, subjective, but also rich in data and different perspectives; in fact, where traditional definitions and concepts in sociolinguistic research may have emerged from studies of other data from specific contexts, ethnographic research functions as one reflexive approach to challenge claims that seem universalistic (Trudgill 2018).

Another aspect of ethnographic research is that it does not set out to reach definite conclusions. Rather than directly evaluating a hypothesis, the end-product of a linguistic ethnography is a "hypothesis-generating" description of highly context-dependent situations which are constantly fluctuating (Packer 2018: 1); linguistic ethnography to this extent engages in post-structuralist critiques of hitherto essentialised definitions and categories (Creese 2008). Agar writes accordingly:

> Ethnography is a different sort of research process from hypothesis-testing. From my viewpoint, ethnography is the more general process of understanding another human group; hypothesis-testing is a minor, though potentially significant part of that process. (1980: 71)

From an ethnographic standpoint, no language nor speaker is a "unified, singular and stable" conceptualisation (Gilmore 2011: 122). "Language", like "nation" or various other labels, is an essentialised idea that emerges from settings where we try to delineate phenomena from one another. Ethnography breaks down presuppositions, and positions us as situated social actors in dynamic and "fundamentally political" contexts (Jaffe 2007: 57).

1.2.2. Metadiscourses, metalanguage, and metapragmatic analysis

I engage with a linguistic anthropological approach to language-about-language (*metalanguage*), specifically where focus is not just on explicit statements about language (e.g., formal language policy texts or public language debates in the media)—rather, metalanguage exists within broader *metapragmatic* frameworks (where metalanguage becomes meaningful in context) and is deeply embedded within various cultural practices:

> To speak about metapragmatics, then, is to speak about linguistically interested exchanges, in which numerous socially positioned visions of language and social life grapple with each other. (Karlander 2017: 28)

As such, the performativity of language necessitates the participation of language-users in discourse where metalanguage is part of the non-propositional communicative context. This analytical approach is grounded in the principle that language ideology is effectively *metadiscourse*, where "language embodies ideology [… and] therefore, various actors may engage in regulating, maintaining and/or resisting language policies, uses and choices" (Selvi 2022: 82-3), or put another way:

> To comment on languages, or to describe them, or recommend policy with respect to them, is to engage in a metadiscourse, a reflexive activity that is at once a practice and a commentary upon that practice, within a realm of alternative possibilities. (Irvine & Gal 2019: 1)

This analytical position allows us further to examine a sociolinguistic context as a site of subjects, of individuals who are situated in diverse contexts amongst other participating individuals, where the social contexts themselves are both products of historical events and are sites of the further generation and reproduction of (language) ideological stances. The ethnographic fieldwork presented in this research is complemented by semi-structured interviews and content analysis of various media (press statements, social media activity, pamphlets, newsletters etc.); content analyses of my dataset and semi-structured interviews are more than just a general qualitative reading of these texts, but a "systematic exploration" of the content (Krippendorff 2004: 16-17), identifying how argumentative stances are exhibited in relation to one another, and how ideological orientations are presented across different sites of metadiscourse.

As is repeatedly demonstrated over the course of all three papers in this thesis, my analytical focus is on the linguistic subject—the user of language—as a stakeholder in ideological discourse (Errington 2003). "Individuals rely on metalinguistic strategies to clarify what they mean" (Bridges 2019: 39-40), and in turn, language ideology becomes "locally and historically" framed within linguistic behaviour and other cultural practices (Gal & Irvine 2019: 2). Our use of language, and our statements about language, are inherent "positioned and partial visions of the world" (ibid.), and this theoretical perspective enables us to demonstrate how language practices are associated with the meaning-making networks that exist within varying social contexts. The reader may note that this perspective is related to the concept of *indexicality*, where language-use is clearly not just about communicating propositions, but also "[evokes] a social or cultural frame" (Ljosland 2014: 403). Language-use, including statements about language, bears specific meanings and is embedded in ever-evolving value systems. Consequently, my analytical approach does not examine language as an external system where speakers are not aware of the implications of their language-use. The relationship between metapragmatics and indexicality depends on the principle that "the ways speakers use language can ascribe certain social roles upon them", indicating perceived categories of membership or ideological stances in social context (Bridges 2019: 45).

1.3. Data collection (September 2019-March 2020)

As explained, this project collects, analyses, and presents linguistic ethnographic data alongside semi-structured interviews and content analyses of other multimodal media including data from social media and the printed press. These data are examined through metapragmatic analysis, and each of

the three studies is a presentation of an evaluated case-study of language activism in Catalonia, Norway, or Scotland.

Having used the 2018-19 academic year to undertake reading and develop a schedule and framework for interviews and observational research, data collection for this project as a whole commenced in September 2019 and ended abruptly in March 2020. Data sourced from my 2018 MScR dissertation is also cited in the Nynorsk paper, although newer data in the form of semi-structured interviews in 2019 and citations from the press are examples of the further research done to build on and consolidate my Norwegian research trajectory until now. Therefore, all three papers in this thesis are written on the basis of a multimodal, although mostly text-based, qualitative set of data consisting of handwritten jottings, written-up fieldnotes, photographs, digital screenshots, transcripts, and corresponding translations of twelve semi-structured interviews.

At the core of this linguistic ethnographic fieldwork are handwritten jottings which are an attempt to make a record of various interactions and statements within an interactional setting, in addition to making any notes or comments that the researcher believes are relevant or give further detail to a specific interaction (Papen 2020). Jottings are, at their most basic form, unstructured and can be written in multiple ways, as well as by hand, digitally, or a mix of the two approaches. I opted for doing most of my handwritten jottings in the same ring bound A5 notebook, making occasional use of different coloured inks either to separate individual sessions of an event or to specifically highlight an interaction or statement (see Figure 1).

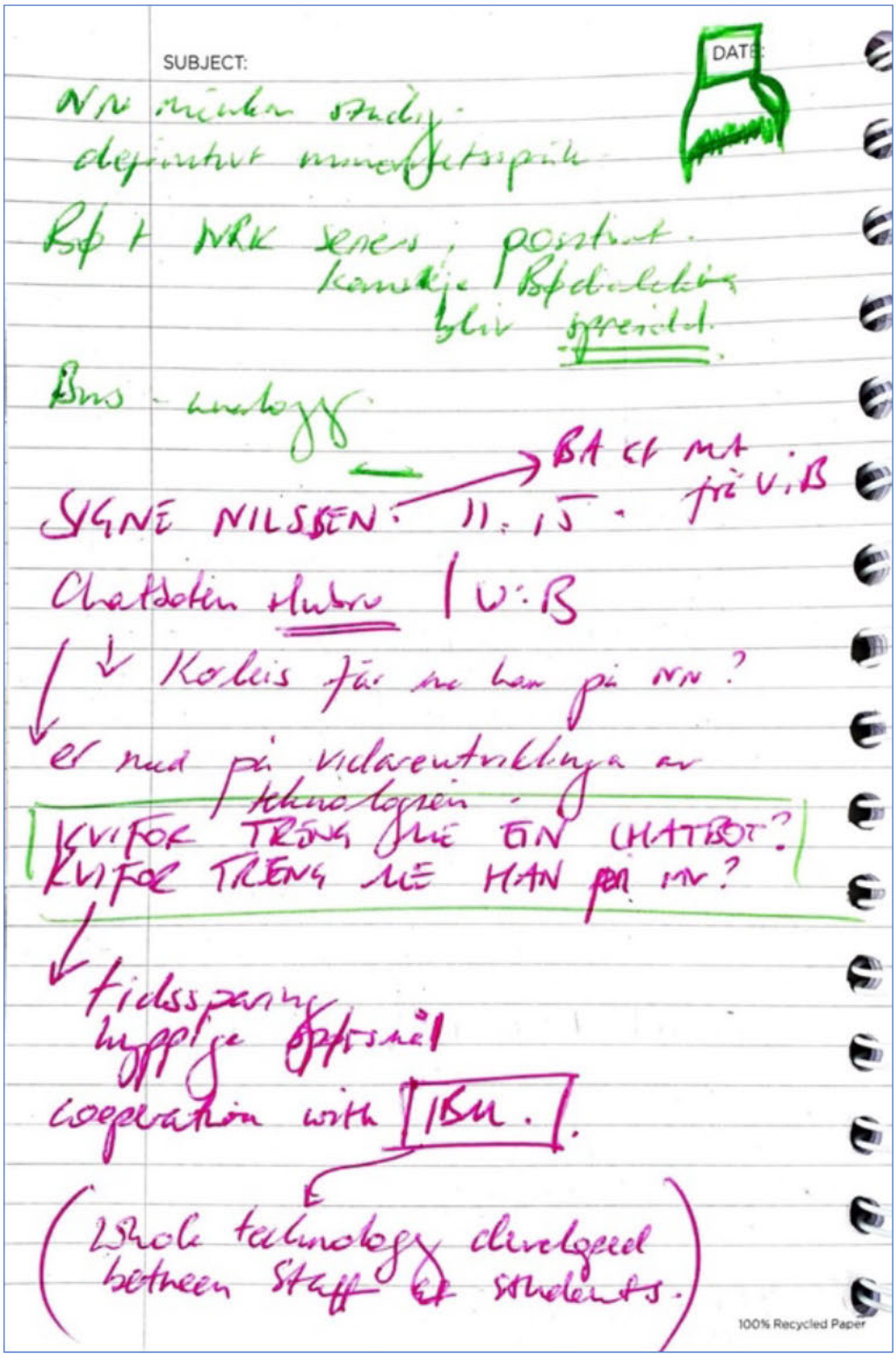

Figure 1:

Example of a page of fieldnote jottings, taken in September 2019 in Oslo.

Other jottings were written on pre-printed A4 sheets on a clipboard which allowed me to fill in sections on the sheets section by section whilst following along with an organised schedule—this method was used to collect data specifically for the 2020 *Scots@ed* event. At times the jottings do not follow in any chronological order, and comments and sketched-out diagrams may follow around the margins of the page in addition to the use of arrows or other useful symbols (see Figure 2).

Figure 2:

Example of jottings taken from 2020 Scots@ed event in Edinburgh.

As a subjective ethnographic source, this type of material often only makes clear sense to the researcher in as far as they have to retrospectively reinterpret what was written down at the time when looking back at this form of raw notes—to this extent, jottings are a way in which a researcher's memory can be prompted with various quotes or observations, and a broader description of what was observed at the time in relation to other events and observations can be drawn out by reflecting on the handwritten data-set as a whole. Looking back at previous jottings also proved useful before going into semi-structured interviews, generating other questions (see Figure 3).

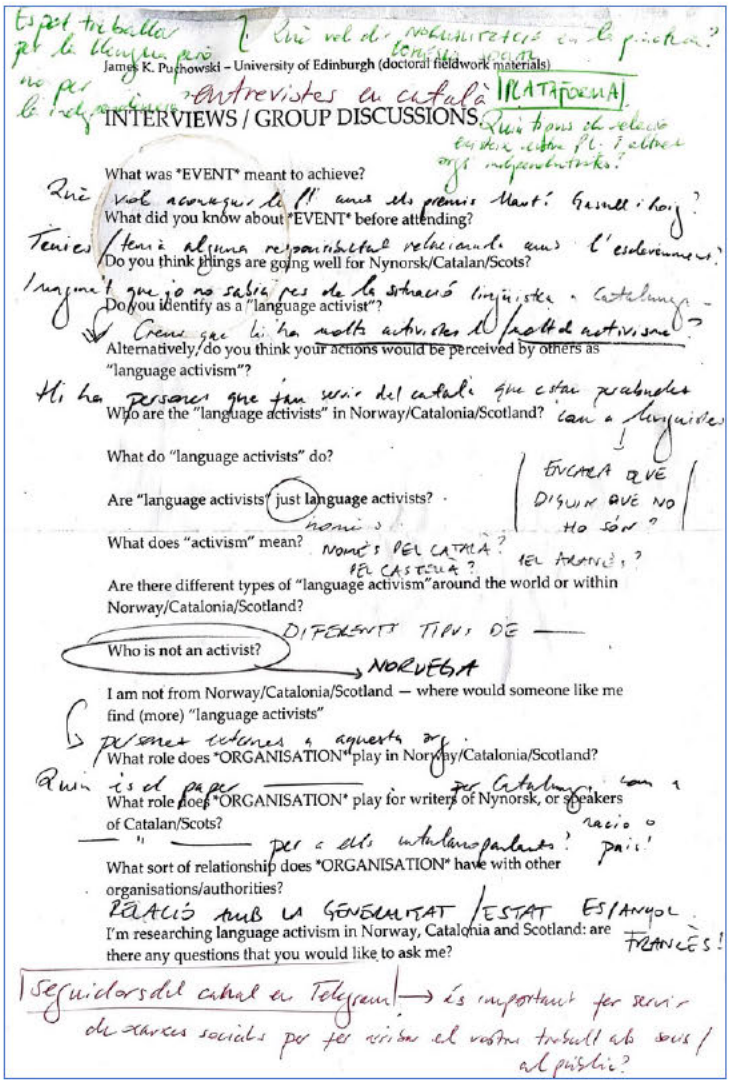

Figure 3:

Annotated (and coffee-stained) question sheet for Catalan interviews in February 2020

Fieldnotes themselves are the more formalised and structured form of accounts which are based on jottings and are also able to bring in other data; the use of diagrams, photographs or digital screenshots may be used as illustration throughout a set of fieldnotes. Not all jottings were formally written up as fieldnotes, as the limited focus for each of the papers as and when they were written did not necessitate it. Where a thorough account of a specific event was required, writing up fieldnotes as a chronological commentary of events was useful in both the Catalan and Scots papers, as both feature first-hand reports of public events, including the *Premis Martí Gasull i Roig* in Barcelona, the *No em canviïs la llengua* event several days later, and the 2020 *Scots@ed* event.

1.3.1. Coronavirus pandemic: ending data collection early

By the start of March 2020, all three research sites were represented to varying degrees across my ethnographic jottings and interview recordings, although the original research plan had envisaged further interviews and travel over the summer.[6] With travel restrictions enforced due to the rapid spread of the Coronavirus globally, and decisions by university authorities to suspend field research for staff and students, I had to end data collection much earlier than was suitable for the original design of the project. As explained prior, the proposal submitted for this thesis intended for a comparative ethnography answering various research questions in order to draft a theoretical framework for language activism, and with limited ethnographic research in Catalonia (only lasting one week of travel to Barcelona) and few insights from the Scots case (comprising the 2019 *Scots Language Awards* being involved in the

[6] A summarised overview of the data collected until March 2020, including a timeline of ethnographic observations, can be found in the Appendices (6.2).

organisation of the 2020 *Scots@ed* symposium), it was no longer sustainable for this doctorate to present fully comparative observations alongside my more substantive ethnographic work in Norway.

Whilst it would have been possible to continue fieldwork virtually via technologies that had gained considerable popularity during so-called "lockdowns", such as video conferencing software, and whereas it may have been advantageous to even restart the project by examining language activism with non-ethnographic methods which did not necessitate the use of interviews or real-time in-person observations (for example, a study of language activism via social media, as already mentioned), I had decided that doing either would not be fully compatible specifically with the contextual quality of the Nynorsk data that had been collected over several years until this point; in other words, the nature of my research until this point was not immediately "amenable to a shift to ethnography in virtual spaces" amongst other factors (Kim et al. 2021: 3). The novel occurrence of a global pandemic that fundamentally changed the world of work, education, and leisure also affected the daily operations of the organisations I had wanted to investigate further, such as *Plataforma per la llengua* and the *Scots Leid Associe*: both organisations had transitioned to virtual events at various points between 2020 and 2021. I was minded instead to use what data had been gathered until this point—which was by no means nothing, consisting of nearly eight hours of interview recordings and over 130 pages of handwritten jottings—and orient my papers around themes specific to each case-study instead of performing a comparative analysis across all three.

Changing circumstances did also mean that this project was no longer operating under a specific, overarching research question. Consequently, each paper has approached the topic of language activism first and foremost through an organic description of themes that were identified in every case-

study, and this thesis' introduction and the subsequent conclusions attempt to draw together an open-ended theoretical discussion about the various insights that have emerged from each site, and collectively form a theoretical commentary on language activism as an area of study in sociolinguistics.

As is exemplified by this thesis and knowing how other colleagues have had to work within these disrupting circumstances, I do not doubt that other doctoral candidates around the world and across various disciplines will also need to account in their writing for how the circumstances of 2020 have affected their original research plans. In as much as it has become even more important to talk about positionality in contemporary ethnographic work (see Section 1.4), I am equally fine with being transparent about my own circumstances as a researcher with a life-long mental health diagnosis; I am comfortable with disclosing that I took health leave for three months over the summer of 2020 due to the exacerbating circumstances of lockdowns and isolation at home in Edinburgh, deciding to spend time away with my family in High Wycombe. At this point I had not yet started with the transcription of my semi-structured interviews, yet I was fortunate to receive financial support from my funding body which was put towards the transcription of all twelve interviews in their original languages by professional transcribers. I was able to use some of my time away to look through transcripts, make any necessary corrections, and translate the Norwegian interviews into Nynorsk, as they had been delivered to me in Bokmål; I will admit that this was an oddly pleasurable experience, despite the many hours it also took to proof-read afterwards.

Towards the end of my time away, I had begun some work on drafting the first article of this thesis, as the organisers of a conference I had presented at in 2019 at the University of Stockholm offered me and several others the opportunity to publish research findings in the *Journal of Postcolonial Linguistics* in a special peer-reviewed issue in 2022. The reader will note that

this paper centres on my very brief research period in Catalonia, and to present *ethnographic* research that stems from only a week of observations feels perhaps bizarre, given that ethnographic research is usually long-term endeavour (cf. Pink & Morgan 2013). However, given the unique opportunity to publish and build on the rich variety of data in both my interview transcripts and notes that I was able to comb across during my time away is perhaps illustrative of how the turn taken in my project design quickly became a strategy that has helped reorient this thesis in a different direction.

1.3.2. Documents and photography

During my pre-pandemic fieldwork, I was able to add self-published documents from Scots and Catalan organisations, such as flyers, schedules and promotional materials to my already existing *Noregs Mållag/Norsk Målungdom* collection; these documents were also available digitally, but when available as physical copies I found it useful to take examples, which also proved conducive to my analytical approach where I would use post-it notes or highlighters when doing rudimentary coding of metalanguage (see Figure 4).

Figure 4:

Examples of pamphlets and badges produced by Noregs Mållag

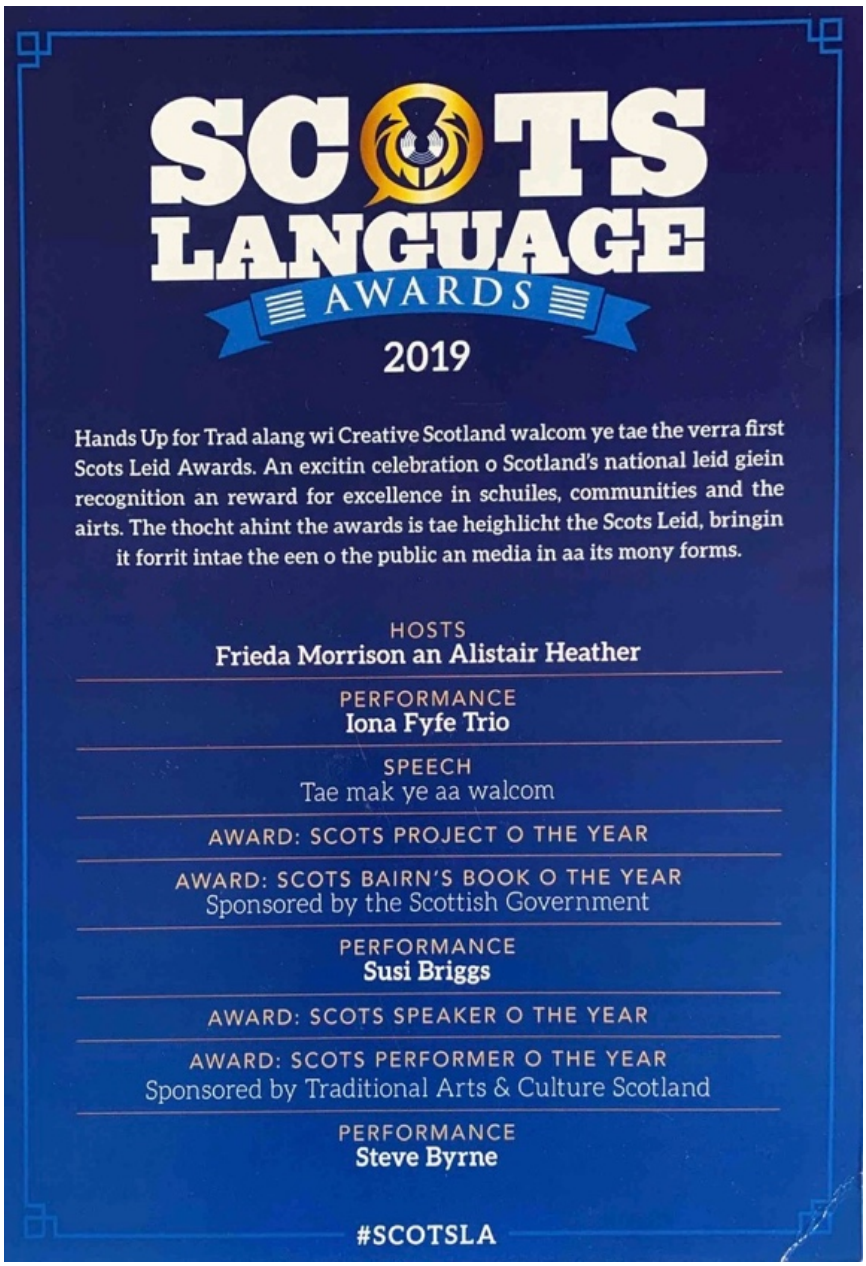

Figure 5:

Programme from the 2019 Scots Language Awards

As the papers demonstrate, only a handful of snippets of different documents are brought up as examples where it was appropriate to use them as such, thus most collected documents were not used for presentation in this doctoral thesis and should instead be useful in future research. As regards photography of subjects, I only used my camera phone to take pictures at

events that were open to the public such as the *Premis Martí Gasull i Roig* in Barcelona or the *Scots Language Awards* in Glasgow (see Figures 5 and 6).

Figure 6:

La Llibreria Catalana wins the 2020 Premi Martí Gasull i Roig

I also took other photos where subjects were not present, although the use of photography applies mostly to the Catalan and Nynorsk cases due to the extent of my fieldwork up to the point where it had to stop. For the most part, the use of photography is not a major factor in this doctoral research, although what photographs I do have are mementos of the time I had to undertake fieldwork and are valuable illustrations of my investigations prior to the events of 2020 (see Figure 7).

Figure 7:

Placards placed at the offices of Plataforma per la llengua catalana in Barcelona

1.3.3. Use of social media

In the Catalan and Nynorsk papers, social media are used specifically as contextual explainers or additional illustrations of metalanguage, rather than being a discreet site of fieldwork. Examining social media did not become an explicit aim of my work; I have focused primarily on interviews and jottings from observational settings.

Indeed, it could have been possible to gather data intentionally from social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, and likely would have been a fruitful exercise too; various contemporary studies do examine language-use in these sites, and photos and microblogging are novel and dynamic multimodal sites rich in examples of situated discourse (for example Dynel 2020). Furthermore, social media has offered various language communities the opportunity to develop and evolve new communities of

practice, especially where a language variety is minoritised or not as visible in traditional media, "outside the control" of other authorities and power structures (Hassanpour 2012: 68, see also Selvi 2022), altogether illustrative of "bottom-up resistance" in the contemporary age (Nandi 2017: 41).

1.3.4. Interviews, transcripts, and translations

The principle aim of using interviews for this project was to supplement my ethnographic observations (McCarty 2015). Semi-structured interviews were used as non-exhaustive attempts to discuss events attended prior to the end of my fieldwork with interested participants who volunteered their time and were willing to take part. One underlying principle in the use of interviews in qualitative research is to use this as data towards understanding and analysing other observational fieldwork; to this end, these interviews are "[materials] which [provide] good opportunities for interpretation and analysis" (Fägerborg 2011: 85). It is important to stress that interviews of the kind used in my research are necessarily open-ended and are able to diverge from any set list of questions that the interviewer may originally set out to follow.[7] It is equally important to state that interviews in themselves are unlikely to be enough as a comprehensive data set when examining wider phenomena, in as far as they only illustrate limited and situated perspectives on a given topic; interview work such as this is more-so part of how the researcher tries to triangulate of data collection, rather than engage in a standalone exercise where the number of possible individuals who could be interviewed is often without limit, and the conversations that could be held could go on for as long as either party is willing to sit down (ibid.: 93) These factors are still a relative

[7] A list of possible questions taken into the semi-structured interviews can be found in the Appendices (6.3)

strength; I had intended to use interviews to initially discuss participants' perspective on an event both of us had attended or of which they involved in the organisation, which would then lead into a broader discussion about activist organisations, their experiences with Catalan, Nynorsk or Scots, and their conceptualisation of language activism.

Interview transcripts are consequently snapshots of explicit ideological statements and are the result of a "joint production" between the interviewer and participant (Schilling 2013: 108). Both parties engage in a site of metadiscourse which in turn complements other "systematic participant observation data" (Gilmore 2011: 125). As I resort primarily to ethnographic observations and jottings recorded throughout, interviews are only an additional part of my fieldwork rather than the sole focus of my analysis; focus instead is on observational sites, where interviews are "situated discursive practices" that draw on themes that provide other subjective perspectives on a given phenomenon, and therefore further cultural knowledge and examples of metalanguage (Pritzker & Perrino 2022: 137).

Interviews were undertaken in Catalan, Norwegian and English, with the raw transcriptions being in Catalan, Nynorsk, and English (with Scots lexis included where appropriate); as this is not a project engaging in conversation analysis, transcripts are not significantly detailed, only accounting for laughter or significant pauses.

The reader will note that the Catalan paper includes snippets from interview transcripts that are not accompanied by their original Catalan source text, being instead just English translations. This was done in order to meet the word-limit for the *Journal of Postcolonial Linguistics*. In the Nynorsk paper, all interview sections include both the original lines in Norwegian followed by my English translation. My Scots interviews were not used for my Scots paper, where I focus solely on the proceedings of the 2020 *Scots@ed* event.

1.4. Ethics and positionality

The papers presented in this thesis each examine a site of a minority language discourse, and there are various concerns to account for due to the sensitivity of observational research in close-contact settings, which do not just implicate the researcher, but also those being observed who through their participation "run the risk of becoming objects of scientific control" (Zienkowski 2016: 396). The subjects involved in my research are observed in highly dynamic and fluctuating contexts, and I have triangulated this with multimethod data collection via semi-structures and content analysis (Fägerborg 2011).

This is my own research and is not part of any other scheme or funded project. Besides my doctoral stipend and other awarded funding for living costs and tuition fees, neither I nor any of my participants were in receipt of funds for either writing up or participating as subjects in this project. My doctoral stipend was awarded by the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland, and I was also in receipt of mobility funding from the Norwegian Government to spend my last three months at the University of Oslo, on the grounds that a considerable portion of my work is centred on past Norwegian fieldwork, and resources pertaining to Norwegian Nynorsk are accessible at libraries and research institutions across Oslo.

As ethnographic fieldwork that also undertakes recorded interviews, ethical approval was required from the Linguistics and English Language Research Ethics Committee at the University of Edinburgh. Where informed participation was required—for example, when recording an interview—all participants were issued with information sheets and consent forms to sign (see Appendices). Interview participants were allowed to keep the information sheets if they so wished, which contained information about their right to withdraw at any time before the submission of this thesis. These documents were also translated into Catalan and Norwegian alongside the main English

text for the Catalan and Norwegian interviews, and these translations were proof-read by Catalan- and Norwegian-speaking staff at the University of Edinburgh. Other sites of observation were events that were open to the public, and whilst informed consent was not strictly needed prior to attending due to the open nature of these sites, I decided to send information sheets in postal letters to the various organisations whose events I had planned to attend over the course of my doctoral research period. These letters contained information about the research project, and how observational jottings would be used, including relevant research questions. Contact information was also provided in the event that organisation representatives wished to ask questions; indeed, at one point, I received both e-mails and phone calls from the international office of *Plataforma per la llengua catalana*, who themselves were already familiar with researchers showing an interest in their organisation.[8] Naturally, not all of these organisations were visited in the end, not least due to the constraints of the Coronavirus pandemic. The following organisations were contacted in 2018:

Noregs Mållag (Norway)
Norsk Målungdom (Norway)
Òmnium Cultural (Catalonia)
Plataforma per la llengua catalana (Catalonia)
Scots Language Centre (Scotland)
Scots Leid Associe (Scotland)

[8] University of Cambridge doctoral candidate Javier Moreno-Rivero was also in Barcelona during the same week of 2020, visiting the organisation's premises at the same time as me on occasion; his forthcoming thesis also includes an examination of the operations of *Plataforma per la llengua catalana*.

The planning of semi-structured interviews was to be oriented around events scheduled and organised either by these organisations or in collaboration with them between September 2019 and August 2022; after attending a public event such as the *Scots Language Awards,* volunteering interview participants would be sought out either during the event or afterwards after being contacted. Interviews were to take place at a time and date that suited the participant and would usually be with an individual within an organisation with a specific role as a full-time employee or someone elected to a specific position. These interviews were to be held one-on-one rather than as group panels or focus sessions. By virtue of the organisations having determined roles and responsibilities, I had decided in my ethics approval application that participants' full anonymity may prove difficult to maintain due to the nature of their work. Nevertheless, each interview consent form gave participants the option to maintain full anonymity without having their transcripts associated with their name and role. However, unless marked otherwise, the form stipulated that transcripts would not anonymise the name of the participant. At the time of submission, no participant has requested to withdraw from the research presented in this thesis, nor to have their name redacted from any of the interview transcripts.

An increasingly critical part in studies of this nature, it is also important to discuss my own position within the sites I have observed, and how my conduct and gaze have adapted to various research contexts and circumstances over the course of my doctoral research. Sociolinguists are people too, and the imagined divide between the academic expert and the observed lay person is something that must be considered when reflecting over how research is performed and scientific knowledge is then generated. In research such as this, people become easily objectified without also considering how this objectification is ultimately sketched out by another

living person: the researcher themselves. Naturally, “our own interpretations [should be] subject to analysis as well” (Rymes & Leone 2014: 32). Discourses that language-users participate within, especially within the context of language activism (embedded within wider social action and cultural narratives) develop out of complex processes of attitudinal enregisterment (Williams 2019: 308). In other words, social actors’ statements do not represent one static perspective, and neither do social actors merely parrot what others say. Social actors, and researchers included, represent “complex repertoires of semiotic resources”, in the same way that talk about individuals—about subjects—is a conscious act of broadcasting a personally negotiated attitudinal view in tandem with the themes we discover in the talk of others (ibid.). Whilst other linguists might be able to treat individual structural patterns as artefacts or objects in their own right, direct participatory involvement in sites of cultural practices is not the same style of work. By engaging in academic research on social action, researchers ought to be aware of their role as people with the ability to act upon impulse, bias, and political sympathies; these need accounted for:

> We invest our selves emotionally in particular subject positions and projects because these positions and projects provide social value(s) as well as various forms of capital for the self. […]. Selves are never mere binary entities even though some ideological discourses suggest exactly this. (Zienkowski 2016: 268)

One way to account for these is to engage in exercises such as autoethnographic reflection. I am now 27, I am a cisgender man, and I am white with northern European ancestry and citizenship from both the UK and Poland; however, due to my grandfather not passing down the Polish language

to his own family after settling in England in the post-war years, British English is my only family language, and I was raised for most of my childhood in High Wycombe, in a majority English-speaking community. Whilst I did complete French and German GCSEs and A-levels at an all-boys state grammar school, I had never considered that I had learned a language fully until I moved to Edinburgh in 2013 to start a degree in Norwegian.

First, my doctoral case-studies are representative of both my own linguistic background and the connections I have been able to develop as someone in their early twenties and involved in party politics at home now in Scotland. Whilst I completed a degree in Scandinavian Studies and Linguistics in 2017, specialising in Norwegian, I am also a competent speaker of Catalan, having taken courses in this language in my first year of undergraduate study. My status as a Catalan speaker is also rather unusual, as I do not speak Castilian Spanish to the same level and have never studied it formally (bar one year of basic classes in my first year of high school).

Although I took courses in Catalan out of general curiosity in 2013, when in Catalonia I make active attempts to use Catalan in everyday transactions and avoid using English and Castilian, practising where I can despite my appearance as someone from outside the Mediterranean. My continued use of Catalan has been spurred on due to various political activities associated with the independence movement in Scotland, and my participation in events advocating the self-determination of the people of Catalonia. In October 2017, I was one of several international visitors who were invited by the devolved government of Catalonia (*Generalitat de Catalunya*) to observe its 1 October independence referendum—declared illegal and illegitimate by the Spanish state—and in the capacity as an interpreter for a group of Scottish politicians during and in the events prior, I like many others became witness to scenes of unfathomable police brutality,

smashed glass windows and the blood of voters on the floor outside the polling station in Sant Julià de Ramis, and having members of the public come up to me in Girona later that day to show me the bruises received due to the impact of rubber batons when attempting to prevent the confiscation of ballot boxes; these experiences have, if anything, strengthened my own personal sympathy with people who advocate for the people of Catalonia to determine who governs them and where political sovereignty should lie.

As Norwegian is a much smaller language in terms of its number of speakers, with an even smaller Nynorsk-using population, alongside my political sympathies is my wish to see the Catalan language be "normalised" (see discussion of *normalització* in Catalan paper) where Catalan speakers do not have to see the language as subsidiary to Castilian, or as a language that has no utility or status beyond the sub-national limits of Catalonia, the Valencian Country, and the Balearic Islands—where Catalan is used the most. Granted, Andorra (a mountainous microstate stuck in-between Spain and France) is the only country in Europe that uses Catalan at an official, state-wide level, yet their lack of European Union membership (which would otherwise make Catalan an official language of the EU by default), and comparatively miniscule size would seem to prevent increased visibility of Catalan at any international level. Consequently, there is considerable overlap between the self-determination movement in Catalonia and pro-Catalan language advocacy, and it is perhaps natural that I am in favour of both of these as they are, to a certain extent, two sides of the same coin; this theme came up in all three of my Catalan language interviews, although I do not bring this up explicitly in my Catalan paper (further discussion is in Cetrà 2019 and Byrne 2020).

At the same time, my experiences with Norwegian, and more specifically making the switch from Bokmål to Nynorsk during my

undergraduate exchange year in Oslo, have influenced my most inner feelings about what we mean by the term "language" and how language attitudes are legitimised in the public sphere. Not only has this been relevant in terms of my observations and the notes taken in the field, but also in how I have approached transcription and translation of data. My Norwegian participants in particular all speak various dialects, as is the norm, although what they say is represented in the same form of Nynorsk where I have chosen to be consistent with my choice of infinitive endings, amongst other stylistic features. It would have been possible to transcribe the interviews with regard to participants' dialects (replacing <korleis> with Gunnhild Skjold's Tromsø-dialect equivalent of <korsn/korsen>, or writing <i> instead of <eg> when transcribing Anna Rekdal's dialect from Møre og Romsdal), although what was critical when finishing the transcriptions was not so much the linguistic features of their speech, but rather the actual content of what they said; a similar quandary concerning positionality, reflexivity and approaches to transcription of polynomic language varieties was also taken up in Diana Camps' doctorate on Limburgish (see 2018: 99).

Whereas the Catalan data did not require the same level of treatment, my conscious effort to translate the outsourced transcripts to from Bokmål to Nynorsk was also important for me in terms of the voice I wanted to have in my writing, although doing so was clearly unnecessary; my participants were speaking Norwegian with me, and both Bokmål and Nynorsk are valid forms of written Norwegian, although importantly, Nynorsk is *my* form of Norwegian, and the form of Norwegian used by many of my close friends in Norway. It would feel inauthentic to write out tracts of Norwegian conversation in my own doctorate if it were not in Nynorsk. However, my Scots work is quite contrastive in comparison to my Nynorsk and Catalan work. The close intelligibility between the vernacular speech varieties of

Scotland (be it Broad Scots or closer to a variety of Scottish Standard English) and my own English, as well as my own background as someone born and raised in England, creates something of a mental block when it comes to my own use of Scots as a language in its own right. The Scottish sites I have documented are predominantly focused on my role as a foreign-born observer, at least, more than as a direct participant. That being said, halfway through this doctorate, I was elected to the committee of the recently established *Oor Vyce* organisation which is actively working alongside Scottish politicians and other civil society leaders to establish a Scots language board and put forward draft legislation for the Scots language akin to what is currently in place for Scottish Gaelic; other members of the committee also include foreign-born individuals, as well as linguists and other academics. However, unlike Norwegian and Catalan, Scots is not a language I have studied at any formal level, and whilst I have made occasional attempts to write in Scots on social media, it is not a language that I would argue I have within my own personal linguistic repertoire; I could say the same for Swedish, Danish and Castilian in as far as they are accessible to me, but not languages I profess actual competence in.

Likewise, my access to the case-studies presented in these papers is the result of the sort of connections I have been able to build over time. It is by virtue of being at a Scottish university in the national capital, with active membership of a political party and being an office bearer in its executive, that I do not just have access on social media and in person to people within Scots activist circles, but also that I have been able to highlight my background in Norwegian, which has often piqued the interest of Scots advocates due to the sociolinguistic and historical linguistic parallels between Scots and the

Scandinavian languages (see Ljosland 2021).[9] Had I not been active in the 2014 Yes campaign, and were I not a member of a party that supports the political self-determination of both Scotland and Catalonia, it may have been harder to seek out a conversation with people like English-born Matthew Tree; before my recorded interview with him on Catalan activism even began, he appeared especially interested in wanting to speak about politics back in Scotland and my own upbringing in England. My connection with Catalan politics continues even to this day, as I was invited along to an event with *Assemblea Nacional Catalana* only in April this year, attending a pro-independence rally in Vic and later tagging along with the organisation's president to meet with a retired teacher who was on a hunger strike in protest against the Spanish state's imposition of a 25% requirement on Castilian use in Catalan public schools; the press also remarked on my status as a doctoral candidate in linguistics in a report of the visit.[10]

My background at times does also act as a hindrance: it is much harder to use Catalan as a foreigner, not least due to the complex dynamics of Catalan-Castilian diglossia in Catalonia (see Alarcón & Garzón 2013), but also due to my appearance as someone from northern Europe—my "phenotype", to paraphrase Matthew Tree's words in the Catalan article—in addition to my Polish name. The opposite is so in Norway, where unless I insist on using English, I can always use Norwegian. My role as part-time Lecturer in Norwegian at University College London also adds aspects of legitimacy and expertise to my speakership, as well as my specialism and use of Nynorsk. In the case of Scots, I have consistently used English in my research there but often find myself wondering how my own use of my south-eastern English

[9] At the time of writing, I am the elected co-convenor of the Council of the Scottish Green Party, serving a term of two years (2021-23).
[10] https://www.larepublica.cat/noticies/politica/la-vaga-de-fam-de-jaume-sastre-acull-elisenda-paluzie-i-altres-carrecs-internacionals-de-lanc/ (accessed 26 July 2022)

accent impacts the willingness of others in a given space to use their Scots. My interview with Billy Kay is case-in-point: whilst the consent forms he signed indicated that Scots could be used in the recording, our conversation was in standard English.

Regardless, each of the case-studies presented as article manuscripts over the next three chapters will illustrate that I have been able to build both rapport and access with various social actors in order to gather data necessary to produce doctoral research in these three individual contexts, despite the circumstances that effectively changed this project into something different from its original design. However, the quality of this data and the quantity of data I have been able to extract from each field-site will differ since I have entered each one with a different approach, hindered or helped by either my academic background, ethnicity, linguistic competence, or political activity. To that end, it is worth repeating and underscoring that each study can be read as a standalone piece, that I have not entered the field for each paper with the same level and quality of access and rapport; each study has been approached with various social inroads I have gathered over time, each being slightly different in quality and scope.

The papers that follow are the result of a disrupted research journey, and thus reassemble the objectives and focus of the original research project towards a broader discussion of language activism with a focus on both the metadiscourses that inform it, and the individuals who are present across the field; not the route I intended to follow, but a route to follow, nonetheless. They are a product of subjective observations within a very short period, and long conversations with an incomplete set of individuals—I would have gladly conducted more interviews and arranged further trips for observational research, *but alas*—however, as with all ethnographic work, what I have written builds on past work and may well inspire whatever may come next.

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2. No em canviïs la llengua![11]

Journal of Postcolonial Linguistics, 6(2022), 160-185 [12]

Abstract: Through top-down language planning and bottom-up advocacy, the Catalan language has often been presented as a language of societal cohesion in today's multiethnic and multilingual Catalonia. This article makes informed observations of an *ad hoc* Catalan language activist collective — *No em canviïs la llengua*. *No em canviïs la llengua* points to experiences of "native-born" Catalan interlocutors "changing language" to Castilian with them, and in 2019 created an informal group to express ideological opposition to alleged linguistic discrimination. I interpret *No em canviïs la llengua* as a novel example of language activism which follows from the historical trajectory of Catalan language policy and the work of other more formally established language organisations in Catalonia. Through their casually organised platform of events and social media interactions, these activists employ familiar rhetoric to construct an ideological narrative about the Catalan language: a "language that unites us". I use highlights from semi-structured interviews and a brief observational study of a *No em canviïs la llengua* event in February 2020 to showcase how these activists utilise extant narratives about the Catalan language as a "tool of social cohesion". I use a metapragmatic analysis to highlight themes of social equality, Catalan speaker identity, and linguistic agency. My analysis supports a non-essentialist approach of language activism, expanding beyond explicit demonstrations of activism, formal organisations, or native in-group/indigenous identities. As examples of social action, participation in sociolinguistic debate and interventions in metadiscourse also represent activism as a form of linguistic citizenship.

Keywords: *language activism, Catalan, metalanguage, new speakers, linguistic citizenship*

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[11] https://iacpl.net/jopol/issues/jopol6/no-em-canviis-la-llengua/ - accessed 5 July 2022
[12] *Nota bene*: the citation style of this paper has not been changed from the published version.

2.1. Introduction: language activism in a non-native context

This article investigates the emergence of a novel case of Catalan language activism, characterised by "non-native" participation in sociolinguistic discourse. The notion of language activism as a domain for "non-natives" is surprising: language activism/advocacy is often portrayed in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology as action specific to an indigenous population (Makoni & Criss 2017), or an assertion of ethnic identity (Dołowy-Rybińska 2018). However, cultural affiliations can be discursively performed (Perez-Milans & Soto 2016; Zienkowski 2016), and language activism could be better interpreted fluidly as acts of participative "linguistic citizenship" (Stroud & Heugh 2014; De Korne forthcoming) – not explicitly what some "significant participants in language management" do (Spolsky 2009: 204). The implications of this stance give nuance to theoretical approaches to researching of speaker identities and linguistic narratives (Kymlicka 2001; Edwards 2006; Johnson & Ricento 2013).

This article presents an informed observation of a group called *No em canviïs la llengua* (don't change my language), an example of language activism related to Catalan "new speakers" (Pujolar & Puigdevall 2015; Pujolar 2020)[13]. These individuals are embedded in a multilingual context where use of the Catalan language has been "de-ethnicised" and no longer related to a "native" Catalan identity (Pujolar & Gonzàlez 2013). However, Catalan remains associated with "status and social promotion" (Alarcón & Garzón 2013: 95) and tropes of a middle-class identity (Philips 2004; Codó 2018). *No em canviïs la llengua* is an example of where some new speakers have become

[13] Both "new speaker" and "non-native" may be disputed by non-spoken language research, the theoretical adequacy of "nativeness" as a concept, and connotations of "new speaker" in a globalised world. I use these terms interchangeably and am conscious of the implications.

explicit advocates for the language. Their discourse encourages others to engage with the view that those who "change language" to Castilian are discouraging "participation" and "social cohesion", hindering the ideological objective of instituting Catalan as a "common language" in popular consciousness. Operating as a voluntary collective, this group uses social media and holds casual, infrequent public events. This contrasts with the language activism of professional linguistic and cultural organisations for Catalan speakers such as *Plataforma per la llengua catalana* and *Òmnium Cultural* (Deulonder Camins 2015; Marco Palau 2017).

The research objective of this article is to present initial observations of *No em canviïs la llengua* as an informal collective of activists characterised by their "non-native" identity. My data are drawn from a preliminary fieldwork visit to Barcelona in February 2020. Before presenting findings, I contextualise the sociolinguistic context of Catalonia, identify ideological themes in current language policy and other language activist groups, summarise the events surrounding my fieldwork, and explain my methods, positionality, and analytical framework.

2.2. Catalan: sociolinguistic context

Catalan is a Romance language with varying status in four countries (Vila 2013) – Andorra, Spain, France, and Italy (in Alguer, Sardinia). The number of Catalan users is estimated at roughly ten million (Joan i Marí 2002), with the majority of living in Spain – and most notably in the Autonomous Community of Catalonia, where 95% of the population understands the language, 73% report a speaking ability, and 35% claim it as their habitual language (Codó & Garrido 2010).

Catalan and Castilian are co-official languages in Catalonia, the Valencian Country (where the language is known as Valencian) and the

Balearic Islands. In recent history, Catalan-speaking Spain experienced immense political and demographic shift under the fascist dictatorship of Francisco Franco, whose language policies led to successive generations of other Spaniards – who had no prior knowledge of the Catalan language – settling in the more affluent Catalan-speaking regions of Spain in search of employment (Pradilla 2001). Later waves of migration would also comprise settlers from Latin America and former Spanish colonies (Trenchs Parera et al. 2014).

Considerable political reform has been undertaken since Franco's death in 1975, but Castilian remains the only official language of the state. All citizens of Spain are constitutionally obliged to "know" Castilian, even if it is not their first language.[14] The Catalan sociolinguistic context, however, is not a simple diglossia.[15] With global migration and the growing role of English in social life (Vila 2018), residents of Catalonia today experience living in a highly multilingual community, in a territory which is home to a dynamic population with varying levels of competency in Catalan, Castilian and other language varieties (Fleming & Ansaldo 2020; Atkinson 2018; Pujolar 2007).

Vernacular use of Catalan, however, remains low in areas where newcomers of different linguistic heritages continue to reside, where Castilian is often more familiar and cosmopolitan, constituting certain challenges for Catalan language planning (Trenchs Parera et al. 2014). There has been extensive language policy work in Catalonia (Corominas Piulats 2007; Woolard 2016), research on language acquisition and youth multilingualism (Alarcón & Garzón 2013), and studies on the relationship between language,

[14] Article 3.1., Spanish Constitution of 1978: "El castellano es la lengua española oficial del Estado. Todos los españoles tienen el deber de conocerla y el derecho a usarla".
[15] The sociolinguistic situation is different for Occitan speakers in Aran, an autonomous region in north-western Catalonia where Aranese Occitan is also co-official (see Suils & Huguet 2001).

nation, and cultural identity (Woolard & Frekko 2013). Castilian had been previously instituted as the primary language of public services, state education and commerce across Spain. Yet, in the wake of Spanish political reform, a growing movement of Catalanist political parties and Catalan language advocates have worked to politically institute the Catalan language as the "common language" of the Catalan community (Urla 2013; Dowling 2018).

2.2.1. Catalan as a "common language": legislation and normalisation

Pessimism about the condition of the Catalan due to its diminished role under Franco triggered counter-cultural efforts to reverse further language shift to Castilian (Fleming & Ansaldo 2020). Since the early 1980s, the aim to "normalise" the Catalan language (*normalització*) has been an objective and priority for successive administrations of the devolved government of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya), with a commitment to recovering "normal use of Catalan" (Àngel Pradilla 2015: 47). This has meant in principle creating new generations of Castilian-Catalan bilinguals to ensure, at the very least, passive knowledge of both languages. At the level of government, there have been two fundamental acts of legislation. The first passed in 1983 (Llei 7/1983 – *Llei de Normalització Lingüística a Catalunya*) and the second in 1998 (Llei 1/1998 – *Llei de Política Lingüística*). Both aim to ensure Catalan becoming the primary language of education and public communications. Catalan was to be instituted as the language of societal cohesion in modern Catalonia (Àngel Pradilla 2015; Ramallo 2018).

Alongside support for Catalan in the media and public signage, the principles of *normalització* are often reflected in the decision not to segregate pupils at school by preferred or home language: all public schooling is in Catalan. Some political opponents to *normalització* have interpreted Catalan

language policy as one that indoctrinates newer generations to feel more Catalan than Spanish (Woolard & Frekko 2013; Cetrà 2019), arguing that there is discrimination against Castilian speakers in Catalonia who want to access state schooling in Castilian as a constitutional right. Attempts to enshrine Catalan language immersion in the Catalan Statute of Autonomy have been rebuffed by the Spanish Constitutional Court, alongside proposals that would have made it a requirement for residents of Catalonia to "know" Catalan (Àngel Pradilla 2015: 49). The Catalan language has no role or status outside territorial boundaries of Catalan-speaking regions, an issue extending just as much to the situation for Basque, Galician, or any other co-official language of other autonomous communities (Amorós Negre 2016).

Top-down language policy has been accompanied by non-governmental initiatives and campaigns, accompanied by language organisations in Catalonia which are rooted in counter-cultural and emancipatory efforts that work to construct Catalonia as a "community of conscience" (Àngel Pradilla 2015: 28) in an age of social and political reform. This has enabled widespread participation in debates about Catalan self-determination in relation to the language. Specifically, Catalan has itself become symbolic of a continued counter-cultural struggle.

2.2.2. Catalan as a "common language": advocacy and activism

Catalan language policy has instituted a Catalan language immersion system in state schools as a matter of "social cohesion" in a multilingual context (*Pla per la llengua i la cohesió social*; see Corona, Moore & Unamuno 2010). This is informed by a Catalanist view, inexorably tied to the symbolic nature of the Catalan language. Catalanist ideals reflect an ideology where the Catalan nation and language are essentialised concepts in the "re-creation of the nationalist ideal" (Fleming & Ansaldo 2020: 2; see also Byrne 2019a).

Catalanism and Catalan national sentiment have challenged centralised notions of Castilian Spanishness through the assertive use of the Catalan language (Dowling 2018). *Assemblea Nacional Catalana* (Catalan National Assembly) demanded further Catalan language rights (Caballer Albareda 2007), and smaller organisations such as *Crida* (Call) and *Grups de Defensa de la Llengua* (Groups in Defence of the Language) would engage in non-violent disruption – such as walking out of restaurants, *en masse*, when they did not provide menus in Catalan (Porquet Botey 2013). To react "against demagogic attempts to stop the process of linguistic normalisation that was already underway" (Marco Palau 2017: 37), work from the grassroots encouraged further demand for political action, legitimising the pressure-group role of several Catalan culture and language organisations.

Contemporary language activism is the domain of several groups. Since 1961, *Òmnium Cultural* has focused on the celebration of literature, cultural prizes, and more recently advocating Catalan independence (Deulonder Camins 2015; Joan & Mari 2019). However, the formation of a significant language activist organisation, *Plataforma per la llengua catalana* (Platform for the Catalan Language) brought together many smaller groups, lobbyists, student associations and unions with a narrower focus on language rather than broader Catalan cultural emancipation. Founded as *Col·lectiu Esbarzer* (Esbarzer Collective) in 1993, this group consisted initially of young activists who repeatedly and successfully lobbied government and state actors to live up to language policy obligations. An example of their earlier activities was ensuring metro ticket machines printed tickets in Catalan (Marco Palau 2017). However, the "sovereignty struggle" continues to be a thematic foundation for the present-day organisation and work of related activists (Dowling 2018: 50).

Linguistic practice need not necessarily code for an individual's feelings towards national identity or their position on the question of Catalan

independence (Byrne 2019a); other organisations such as *Súmate* have brought a Castilian-speaking voice to the Catalan independence movement (Byrne 2019b). However, in the wake of the Catalan independence referendum in 2017 and successive pro-independence parliamentary majorities, cultural and linguistic organisations have begun to speak more openly about how an independent Catalan state could promote and secure further domains for the Catalan language that have not yet been realised (Atkinson 2018). Those who relate their Catalan use to the broader struggle for independence may claim that language shift in favour of Castilian is underway and can only be halted if Catalan has "sole officiality", inferring political independence (ibid.: 765).

Many pro-Catalan independence groups use only Catalan in their campaigning (Byrne 2020), and some have promoted the view that the Catalan language is in danger (Fleming & Ansaldo 2020). The view of Catalan as a "minoritised" language has been underscored by academic conversation (Junyent 2020), with further debate about the efficacy of Catalan language policy within a Spanish political apparatus. Although social mobility in Catalonia is markedly dependent on knowledge of the Catalan language (Fleming & Ansaldo 2020), and Catalan is used in different aspects of everyday life in Catalonia, Catalan language advocacy continues to have ideological purchase in the political climate. This sets the scene for examining how an ideological narrative is constructed by language advocates when Catalan language and language use in Catalonia is discussed.

2.3. Castilian, code-switching, and ideological discourses

Catalan normalisation is associated with the construction of a civic and de-ethnicised Catalan linguistic identity for social mobility and assimilation (Ramallo 2018). "Ethnolinguistic boundary maintenance" through the Catalan

language is less evident (Pujolar & Gonzàlez 2013) and Catalan is a "resource" for constructing a cosmopolitan identity in a population with pronounced linguistic diversity (Woolard & Frekko 2013: 135). Despite this, Castilian is understood by almost all the population of Catalonia. Whilst Catalan has become a "passport to greater social participation" (Corona et al. 2010: 19) the language has "middle-class indexicalities" (Codó 2018: 14). Tropes of Catalan L1 speakers belonging to an ethnically Catalan, bourgeois, university-educated, managerial population are still pervasive (Puigdevall et al. 2018). Furthermore, the Catalan linguistic context can restrict social mobility for newcomers in a working-class context, especially where Castilian is a first or home language (Alarcón & Garzón 2013; Hornsby 2018).

Although many Castilian speakers are competent Catalan speakers, code-switching to Castilian with Catalan-speaking interlocutors is today a normative linguistic practice (Codó & Garrido 2010; Pujolar & Gonzàlez 2013). Such code-switching is often referred to as "changing language" (canviar-se la llengua; Junyent 2020; Pujolar 2020), interpreted as an accommodation strategy by speakers of Catalan with unfamiliar interlocutors. This behaviour occurs when "autochthonous Catalan speakers [are known to] speak Castilian to immigrants or persons judged to be foreign, even when the immigrants choose to speak Catalan to them" (Fleming & Ansaldo 2020: 102). This impacts how language use is interpreted as reinforcement the normativity of code-switching. "Changing language" can expose implicit beliefs that "people of colour do not speak Catalan, or even people who simply look different from me do not speak Catalan" (Corona & Block 2020: 784). This has repercussions for the construction of language ideologies, as code-switching and other linguistic behaviour can "feed into" circulating ideologies about (a) language (Verschueren 1998: 65). This informs the basis of my research context: the use of Castilian with Catalan-speaking interlocutors,

when it is explicitly referenced in discourse, exhibits a metapragmatic awareness of the implications of language use.

2.4. Don't change my language!: research context

During a session of the Catalan Parliament on 12 February 2020, the activities of a new group of Catalan language advocates were featured in a speech by Anna Erra, a pro-independence MP and mayor of the town of Vic.[16] *No em canviïs la llengua* is a group of Catalan speakers who were "born abroad" (*nascuts a fora*). These language advocates had been using social media platforms such as Twitter, and infrequently organised public events to demand that their Catalan-speaking interlocutors stop changing to Castilian when talking with non-native speakers. The group had been active since 2019 and invited both "native" and "non-native" Catalans alike to participate in events that underline this message. Erra praised their work, stating that "autochthonous Catalans" (*catalans autòctons*) need to "seduce new speakers" (*seduir nous parlants*) and "put an end to this very obvious habit […] where people always speak in Castilian with someone because their physical appearance or their name suggests they do not appear to be Catalan" (*posar fi al costum molt present en determinades zones del país de parlar sempre en castellà amb qualsevol persona que pel seu aspecte físic o pel seu nom no sembli catalana*). Erra's speech attracted considerable media attention as her words were considered to be ideologically charged by her Catalan nationalism. Additionally, some foreign-born individuals were suspicious of the group,

[16] https://www.elnacional.cat/ca/politica/anna-erra-demana-parlar-catala-nouvinguts-premsa-espanyola-embogeix_469533_102.html (accessed 26 August 2020).

which they found to be unrepresentative of the concerns of most non-native Catalan speakers.[17]

At one point, Spanish unionist political party *Ciudadanos* appealed in a letter to Spanish and European Union ombudsmen to investigate *No em canviïs la llengua* for its alleged "racist and xenophobic overtones"[18]. Rosario Palomino[19], a Peruvian-born Catalan political activist and co-ordinator of *No em canviïs la llengua*, responded in various tweets to explain the group and dismiss allegations that the initiative was being operated and funded by the government of Catalonia (see Figure 1).

Figure 8: *Example of response:* @rosariopalomi71*, 15 February 2020*[20]

[17] https://lareplica.es/no-em-canviis-la-llengua-racismo-realidad-o-normalizacion-linguistica/ (accessed 19 January 2020).
[18] "tintes racistas y xenófobos", https://www.lavanguardia.com/vida/20200213/473531979246/ciudadanos-lleva-al-defensor-del-pueblo-y-la-ue-la-campana-de-la-generalitat-no-me-cambies-la-lengua-por-racista.html (accessed 26 February 2020).
[19] At the time of writing, Palomino is the 32nd candidate on the Junts per Catalunya list for Barcelona at the upcoming 2021 Catalan Parliamentary election.
[20] "You are wrong, the 'No em canviïs la llengua' campaign is NOT a Catalan government initiative. I personally (a Catalan woman of Peruvian origin) started the campaign directed

The media attention around *No em canviïs la llengua* piqued my interest as a foreign-born Catalan speaker. As part of ongoing research, I was visiting Barcelona next week and had initially made plans to meet and talk with members of *Plataforma per la llengua catalana* to begin a case study of Catalan language activism. However, the attention given to this newer group was a unique opportunity to examine language activism in the context of a specific debate.

2.5. Positionality and methods

This study forms part of a research project on language activism in Catalonia, Norway, and Scotland. Following five years of ethnographic field trips in Norway with young Nynorsk activists, my ongoing research with Catalan and Scots activists are "extended case studies" (see Jerolmack & Khan 2018) which capitalise on the other languages I speak, my location and my political connections. As a smaller study, my Catalan work uses my unpublished postgraduate thesis as a methodological springboard (Puchowski 2018). Due to pandemic restrictions in 2020, my work in Catalonia was unfortunately cut short as I was not able to return to continue fieldwork. I have decided to present this data as a brief snapshot of developments in February 2020.

My research questions concern who language activists are, how activism is discursively performed, and how activists construct an ideological narrative. This work extends beyond variationist and interactionalist approaches, aiming instead at the observational study of the subjectivities of language use, and how discourse about language is embedded cultural history and functional

towards autochthonous Catalan-speakers (autochthon: a person who is born in the same place they reside)" // "@maitepagaza reports the Catalan Government's 'No em canviïs la llengua' campaign to the EU ombudsman: 'It's racist and xenophobic', violates the Constitution and the European Charter of Fundamental Rights and promotes discriminatory behaviour".

tradition (Hymes 1974). My style of sociolinguistic work examines linguistic variation and change where it is assigned social meaning. I take a "socially embedded" (Bell 2016), anthropological approach to sociolinguistic fieldwork, combining subjective narrative with a "thick description" (Richards 2005: 50) of interactions and events based on fieldnote jottings and transcribed semi-structured interviews.

Despite having not lived in Catalonia, I speak Catalan competently. Both Norwegian and Catalan were part of my undergraduate studies in 2014, and I have a passive understanding of Castilian. I volunteered as a Catalan-English interpreter in the period surrounding the 1 October 2017 Catalan independence referendum and have spoken at pro-Catalan self-determination protests in Scotland. I have made friends with Catalan independence campaigners, and have visited Catalonia as a tourist, on cultural exchanges, and to attend political rallies. I have been exposed to contemporary Catalan political discourse and am familiar with organisations and political groups that participate in Catalan sociopolitical debate. I should mention that I engaged with the emerging *No em canviïs la llengua* debate on Twitter, responding to an *El Mundo* article about Anna Erra's intervention:

> *"I am English, I am a Catalan speaker, and I don't know how to speak Castilian. I don't remember how many times someone has addressed or attended to me in Castilian because I am a foreigner in Catalonia. Yes, I have very white skin with light-coloured eyes, a guiri*[21]*, and I speak Catalan. We exist. Don't change my language."* [22]

[21] *guiri* – popular term used in Catalan and Castilian to refer to other non-Mediterranean/Anglo-Saxon European tourists, stereotypically sunburnt and/or drunk.
[22] https://twitter.com/kvisleis/status/1227668008077795328?s=20 @*kvisleis*, 12 February 2020

This tweet was retweeted 1,688 times, receiving 5,102 likes[23]. It shows personal bias and frustration; I speak southern British English as a first language and have a white, northern European appearance. Having made several visits to Catalonia since 2014, I have experienced being addressed in Castilian or English by Catalan speaking interlocutors. This contrasts with my experiences in Norway, where my appearance and origin rarely impacted my ability to use Norwegian.

I use ethnographies and observational studies as an approach to studying language activism, which is rooted in my own experiences as a participant in language activist organisations. During a year-long academic exchange in Norway, I became a member of the committee of a university Nynorsk organisation, contributing to newspapers and radio debates. Likewise, my data collection approach in Catalonia is situated in my support of language activists and my own "non-native" Catalan speakership. Social media participation became useful in-road for establishing further rapport in e-mails and phone calls with *Plataforma per la llengua catalana*. My response to events in February enhanced access when contacting the *de facto* organisers of *No em canviïs la llengua* (Rosario Palomino and Matthew Tree), requesting an interview, and gaining research access to their public event.

Observations are contextualised through participants' statements and an embodied perspective (Crang & Cook 2007; Madden 2013). I intend to describe "observed events by way of internalising participants' meaning" (Roller & Lavrakas 2015: 207). Engaging with individuals and groups directly to gather experiential data is enhanced through building rapport with actors who have useful, nuanced perspectives and ranging internal beliefs about language (Garrett 2012; Peltz 2017). The quality of this work is dependent on

[23] As of 22 August 2020.

personal relationships and the ability to gain access to research spaces (see Bernard 2006; Ahearn 2017) and understanding that the data is not descriptively exhaustive.

I arrived in Barcelona for a *Plataforma per la llengua catalana* awards evening on 17 February, which was the thematic basis for my interviews on 18 February with two employees of the organisation. On 19 February, I interviewed one of the organisers of *No em canviïs la llengua* before attending one of their events on 20 February. My data is therefore drawn primarily from three interviews (2 in Catalan, 1 in English) and jottings from a *No em canviïs la llengua* event.

2.6. Analytical approach

As language ideological research, this is a study of language activists and their metalanguage – statements about language (Verschueren 1998). It hybridises embedded data collection, qualitative interviewing, analysis of discourse, a holistic focus on language histories, and the dynamic role of biographic sensitivities (Zienkowski 2016). In my analysis, I highlight metalinguistic devices which refer to broader ideological stances, as well as the wider sociolinguistic dynamics surrounding the use of Catalan and Castilian. This is a sociolinguistic study that draws on discourse from a linguistic anthropological perspective, focusing data analysis on what language activists say and how this relates to a wider conversation about language (Gilmore 2011). As these narratives exist in wider conversations about language with multiple subjects, I take a metapragmatic approach to discourse analysis.

This approach positions the linguistic subject as a stakeholder in language ideological debates (Errington 2003). There is no such thing as the "sociopolitically disinterested language user" (Kroskrity 2008: 6–8), and statements about language cannot be held to be ideologically neutral

(Coupland & Jaworski 1998). Where (a) language and linguistic issues are discussed, there is a "culturally determined reflection upon language" (Fischli 2011: 32), and metalanguage can be rooted in wider metadiscourses (Jaworski, Coupland & Galasiński 1998). Metalanguage is "socially and culturally regimented" (Blommaert 2011: 127) and language users' statements refer to the contextual meaning of linguistic practices (such as "changing language") to construct an ideological discourse (Duranti 2009: 16). Metapragmatic analysis examines metalanguage in context and is an applied method for examining how sociolinguistic discourse constructed (Bucholtz & Hall 2004, see also Zienkowski 2016; Karlander 2017). As language can be "distorted" in its agency to simply communicate propositions (Hodge & Kress 1993: 6), explicit discourse about language serves a broader cultural objective (Lucy 1993).

Specific to my research, the narrative constructed by Catalan language activists is a form of metadiscourse. As I address what activists say in my analysis, I refer to a range of diverse statements, phrases, and utterances. In this Catalan case study, metalanguage is presented within reference to broader cultural, historical, and political themes. I begin by outlining these themes in the context of the activism of *Plataforma* before directly addressing data from *No em canviïs la llengua*.

2.7. A bunker of Catalans: metadiscourses at Plataforma

As I had initially planned, I attended the 2020 *Premis Martí Gasull I Roig* at Barcelona's *Teatre Poliorama*. As part of the yearly calendar of events hosted by *Plataforma per la llengua catalana*, I was there to familiarise myself with the organisation's current projects and how these were expressed in relation to their long-term ideological objectives. Afterwards, I was invited to dinner with the *grup tècnic* (permanent staff) of *Plataforma*, and the following day I

interviewed employees Daniel Roldan (international affairs) and Miguel Gil (administration) at their main office. I asked generic questions to both about their role at the organisation and the awards ceremony. This was followed by a broader discussion of Catalan language activism, their interpretation of government language policy, migration, and comparisons with other minority languages. I use these interviews to frame the relationship between the activist metadiscourses of *Plataforma* and *No em canviïs la llengua*.

As an employee who also operates the "complaints service" (*servei de queixes*), where individuals can report linguistic rights violations, Roldan underlines that assertive use of Catalan is a vital part of Catalan language activism. Notably, he framed the use of Catalan as an act that is strongly tied up with activism in and of itself, associating language activism with linguistic agency:

(1) Roldan: Being a language activist is using the language in a positive way, […] An invitation to become a speaker. Even if the attitude of a person I am interacting with may clearly be supremacist [who has] incorporated this supremacist vision that the state, [Castilian language] and [Spanish culture] are above everything else, […] What I want is that the whole population can use Catalan in a normal way and be invited to participate

The use of the term "supremacist" to describe the Spanish state and the Castilian language are counterposed by the description of Catalan as an "invitation" to others to "participate". This rhetoric implicitly infers that Catalan is not the language of everyone in Catalonia, and the Castilian imposed as an official language by the state is an act of symbolic violence. This led to a wider discussion of the aims of Catalan as a "tool of social cohesion"

(*eina de cohesió social*). I asked if there were other organisations which worked for the "same motives and with a comparable job" (*mateixos motius i amb un treball comparable)*. As both Erra's speech and *No em canviïs la llengua* had been mentioned (and supported with applause and statements) in the previous night's awards ceremony, it was not surprising that Roldan was aware of the attention given to the group:

(2) Roldan: Without a doubt, [Plataforma] are the biggest organisation that is specialised in language, but I believe that there are other organisations. Most recently the 'no em canviïs la llengua' initiative has emerged, having had a particular impact on social media

This branched further into the concept of "participation", which raised topics of immigration and Castilian use. Catalan for the sake of social cohesion is a central theme; he draws on how personal experience has informed his relationship with the Catalan language and his work as part of *Plataforma*:

(3) Roldan: It is that we do not want [Catalan] to be excluding, we focus on it as a tool for cohesion. We do not want to create a bunker of Catalans, which they already are, and for them to reject having contact with people who are not Catalan-speakers. On the contrary. […] I will use my dad as an example. When he was born, he did not speak Catalan, he did not know it. He learned it when he was 20. […] He began to learn, to interact more in Catalan, to make it his own, and when I was born, he spoke to me in Catalan […] people should make it their own and not see it as an alien thing

Drawing on the experience of his Castilian-speaking father from Murcia whose family moved to Catalonia in 1949, Roldan indicates a personal and contextualised appreciation for Catalan through his own family. The issue of "changing language" is relevant here; if an individual is not assertive in their use of Catalan, the language will continue to appear "alien" to Castilian speakers, "excluding" them from the language. Metapragmatic awareness of Castilian use today gives greater cause to further the ideological aims of Catalan advocacy. Roldan's description of a "bunker of Catalans" refers to an exclusive Catalan linguistic community that he argues *does* exist, contextualising Erra's use of the words *autochthonous* and *native-born* as perhaps accurate descriptions. Interestingly, my conversation with Gil did not address *No em canviïs la llengua* as activists directly, but touched on many of the same themes of social cohesion, integration, and challenging normative Castilian use:

(4) Gil: Article 3.1. makes Castilian official across the entire State, and what's more, it gives it this "duty to know it", which basically means that people who are born with families speaking Catalan, or Basque or Galician have the obligation to know Castilian. Thus, any Castilian-speaker can travel about the State and expect to be understood, but reversed with one's own language, reversed, no. This means therefore that basically there is this idea of internal colonisation, […] Or put another way, there is a group which has rights across the territory which others do not have

Castilian cultural-linguistic "supremacy" appears again. Gil, however, focused his explanation on the role of legislation and existing political

frameworks. Worsened by Spain's political history and the legacy of Francoist dictatorship, "internal colonisation" has disfavoured the Catalan language, giving more rights to one group but not "others" – non-Castilian Spaniards. This argument is made through the rhetoric of language rights as a moral issue (see Ricento 2000). Political reform and liberalisation of language politics in Spain, however important they are, have not rectified the situation:

(5) Gil: Before, [using Castilian] also meant direct repression. […] Or, put another way, in the sense that they could stop you, they could arrest you, they could fine you. And therefore, this has created a series of fears and prejudices in Catalan-speakers who make the habit of changing to Castilian in several situations. So, the people that do not do this, in truth, they are actually doing activism, they are fighting actively against a situation

Gil's narrative argues that the Catalan language is conceptually associated with the history: "fines and punishment" and a range of internalised "fears and prejudices" continue to permeate social consciousness. The use of Castilian is described here as a "habit", aligning with Erra's statement again, inferring that individuals can change their behaviour if they want to. Assertive use of Catalan – the direct act of *not* switching – represents an indirect form of activism.

Encouraging people to not "change language" is associated with the activities of *Plataforma per la llengua catalana*, although in their case, this is done through professional activity and lobbying policymakers. I noted that the metalanguage and themes in my interviews with Roldan and Gil relate directly to *No em canviïs la llengua* and their ongoing activity. My conversation with Matthew Tree two days later focused on similar topics around language

activism, policy, and Catalonia's politics. By discussing the *No em canviïs la llengua* event planned for the following day, and the media reaction to the group the week prior, I can contextualise the metalanguage used by *No em canviïs la llengua* in the public space.

2.8. Our little group of Romanians and Africans: non-native metadiscourses

Matthew Tree is an English-born Catalan language author and prominent member of *No em canviïs la llengua*. He is, however, known for frequent participation in different kinds of Catalan cultural events. Tree has lived in Catalonia for 35 years, having moved there from England when he turned 26. He is known for being on side with Catalan independence and self-determination, and his work and public engagement as a published author offers a useful subjective commentary on the linguistic context of *No em canviïs la llengua* and his own involvement in the group. We met for an interview at his apartment in Barcelona, and I asked similar questions used with Roldan and Gil. Unlike my conversations with Roldan and Gil, Tree's interview was conducted in English, and I structured our conversation in relation to my interest in the group as on one hand a non-native Catalan speaker, but on the other as an outsider. At the beginning, Tree's description of *No em canviïs la llengua* is not wholly comparable with the more regimented and professional activist work of *Plataforma*:

(6) Tree: [*No em canviïs la llengua*] is a very simple, very small association. It is not even a registered organisation. It is the idea that came from a long-standing Peruvian friend of mine, of ours in fact, who simply got fed up, after living here for years and years speaking fluent Catalan to Catalan speakers, wherever they were from, and always

being replied to in Spanish simply because she has Amerindian features

Tree began by formulating *No em canviïs la llengua* as a "very small association" that arose out of perceptions of linguistic discrimination. Tree contextualises the group through his friendship with Rosario Palomino, the wider membership of the group, and political developments in Catalonia in tandem with the dynamics of language use. Catalan speakers with diverse linguistic backgrounds and ethnic heritage are subject to the behaviour of "native-born" Catalan speakers; Tree, Palomino and others in the group are consequently "fed up" due to their relationship with the Catalan language and desire to use it. His own experience as a foreign-born author and his public work offers an anecdotal reference to emphasise the social significance of internal Spanish migration, newer migration from outside Spain, and the dynamics of switching between Catalan and Castilian. This is at one point structured with reference to Francoism, where normative Castilian use is a supposed legacy:

(7) Tree: I got a load of work giving talks at Catalan language centres for adults teaching Catalan to adults. [...] I would harangue the Catalan audiences going to these talks [...] saying why do you do this? And I got people from all ages and every answer was different. The older ones said because under Franco you could be beaten up or you could be thrown off a tram or fined for using Catalan. Other people said because they were trying to help these people. [...] Other people said it was a way of being polite including young people like that it is polite to speak to an African in Spanish even though that African is speaking to you in fluent Catalan. Again, that is not polite. That is

> actually being rude. […] It certainly comes from a hangover from the past. One African-American [...] suggested to me that maybe that is what native-born Catalan speakers do: they do not want any aggression coming from anyone because they are using Catalan. So, they go into Spanish as their way of smiling, as a kind of defensive act

Tree has identified code-switching to Castilian, specifically when non-native speakers attempt to use Catalan, as a "hangover from the past". This term is suggestive of the "internal colonisation" mentioned by Gil. However, Tree's reflections on Castilian linguistic practice were focused on Catalonia's ethnic diversity beyond internal Spanish migration. "Native-born" Catalan users have already grown up to respond to outsiders from the rest of Spain in Castilian as either a form of "help" or a "defensive act". This practice has been extended to newcomers from further afield, as they either assume outsiders do not speak Catalan (cf. Corona & Block 2020) or that using Castilian is "polite" (see González Castro 2019: 47-48 for a comparative interpretation). His presentation of the group and its background is interpreted through the experiences of Palomino, who herself comes from Peru and speaks Castilian as a first language. According to Tree, Palomino assertively speaks Catalan but is often spoken back to in Castilian:

(8) Tree: She saw this as a kind of subliminal racism. 'You do not belong to our world, so do not even try to speak Catalan to us.' Something like that, so she then found by talking to other foreign-born Catalan speakers […] and she found out that we all had the same thing in common: That even people who have a slightly different phenotype from the Mediterranean phenotype, like Romanians or Germans or

whatever, have had trouble convincing Catalan speakers to speak back to them in Catalan where they are using Catalan all the time

Here, Tree formulates a discrimination narrative through Palomino. Although she has a legal right to use Catalan in Catalonia, Palomino's ethnic appearance is interpreted as the reason for her interlocutors' code-switching. The argument is that it is non-native Catalan speakers who have experienced a form of racism and discrimination where they are denied the opportunity to use and be addressed in Catalan. Her right to use Catalan has not been enough to guarantee her speakership, and Tree's explanation puts this down to a "subliminal racism" that her interlocutors have. The response to *No em canviïs la llengua* that has exposed multiple voices and exemplified the complexity of Catalan sociolinguistic debates:

(9) Tree: Whenever you get anything that is about identity and language, they [Ciudadanos] will start calling you Nazis and supremacists at the drop of a hat. When the Mayor of Vic [Anna Erra] made a comment about the association of 'No em canviïs la llengua', she should have known that she was walking across the linguistic minefield. She should have been a bit more careful with her language. […] It is just ridiculous. I think of Rosario and our little group of Romanians and Africans and stuff and being taken to the European Court of Human Rights for discrimination. I mean, it is crazy

Tree's statements present a view of the Catalan sociolinguistic situation as one which is highly dynamic, phrased here as a "minefield". Erra used charged vocabulary due to a highly sensitive political context. The politician has been criticised and condemned, but Tree sees that contemporary political

arguments about Catalan relating to supremacy are nonsensical when put in the context of *No em canviïs la llengua*. Tree's depiction of his group suggested that they have become contentious due to implications of ethnicity, nationality, and the normative use of Castilian amongst Catalonia's multiethnic and multilingual communities. But pointing out that the group is both "small" and made up of "Romanians and Africans", *No em canviïs la llengua* is a private, voluntary, loosely organised group of ethnically distinct people from the general Catalan population. This contrasts with larger organisations, "native-born" Catalan advocates, and top-down policy mechanisms.

Tree's interview contained several responses to the allegations made against *No em canviïs la llengua*. The sections I highlight stress that the group is both a small informal collective, and that its membership is demographically distinct: accusations of racism, supremacy, and government funding are fundamentally incorrect assessments. The group has emerged *despite* top-down policy, government initiatives, and other activism, as code-switching to Castilian with "foreign-born Catalan speakers" persists. *No em canviïs la llengua*, therefore, embodies an ideological appeal to wider Catalan society and speakers' agency. This constitutes an intervention in Catalan sociolinguistic discourse. Attending the *No em canviïs la llengua* event the following day, all my interviews contextualised how this activist metadiscourse is performed in the public space with multiple participants and an audience.

2.9. The language that unites us: non-native activism in the public space

Coinciding with the same week as International Mother Language Day (see Figure 2), *No em canviïs la llengua* hosted an open-mic evening at a community

theatre in Barcelona. The setting was not as formal as the awards evening hosted by *Plataforma* earlier that week. Both Palomino and Tree steered the evening's proceedings loosely. Attendance was not ticketed, and it was open to the general public. It was unclear how the recent media outburst would impact attendance. Speaking to Palomino before the event began, she explained to me that they use the theatre often and that "normally, we fill up!" (*normalment omplim!*). However, there were roughly 40 attendees in attendance and half the seats were empty. There were non-white faces in the audience, though they seemed mostly middle-aged. Having attended the *Plataforma* awards ceremony days before, I noted a similar age demographic.

Figure 9: *Promotional digital flyer for event*[24]

[24] Text reads: "Mother Language Day 2020 // Thursday 20 February at 19:00 we celebrate Mother Language Day with Carme Sansa, Matthew Tree, Aleix Renyé, Rosario Palomino,

Ten chairs were placed on stage with various speakers, each with a different linguistic background. As a format, each speaker on stage was invited to introduce themselves, read a text (a poem, a short story) in a different language before offering a translation in Catalan. Speakers exhibited varying fluency in Catalan but appeared to be understood and well received by the audience. The event began with Palomino welcoming the audience, stating that "we are delighted that we can come here from all over the place" (*estem encantats que puguem arribar de tot arreu*), and that the objective of events like this one is to "get 10 million activists for the language" (*aconseguir 10 milions d'activistes per la llengua*). "10 million" is an important phrase, having also been used by *Plataforma per la llengua catalana* in their own material to highlight the size of the language in comparison with comparatively smaller European languages with considerably more political status, such as Finnish or Greek.[25] Palomino has reinterpreted the phrase in the context of *No em canviïs la llengua*: their events are open to the public and intend to raise linguistic awareness which would lead to all 10 million Catalan speakers becoming "activists for the language".

Matthew Tree gave a small introduction, framing the event as a "celebration of language" (*celebració de la llengua*). This refers to the event marking International Mother Language Day, although the use of the world *llengua* could be interpreted here to mean the Catalan language as well. The banner on stage claimed a unifying effect of the Catalan language (see Figure 3), and my interpretation of Tree's statement was that the event was being presented a "celebration" of both Catalan and other languages. Both Tree and Palomino dismissed accusations of racism and supremacy. Palomino cited her

Pep Ribas, Judit Raso Eho // Orfeó Martinenc, Avinguda Meridiana 97 on the corner with Consell de Cent, Clot metro station (Line 1)"

[25] https://www.som10milions.cat/ (accessed 19 January 2021).

experiences of being addressed in Castilian by virtue of her appearance. This is further underlined when she addressed the word *autochthonous* in relation to Anna Erra's presentation of *No em canviïs la llengua* in the Catalan Parliament. Palomino emphasised that race, accent, and appearance do play a role in the way that people like her are received by other Catalan speakers; "it is as simple as that" (*és tan senzill com això*). She referenced the slogan on the banner — "we will continue our language that makes us equal" (*continuem la nostra llengua que ens iguala*) — stating a personal resolve.

Let us defend the language [26]*; that unites us; that makes us equal; that makes us brothers and sisters.*

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Figure 10: *Image of stage taken during event – a non-native Catalan speaker reads a text in their "mother tongue" as the audience and other contributors listen*

[26] Alternatively, "we are defending the language".

Palomino concluded her intervention referring to Quechua, which she argued was the language that would have been her mother tongue, had it not been for Spanish colonialism in Peru. This statement drew attention to the role and symbolism of Castilian in language shift both in Spain and abroad, albeit implicitly. Some other speakers drew on similar experiences of belonging to a minority or colonised community. One man from an island in the Goa region of India spoke that evening, as well as a participant from French Catalonia (see Hawkey 2015) who drew on Catalan being his mother tongue within the different context of the French state where Catalan has far fewer speakers and no official status. At one point, Palomino framed the use and promotion of Catalan as synonymous with wanting to "protect all languages" (*protegir totes les llengües*). Despite its "10 million speakers", Catalan is also positioned by this discourse as a minoritised language where speakers from diverse linguistic heritages reflect on the status of other languages around the world and relate it to Catalan's position. I observe here that some participants come with a heightened awareness of sociolinguistic and cultural debates, and this has informed their stance towards Catalan, akin to a sociolinguistic "mirror effect" (Cortès-Colomé, Barrieras & Comellas 2016). Consequently, statements during the event echoed an ideological assertion that Catalan is intended to be a social unifier and is associated with a participative Catalan identity. One participant introduced herself as originally from Romania but stated her preference to call herself Catalan; "I am a Catalan woman" (*sóc catalana*). Another woman, a Russian speaker, began by stating "I am from here, from Barcelona" (*jo sóc d'aquí, de Barcelona*). These statements contextualised their use of Catalan and participation in the event as associating with an adopted Catalan identity, with no essential reason to be excluded from the Catalan linguistic community.

Themes of social cohesion and solidarity came to the fore towards the end of the event. This was no more underlined than by the President of the *Coordinadora d'Associacions per la Llengua* (an association of small organisations which promote Catalan), Pep Ribas. Ribas' speech was a reflection on a traditional nationalist concept of Catalans being "one people" (*sol poble*), but he stated that this term is misunderstood. As *No em canviïs la llengua* is oriented around non-native speakers of Catalan, he reframed the term to explain that its meaning does not infer an isolated Catalan identity or ethnic supremacy (see Pujolar & Gonzàlez 2013). He argued that the "people", united by a language, are invited to integrate and to create a parallel Catalan-using society to "enjoy the same opportunities" (*gaudir de les mateixes oportunitats*). He ended his statement with "it is important to speak about linguistic diversity, recognising that co-existence is participation" (*cal parlar de la diversitat lingüística, reconeixent que la convivència és participació*). Palomino concluded the event by echoing Pep's remarks, encouraging the audience and participants to use the Catalan language in "our Catalonia" (*Catalunya nostra*), and that it is "one people" (*sol poble*) and "one nation" (*sola nació*). Reinforcing these terms in the context of Catalan, therefore, underlined a claim to identity, resonating with a broader Catalanist ideology. By co-opting a phrase such as "one people" as a term based on linguistic membership, the use of Catalan can be both a statement about a claim to Catalan speakership and a declarative act of belonging to the Catalan imagined community.

2.10. Discussion

Instances of metalanguage in the data show how *No em canviïs la llengua* seeks to reframe ideological discourses around linguistic identity and authenticity. Within the multilingual and globalised context of Catalonia, individuals

associate with a range of linguistic identities. Fundamentally, using a specific language in a particular context *in itself* can be interpreted as a marked act of language activism where it constitutes "social action" (Avineri et al. 2019: 2ff). Specific to this case study, a Catalan speaker "muda" (Puigdevall et al. 2018) can be extended into further concerted acts of Catalan linguistic citizenship in a polemicised context marked by the existence of an overarching acrolect which is commercially and politically influential – Castilian.

As the social context, Catalonia has undergone several waves of migration which have centred Castilian as a domestic and familiar language amongst a growing proportion of the population. Legalistic and modernist cultural narratives which aim to institute the Catalan language as a "common language" are continually challenged by the dynamism of globalisation and demographic change. Use of Castilian is favoured in both informal/basilectal and commercial/international market domains (Woolard & Frekko 2013), and contemporary research has identified a "de-ethnicisation" (Pujolar & Gonzàlez 2013) of the Catalan language. However, this has not instituted Catalan as a fully "civic" voice in popular consciousness (Atkinson 2018: 779).

My research shows that some non-native Catalan speakers are, however, determined to pursue the ideological aims of linguistic normalisation – to "continue our language", the "language that makes us brothers and sisters". They have established a platform for this position to be adequately expressed, drawing on their own experiences and building on existing activist metalanguage. Catalan use is not addressed here as a matter of rights or policy, as these speakers assert "control over their language" and derive their speakership from their own experiences (Stroud 2001: 353). The research does not suggest that *No em canviïs la llengua* wishes to speak on behalf of all Catalan new speakers; their public engagement is part of an outreach strategy. Attendance was not high at the event, compared to the *Plataforma* awards

ceremony, and the *ad hoc* style of the evening was indicative of a casual organisation. In effect, the sporadic public events and social media interventions organised by the *No em canviïs la llengua* are a soapbox which offers a sense of community for a group of new speakers. I have noted that extant rhetoric is reinterpreted by non-native activists to assert an ideological pro-Catalan message from their position as new speakers of the language. In particular, these individuals use their platform to rhetorically exploit and renegotiate various familiar ideological statements, all of which incorporate an interpretation of Catalan as a symbol of equality and anti-discrimination.

It is however the broader media reaction to *No em canviïs la llengua* that demonstrates that discourses surrounding "changing language" remain semiotically loaded for some Catalan speakers. *No em canviïs la llengua* constitutes a new group of non-native Catalan users whose social action denounces "changing language" as part of a broader ideological goal. Catalan is part of their adopted identity, and instances of code-switching to Castilian are interpreted as a threat to the "sense of community, solidarity or authenticity" (Costa 2015: 129) that Catalan speakership provides. I interpret this as rooted in Catalan being indexicalised as a medium for social mobility, affiliation with other Catalan speakers, and the current political atmosphere rooted in discourses of self-determination and Catalan national sentiment.

2.11. Conclusion

No em canviïs la llengua is an informal collective of non-native Catalan speakers whose activities can be reviewed as an extension of extant Catalan language metadiscourses. Through informed descriptions, I have described how their media interventions and social media interactions constitute an ideological outlet where a conceptual narrative about Catalan and its speakers are constructed. Catalan is presented as a guarantor of linguistic diversity;

Catalan speakers are multiethnic, multilingual interlocutors, and the Catalan language indexicalises unity and collective identity. Conversely, the use of Castilian with those "born abroad" is antithetical to this narrative, and the non-native Catalan speakers who constitute *No em canviïs la llengua* argue that foreign-born Catalan speakers are linguistically discriminated by contemporary linguistic practice in Catalonia. As an ideological platform, *No em canviïs la llengua* intervenes in the public space to argue that "changing language" and normative use of Castilian restricts access to Catalan speakership for non-natives.

Linguistic normalisation is a long-term ideological goal for Catalan language advocates. *No em canviïs la llengua* expands on the rhetorical framing of Catalan speakers as an imagined community, where themes of social inclusion, "common language" and "normalisation" are integral. This type of informal language activism latches onto rhetoric about participative identity, specifying that contemporary Catalan linguistic identity is not assigned any essential ethnic or demographic attributes. Instead, individual agency, participation, and ideologically assertive use of the language is critical.

The broad reaction, however, to this initiative and the politicians who support it is indicative of the political debates which concern language use in Catalonia. Castilian is the presumed cosmopolitan and interethnic language variety across Spain; an effective non-ethnic, unmarked medium for communication for many in Catalonia. As with formal Catalan language organisations such as *Plataforma per la llengua catalana*, *No em canviïs la llengua* engages with a wider sociopolitical discourse around Catalan nation-building and Catalan linguistic citizenship. This is a continuity of a historic counter-cultural effort, where Catalan self-determination and nationhood today vie for cultural and political legitimacy in a globalised, multilingual world.

2.12. Implications for further research

I have highlighted the emergence of *No em canviïs la llengua* so that their activities may extend Catalan language activism beyond traditional policy-oriented organisations such as *Plataforma*, or explicit activities pertaining to in-group or "native" Catalan users. *No em canviïs la llengua* constitutes a form of activism centred on linguistic "performance" (Avineri et al. 2019: 145) – the use of Catalan in social life contra Castilian – and therefore the agency of Catalan users generally. My research here intends to reinforce the importance of a fluid, non-essentialist conceptualisation of language activism (De Korne forthcoming), encompassing interventions in metapragmatic discourses and acts of linguistic citizenship. This paper gives voice to a smaller, lesser-known, less formally established group of individuals who are also stakeholders in contemporary sociolinguistic discourses. This is to complement mainstream sociolinguistic research by examining sociolinguistic agency and the linguistic subjectivity (see Woschitz 2019). Unfortunate time and access constraints have meant that this work is a "rapid assessment" (Bernard 2006; Pink & Morgan 2013) of Catalan language activism. Any observational fieldwork is open-ended by nature (Marcus 2007), and further discourse analysis and actual ethnographic research in this field would be indispensable. This paper sets the ground for a more comprehensive critical analysis of contemporary (Catalan) language activism in different contexts and a theoretical appreciation of speaker biographies.

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3. ‘Mål’ means ‘språk’

First peer reviewed by *Multiethnica*

Revised and sent to *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* [27]

Abstract: This article critically examines how young Norwegian Nynorsk activists engage with Sámi and Kven linguistic issues, drawing on five years of observational research with the Norwegian Language Youth (*Norsk Målungdom*). Using multi-modal ethnographic discourse analysis, I highlight where Nynorsk activism further extends to engaging with Indigenous language communities. I present how long-standing Nynorsk activist discourses around building linguistic tolerance for Norwegian dialects can be rhetorically expanded to tolerance for wider linguistic diversity. In doing so, I argue that, from a broader sociolinguistic standpoint, language activism does not need to be theoretically essentialised towards a concern with one language community alone.

Keywords: *Norwegian, Nynorsk, language activism, Indigenous languages, Norsk Målungdom*

Nynorsk (lit. new Norwegian) is one of two orthographies of the Norwegian language, the other being Bokmål (lit. book-language). The existence of two forms of written Norwegian stems from the political fervour of the National Romantic period, where national sentiment developed as part of the establishment of a Norwegian state after political autonomy was gained in 1814. Until this point, written Danish was the language of schooling and administration. Over many decades, different proposals would compete to be the written standard of Norwegian. Norway’s minoritised Indigenous Sámi and Kven populations, both ethnolinguistically non-Germanic, were (unsurprisingly) not accounted for in national language policy projects (Bull

[27] *Nota bene*: this paper is currently being revised after receiving peer-reviewers’ feedback, and will be resubmitted to the *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* in September 2022

2018, 40). Although political autonomy was indeed a springboard for discourses of linguistic emancipation for Norwegian speakers after years of Danish control, Norway’s Indigenous populations themselves were made to decades undergo cultural assimilation through various instruments of the state and were politically disenfranchised for just as long for the sake of sociocultural integration into the mainstream Norwegian population (Viinikka-Kallinen 2019, 13). Such developments reflect trends in the ethnic nationalist trajectories in many other European and colonial nation-states created during the 1800s (Huss & Lindgren 2011, 9).

Proposals to “Norwegianise” written Danish (an approach which resulted in Bokmål) were rejected by some prominent scholars and politicians, as Norway’s broad dialect continuum and rural populations served as one of several foundations for Norway’s newfound Romantic-era identity (Hanto 2016, 142) and as a marker of authentic distinctive Norwegian-ness in the context of Norway’s forced political union with Sweden after 1814 (Sandøy 2018, 214). After the end of a long union between Denmark-Norway, and in amongst the political energy of early nationalist discourses and resolve to assert an autonomous linguistic identity, the son of a peasant farmer in the west of Norway, Ivar Aasen (1813-1896), travelled around the country to gather notes on the dialects and their structural origins in earlier Norwegian and Old Norse. Aasen’s “Landsmaal” proposals for a new standard were elaborated upon by its early adopters who would incorporate further rural and working-class dialects, culminating in today’s Nynorsk written standard (Jahr 2014, 53ff).

The contemporary Nynorsk movement is known as *målrørsla* (language/dialect/tongue-movement), associated with counter-cultural efforts to resist dialect shift and elitist spoken standards, and promote Nynorsk in public life, mass media, and the education system (Grepstad 2006, 125;

Torp & Vikør 2014, 296-7). For the early Nynorsk movement, Nynorsk was utilised as a “cultural object” to represent a revitalised Norwegian identity in political discourse (Sandøy 2018, 215), and in the mid-20th century during the so-called “dialect wave”, the slogan *skriv nynorsk, snakk dialekt* (‘write Nynorsk, speak dialect’) represented the grassroots cause of contemporary Nynorsk language activism (Almenningen 1981, 494) oriented around the political symbolism of both Nynorsk and the spoken vernacular.

In this article, I present observations of *Norsk Målungdom* (Norwegian Language Youth), a Nynorsk and dialect advocacy organisation whose membership is under the age of 26. Since 2015, through my research as a young foreign-born participant-observer of *Norsk Målungdom*, I have witnessed how its members negotiate Sámi and Kven language concerns into their wider pro-Nynorsk and pro-dialect campaigning. Alongside campaigns against political centralisation and integration with the European Community, solidarity with Norway’s minoritised language groups has some history within the Nynorsk movement (consult Almenningen 1981 for the history of *målrørsla* social campaigns), although I will draw attention to current-day activism. Importantly, this is not a paper that presents research from within the Indigenous context. Furthermore, this is a retrospective examination of fieldwork where I had not set out to collect data specifically on Indigenous languages. Instead, I present an analysis of how Sámi and Kven themes are integrated into the Nynorsk activist metadiscourse, and how *Norsk Målungdom* has engaged in Sámi and Kven language advocacy.

The social action and campaigning of young Nynorsk activists can also be construed as solidarity work and advocacy for Norway’s Indigenous languages. The implications of this reinforce the need to interpret language activism through a more “fluid” perspective (De Korne 2021, 7) alongside other ideas around participative “linguistic citizenship” (Stroud & Heugh

2014, 214, see also Gal & Irvine 2019, 14-17). Language activism can take various forms and manifestations (Combs & Penfield 2012, 461-462), and activity in *Norsk Målungdom* demonstrates that contemporary Nynorsk language activism is not concerned solely with Nynorsk and Norwegian dialects.

3.1. Norway’s Indigenous languages and Norwegian

Norway’s continental territory extends from the southern tip of the Scandinavian peninsula to the Arctic north, bordering with Swedish, Finnish, and Russian state boundaries. The Sámi are a diverse cultural nation whose land traditionally spreads across the north of Fennoscandia, whereas the Kven people are constituted by a smaller, ethnically Finnish off-shoot traditionally residing in a handful of municipalities in Norway’s far north. The north of Fennoscandia has long been home to nomadic Sámi populations, and over time, expansionist Scandinavian populations from the south would soon take land, water, and institute formal political control over Sámi land, known as Sápmi (see Kuhn 2020, vi). Most if not all Sámi people speak more than one language (Nelson & Toivonen 2007, 2), and through major breakthroughs such as the 1987 Sámi Law, the establishment of a Sámi Parliament (consult Marten 2006), and various constitutional amendments, Norwegian and the Sámi languages now have equal worth as national languages (Thingnes 2020, 6) in addition to the 2005 acknowledgement of Kven (kväänin kieli; see Lane 2011, also Viinikka-Kallinen 2019, 12).

Whilst Sámi is an Indigenous language of Norway, Kven is more correctly a national minority language; both have differing status and legal protections at the time of writing. Furthermore, Norway has ratified the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples’ Convention and European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Critical to the research context and ongoing political

sensitivities, a Norwegian Government “Truth Commission” was established in 2018 to investigate the historical treatment of Norway’s Indigenous people, and a report is due in 2022 (Viinikka-Kallinen ibid, 14). Three Sámi languages are recognised by the Norwegian state as official languages—Northern Sámi (*davvisámegiella*), Lule Sámi (*julevsámegiella*), and Southern Sámi (*åarjelsaemien gïele*)—with Northern Sámi being the largest used Sámi language in Norway and a notable role in the linguistic landscape and education system of Northern Norway (Thingnes 2019, 3). As with many Indigenous peoples globally, Kven, Sámi and their descendants all live diverse lives in various rural, coastal, town and city environments, and those who claim ethnicity or adopt Sámi or Kven identity are not necessarily users of the languages (cf. Putra 2018, 23).

Spoken Norwegian is characterised by marked dialectal diversity; regional dialect use is widespread and enhanced through a range of legislative policies and widespread public attitudes which encourage “dialect tolerance” (Kulbrandstad 2018, 179). On paper, no one dialect is treated institutionally as a spoken Norwegian standard, and even since 1878, pupils have had the right to speak their dialect at school (consult Venås 1981). However, internal migration, trends in social mobility and dialect levelling over the years have all significantly reduced dialectal markedness in Norway: Norwegian language is not entirely idiolectal nor heterogeneous, nor is it a true “dialect paradise” (consult Røyneland & Mæhlum 2009). Both Nynorsk and Bokmål are underpinned by a range of ideological, aesthetic, and stylistic approaches as to how Norwegian should be written, regulated by the Language Council of Norway (Språkrådet) through regular spelling reforms (rettskrivingar; Vangsnes 2018, 79ff).

Users of both Nynorsk and Bokmål can register their choice of written language when communicating with state organs (Jahr 2014, 167). School

demographics allow us to estimate that a stable 15% of the Norwegian population—approximately 600,000 people—primarily uses Nynorsk (Grepstad 2015, 52), with most residing in the less urban west and midlands. Nynorsk’s continued use has been successful in part because of its adoption by prominent Norwegian writers and being sustained through the arts. Norway and its Bokmål-Nynorsk divide have long been a textbook case-study in language policy and planning since the seminal work of Einar Haugen (1906-1994) and later contemporaries have continued to examine the dynamics around Norway’s language ideological debates (Bull 2007, 124-126, see also Bucken-Knapp 2003; Puzey 2011).

3.2. Research context

Nynorsk is used by a minority of the Norwegian population, and Nynorsk users often feel pressured to use Bokmål (Thingnes 2020, 4-5) and will often report experiences of their linguistic choices not being respected or understood as writing in Nynorsk has become a “marked choice” (Berezkina 2018, 63). As a minority language, Nynorsk is the site of a prominent language activist movement. Nynorsk activists have historically been characterised as a collective of “students, school teachers and peasants” (Hanto 2016, 141), engaged in charged, ever-present language debates in Norwegian public life. Nynorsk has never been used by the majority of the country and attempts to make it the single written standard of Norwegian have been abandoned by the activist mainstream. In particular, the organisations *Noregs Mållag* (Norwegian Language Society, founded 1906) and *Norsk Målungdom* (Norwegian Language Youth, founded 1961) are the largest to engage in modern-day Nynorsk and dialect advocacy and share an office in Oslo.

Norsk Målungdom is a newer group in the comparatively longer history of Nynorsk activism; the earlier *målrørsla* was decentralised and different

interests were traditionally represented by specific interest groups such as book publishers and folk culture organisations (Almenningen 1992, 99). Both groups today rally for the right to use Nynorsk, encourage the use of dialects in public life, and, at different times throughout their modern history, engage in wider campaigns including Sámi and Kven initiatives.

The relationship between language, identity and nation in contemporary Norway has often provided “a powerful stimulus for political differences and political action” (Aarebrot & Urwin 1979, 80). Consequently, Nynorsk has symbolic weight in various social debates, and a classic example of this has been the involvement of Nynorsk activists in opposition to membership of the European Community and Union where Nynorsk ideologies of anti-centralisation and anti-Americanisation coincided with Eurosceptic narratives (consult Vikør 1981; Torp & Vikør 2014, 226). The 1960s and 1970s were also a busy period for young Nynorsk activists, who were also engaged with campaigns to demand Nynorsk textbooks in schools and protests with farmers in nationwide demonstrations (Almenningen 1992: 180).

One recent example of where the contemporary work of *Norsk Målungdom* and Indigenous language topics coincide is a column written by its then *leiar* (chairperson), Gunnhild Skjold, in the December 2020 issue of the members’ magazine of *Noregs Mållag*. Commenting on an on-going government consultation about introducing official names of the Kingdom of Norway in Kven and the three varieties of Sámi, Skjold writes:

> “Ved å vedta fleire offisielle namn på Noreg syner ein fram at Noreg er eit fleirspråkleg samfunn. Det er også eit gode for dei av oss som ikkje brukar kvensk eller dei samiske språka sjølv, og spesielt for oss nynorskbrukarar. Ved å vise fram alle språka i Noreg, skapar ein

> også høgare aksept for språkmangfaldet, og med det for nynorsken.”
>
> [By approving more official names for Norway, we demonstrate that Norway is a multilingual society. It’s also a good thing for those of us who don’t use Kven or the Sámi languages ourselves, and especially for us Nynorsk-users. By showing all the languages in Norway, we also create increased acceptance for linguistic diversity, and therefore, for Nynorsk.]
>
> (Skjold, Gunnhild. 2021. “Landet vårt er meir enn Noreg og Norge”, *Norsk Tidend* #5, p. 24)

The title of Skjold’s piece—“Our country is more than Noreg and Norge”—reframes a long-standing discrepancy between Bokmål and Nynorsk, where each has their own spelling for “Norway” (Nynorsk *Noreg*, Bokmål *Norge*). The representation of official names and translations on signage and documents in both Nynorsk and Bokmål has featured considerably within the history of the Norwegian language struggle (Puzey 2009, 58ff; Puzey 2016, 169). For Indigenous languages too, such as Sámi, naming initiatives are a form of cultural revitalisation and resistance; an attempt by communities and allies to decolonise the linguistic landscape (Cocq 2017, 102-8). Skjold draws on a familiar discourse of names and signage and employs a strategy where her activism is framed to encompass the concerns of other language communities. Namely, invoking “linguistic diversity” within Norway’s “multilingual society” relates the treatment of Nynorsk-users to that of Indigenous communities and their languages. “Showing all the languages in Norway” is presented as an objective that will lead to more “acceptance” for linguistic diversity, which benefits Nynorsk.

My studies of *Norsk Målungdom* and *Noregs Mållag* as a foreign observer in the 21st century highlight examples where the Indigenous languages of Norway feature more prominently in the discourse of younger Nynorsk activists. How this is constructed and understood amongst young Nynorsk activists will be examined in this article through discourse-oriented content analyses of ethnographic data and semi-structured interviews.

3.3. Linguistic ethnography and language activism

In recent research, language activism has been a focal point of critical enquiry in linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics which examines the role of language as a tool for social justice (Putra 2018; Avineri et al. 2019), speaker agency in language change/variation/shift (Heller & Duchêne 2016; Schwartz 2018; Keller 2019), and how language varieties have become the centre of significant revitalisation and cultural reclamation processes in the postcolonial context (Albury & Carter 2018). If examining language activism as a “linguistic practice” (see Moustaoui 2018, 533ff), activists rely on the use of argumentation which is rooted in “ideological models” which together construct activist discourses around identity or solidarity/opposition with other groups (García 2009, 82; Dołowy-Rybińska 2018, 5). In my work, I examine language activism as a dynamic space for discourse construction with multiple actors. The objective is to observe who language activists are, how activism is discursively performed, and therefore, how activism is agentive in the construction of language ideologies. These observations are analysed and contextualised through an informed observational perspective (Crang & Cook 2007, 15; Madden 2017, 76).

My research is concerned with how language and linguistic topics are talked about in public discourse; linguistic practices and named language varieties can have complex meaning with wider cultural/political associations,

and this can be analysed by considering the varying perspectives of different “culturally embedded speaker[s]” (Irvine & Gal 2008, 78, also Irvine & Gal 2009, 426). The social action that language activism represents is one example of where language ideological narratives are continually recast in the public arena (Kymlicka 2001, 27-8; Edwards 2006, 18), with both formally and informally situated participants.

From this angle, language activism need not be considered the domain of specific people or organisations. Activists “can be anyone and people of all ages” (Putra 2018, 102) and activism is essentially openly participative (cf. Stroud 2001); it neither need be rooted in political apparatus or the production of tangible legal texts or formal policies. This means that discourse and related linguistic practices can become markedly meaningful, construed as activist social action by wider society; the behaviour of a linguistic subject can represent either the continuity or rupture of language ideology. Importantly, political/cultural affiliations are performed in and out of formally organised spaces and a less essentialised and more fluid definition of activism offers a lens embracing the complexity of participation in sociolinguistic discourse.

I take this approach as part of adopting a theoretical reappraisal of the individual/the linguistic subject when engaging with sociolinguistic discourse. All subjects, including linguists despite their desire for impartiality and objective analyses of language (consult Rymes & Leone 2014), are potential stakeholders in language ideological debates (Errington 2003, 723ff; Combs & Penfield 2012, 469), and linguistic behaviour is embedded in social structures that can both restrict and enable the capacity to use language with meaningful implications. In reality, linguistic discourse occurs in vivid ideological spaces, and there is no such thing as the “sociopolitically disinterested language user” (Kroskrity 2004, 501), linguistics should not treat

language as a politically neutral phenomenon (Pujolar 2007, 144), and societal talk about language is never free from its contextualising ideologies (Coupland & Jaworski 1998, 37).

3.4. Data collection and analysis

My data comprise collections of ethnographic jottings and photographs since 2015, excerpts from three semi-structured interviews in 2019, public social media posts by *Norsk Målungdom*, and various materials produced by *Noregs Mållag* and *Norsk Målungdom* (2015-2020). The artefacts I draw on exhibit explicit language attitudes and ideological statements, which are examined as sites of activist metadiscourse. This discourse is part of an evolving cultural continuity, and ethnographic research allows the researcher-as-participant/observer to present an informed “thick description” of the data in a given time and context (Richards 2005, 50, see also Gilmore 2011, 125; Bell 2016, 395ff), generating hypotheses, and offering possible explanations that can be re-evaluated by future research. My analytical approach hybridises ethnographic data collection and qualitative interviews; I focus on what language activists say and do in tandem, and how this relates to the wider cultural trajectory of their movement.

Through ethnographic research, one can identify how social context can impact the meaning of the way a language is used to begin with (Meek 2011, x-xi). I descriptively analyse data to highlight the construction of activist narratives and themes in ideological discourse by examining metalanguage in context. Therefore, metapragmatic analysis (see Duranti 2009, 16, also Karlander 2017 *in extenso*), is one qualitative and anthropologically situated method for examining how such discourses are constructed, based on the premise that linguistic practices can “feed into” circulating ideologies about (a) language (Verschueren 1998, 65). Language is not used simply to

communicate propositions; meaning can be “distorted” (Hodge & Cress 1993, 6) and can reflect a range of cultural narratives (Lucy 1993, 17), or “rhetorics” (Schwartz 2018, 334ff) which legitimise broader sociopolitical claims.

3.5. Positionality and ethics

I was raised as a monolingual English speaker in the south of England and moved to Scotland in 2013 at the age of 18 to study Norwegian and Linguistics. I decided to use Nynorsk halfway through my degree, and thanks to an Erasmus exchange year in 2015 I was able to study at the University of Oslo and observe the Nynorsk movement in my free time by participating in *Norsk Målungdom* events. It is highly uncommon for non-native speakers of Norwegian to use Nynorsk, exemplified at one point by my being interviewed on Norwegian national radio in 2015 to explain my decision. At one point I was also a committee member of the Oslo student Nynorsk society (Studentmållaget i Oslo). As such, my Nynorsk use and my Nynorsk research interests all position me as an advocate of Nynorsk, and there is also activism within my research as I give activists a voice through my work for an international readership.

It is important to state that my relationship with the Nynorsk movement has developed over time to become less directly participative and more institutionalised and distanced as I have entered postgraduate research. However, my experiences over several years provide a valuable insider-outsider view of contemporary Nynorsk activism; *Norsk Målungdom* is an organisation I have contributed to and have volunteered for, and outwith the constraints of the ongoing pandemic, I make return visits to Norway several times a year to attend residential events and give talks. These experiences have allowed me to monitor trends in strategy and focus, as well as see which individuals within the organisation take on leadership roles over time.

The focus on Sámi and Kven within *Norsk Målungdom*, and the implications this has on the themes and activities within contemporary Nynorsk activism, is one of these trends. In presenting observational and interview-based data, this is sketched out from the perspective of my own ethnography. Full names are used alongside interview participants, with their explicit written approval, in accordance with the ethics approval system of the University of Edinburgh (PPLS). This data, however, does not engage with the trajectory of Sámi and Kven language activism due to my wider project being focused just on the language activism of the Nynorsk movement.

3.6. Analysis: “mål” means language

My first major interaction with *Norsk Målungdom* occurred at the start of 2015 whilst as an exchange student in Oslo. My own decision to “switch” to Nynorsk from Bokmål caught the attention of an online Nynorsk magazine aimed at young people, whose feature on me led to an invitation from *Norsk Målungdom* to give a talk about the sociolinguistics of Scots and Gaelic at their annual “Haustkonferanse” (Autumn Conference). Over the course of a weekend in October 2015, this “conference” took the form of a two-night sleepover at a high school in the town of Spydeberg, comprising talks from guest speakers, campaigning workshops held by members, playing board games, having meals, singing songs, and having a raffle. This experience was also the first time I met several prominent faces within *Norsk Målungdom*. As with my own presentation, the Autumn Conference featured talks that were favourably engaged with other minority sociolinguistic contexts: for example, another talk discussed the minority Elfdalian/Övdalsk language of Sweden.

Discussion of Sámi was featured at the Autumn Conference. Gunnhild Skjold, gave a presentation that touched on the politics of Sámi signage in her home region. Referring to her experiences as a resident, she drew on

newspaper headlines and public discourse referring to instances where some prominent individuals appeared hostile to Sámi language plans for the city. Both of our talks were an exercise in reflection on the linguistic diversity around us, framed by the ideological reflexes of Nynorsk and empathetically supportive of minoritised linguistic communities. During my interactions with *Norsk Målungdom*, I gauged that the use of conferences and residentials offered opportunities for the organisation to engage with its membership and provide a social remit for young people with an interest in Nynorsk and dialects, yet this appears to have been conceptually extended to language generally.

As an integral part of the name of the Nynorsk and dialect organisations I have investigated (mållag, målungdom), “mål” in Norwegian can correspond with English “tongue” or “dialect”, and the term is employed by the Nynorsk movement frequently to represent the objectives of Nynorsk to reflect the variety of Norwegian spoken dialects and how Nynorsk has symbolically represented an ideological initiative to protect and curate them (see Almenningen 1992, 99; Brunstad 2017, 77). However, over time I have judged that younger activists are somewhat more engaged with “mål” being used beyond Nynorsk and dialects. At times, this liberal interpretation of “mål” is rather explicit. At their 2015 Annual General Meeting, *Norsk Målungdom* adopted official names in Kven (Norjan Kielinuoret) and the three main Sámi languages (Vuona Giellanuora, Nöörjen Gïelenoerh, Norgga Giellanuorat). Later on, committee member Fredrik Hope reported on this decision in the organisation’s newsletter:

> “På landsmøtet i Oslo vart det fatta mange vedtak, og eit av dei meir historiske vedtaka var namn på tre samiske språk og kvensk. […] *Norsk Målungdom* [er ikkje berre] ein organisasjon for nynorsk. Det

> er sjølvsagt nynorsken som er hovudsaka vår, men me er òg ein organisasjon for språkleg mangfald jamt over. Sett i ljos av dette vart det rettast å velja omsetjingar som fekk fram at mål tyder språk.”
>
> [At the AGM in Oslo there were many decisions taken, and one of the most historical decisions was adopting names in three Sámi languages and Kven. […] The Norwegian Language Youth [is not just] an organisation for Nynorsk. Of course, Nynorsk is our principal concern, but we are also an organisation for linguistic diversity everywhere. In light of this, we made sure we chose translations which made it clear that mål means language.]
>
> (Hope, Fredrik. 2015. “Ikkje berre *Norsk Målungdom* – ikkje berre nynorsk”, *Motmæle* #77, 2015)

Hope sets out that Nynorsk takes focus in *Norsk Målungdom*, but the remit of the organisation’s activities and outreach need not stop at Nynorsk. “Mål” has a wider meaning in practice: its scope can extend to all language. This positions *Norsk Målungdom* as an organisation for “linguistic diversity everywhere”, in consideration of Norway’s broader multilingualism. Following the successful adoption of this motion, several Målungdom-affiliated student societies collectively proposed a similar motion to the 2016 Annual General Meeting of *Noregs Mållag*. This explanation was given in the delegate pack:

> “[Noregs Mållag bør] vera blant dei fyrste til å visa solidaritet med samar og kvenar når språka deira vert pressa. Så er det klart at i det daglege arbeidet til Noregs Mållag får nynorsken og dialektane det meste av merksemda. […]

> Samstundes er ikkje det til hinder for at Mållaget tek visse prinsipielle, språkpolitiske standpunkt som er gyldige utover vårt eige tilfelle, og at me viser solidaritet med andre små og mellomstore språk. [...] Framleggsstillarane meiner det er på tide å synleggjera denne politikken, både internt i Mållaget og utetter i samfunnet […]”
>
> [(Noregs Mållag ought to) be amongst the first to show solidarity with Sámi and Kven people when their languages are being suppressed. Indeed, it is also clear that Nynorsk and dialects should get most of the attention in the every-day work of Noregs Mållag. […]
>
> At the same time, this doesn’t prevent the Mållag from taking specific principal language political stances which are applicable beyond our own situation and showing solidarity with other small and medium-sized languages. (…) The proposers believe that it is time to visually demonstrate this policy both within the Mållag and in wider society (…)]
>
> (Noregs Mållag 2016 Landsmøte, ‘Sakshefte’, p. 34-5)

The motion passed: *Noregs Mållag* now has names in Kven (Norjan Kielijoukko) and the Sámi languages (Vuona Giellasiebrre, Nöörjen Gïelesiebrie, Norgga Giellasearvi). I was in attendance as a delegate to witness the motion passing with acclaim, following several speeches in favour from younger delegates in the hall during the debate. Both the motion text above and speeches at the AGM reinforced the premise that other minority languages in Norway were being “suppressed” and that the organisation could do more to express solidarity whilst not detracting from the “every-day [Nynorsk and dialect] work” of *Noregs Mållag*. Conceptually, “mål” does not have to

necessarily refer to the diversity of Norwegian dialects but to linguistic variation universally (cf. Hoel 2001, 39-40), and this becomes a rhetorical starting point for activists to engage in solidarity with other language communities. Nynorsk is positioned as a minority language—amongst other “small and medium-sized languages”—and has common cause with other minoritised language varieties within the Norwegian context.

Engaging in a form of solidarity and allyship, the Nynorsk movement does not have to be a single-issue cause and can extend its mål-focus to the minoritised languages of other communities in Norway. I interpret this as part of the construction of a “linguistic diversity” ideology, where terms such as “språkmangfald” or “språkleg mangfald” (“language/linguistic diversity”) are consistently used to talk positively and empathetically about other minoritised languages, at times even intervening in public debates to defend Sámi and Kven language initiatives. Importantly, Nynorsk discourses about “linguistic diversity” have been traditionally rooted in an earlier ideology where Nynorsk represents tolerance for Norwegian dialects as a written unifier (see Hellevik 2001, 123). A newer interpretation of “linguistic diversity” was used rather enthusiastically in a *Norsk Målungdom* Facebook post to report on the approval of the naming motion:

> “Me er veldig kry av at *Noregs Mållag* gjorde som me gjorde i fjor, og vedtok namn på samisk og kvensk på #nmlm. Endå meir kry er me av dei dyktige studentmållaga våre, som kom med framlegget og fekk heile landsmøtesalen med seg. Fram for språkmangfaldet!” [We are very proud that *Noregs Mållag* did as we did last year and took on names in Sámi and Kven at #nmlm. We’re even more proud of our capable student language societies who proposed the motion and got the whole hall’s support. Forward with linguistic diversity!]

Facebook post, sharing an NRK Nyheter article about the *Noregs Mållag* AGM (@norskmalungdom, 19 April 2016)

“Forward with linguistic diversity!” is an overt statement of ideological direction for *Norsk Målungdom*, who also appear in their post to claim responsibility for the motion being passed. This would suggest that younger Nynorsk activists are attempting to spearhead concern, advocacy, and solidarity with Norway’s Indigenous language communities within the wider Nynorsk movement, to a degree. Such activity has developed in other campaigns; namely, issues surrounding public signage and schooling. In November 2015, *Norsk Målungdom* sent out a press release and several social media posts in reaction to a municipal decision to close a Sámi language school in Aarborte/Hatfjelldal, one of the last few Norwegian communities with Southern Sámi speakers:

> “Sørsamisk er eit truga språk som treng satsing – ikkje kutt. Regjeringa ynskjer å leggje ned Sameskolen i Midt-Noreg, ein av få skular som gjev undervising i sørsamisk. I staden bør partia på Stortinget leggje til rette for at fleire kommunar skiltar på sørsamisk, syte for fleire sørsamiske læremiddel og gje dei sørsamiske institusjonane økonomisk armslag slik at dei kan satse for framtida.”
>
> [Southern Sámi is a threatened language which needs investment – not cuts. The government wishes to close the Sámi school in Mid-Norway, one of few schools offering education in Southern Sámi. Instead, parliamentary parties need to make sure that more municipalities put up signage in Southern Sámi, get more Southern

> Sámi educational materials and give Southern Sámi institutions economic support so they can invest for the future.]
>
> (Facebook post, sharing a *framtida.no* article with statement from Fredrik Hope, @norskmalungdom, 2 November 2015)

As a young person’s organisation with school-age members, it is understandable that *Norsk Målungdom* is concerned with school language policy as a day-to-day issue; much of their outreach and membership drives are facilitated by invitations to visit high schools to talk to pupils across Norway about Nynorsk, dialects, Norwegian language history, as well as remind pupils that they have the right to use Nynorsk. On this specific occasion, they have used their online platform to raise awareness of an Indigenous language issue. The statement asks for the government decision to be reversed on account of the severely threatened status of Southern Sámi, framed by further policy demands, such as more signage in the local Indigenous language and supporting schools with more didactic materials in Southern Sámi, all of which resonate with their own priorities for how the state should treat Nynorsk and Nynorsk-users.

On other occasions since my observations began in 2015, *Norsk Målungdom* has used social media to display enthusiasm for Sámi and Kven events and to celebrate when other organisations and groups adopt names in Norway’s Indigenous languages; some posts on Instagram are a continuation of a campaign titled “Fleirspråkleg framtid” (*multilingual future*, see Figure 1) coinciding with the theme of the first “Haustkonferanse” I attended in 2015:

Figure 1: *Selection of Sámi/Kven-related Instagram posts from Norsk Målungdom (@malungdom)*

(*top left*) “We are marking Sámi language week!” (21 October 2019)

(*top right*) “Today we are celebrating the Day of the Kven people!” (16 March 2019)

(*bottom left*) “Hooray for the Labour Party Youth, who this weekend adopted official names in Nynorsk, Northern Sami and Kven!” (22 October 2018)

(*bottom right*) “Everyone has the right to know their own mother tongue, be it one or more.” (13 June 2018)

As part of my doctoral fieldwork before the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic, I was able to travel to Oslo in 2019 to conduct semi-structured interviews with five different members of *Norsk Målungdom* as well as a member of staff in *Noregs Mållag*. Whilst I am unable to provide a full synopsis of all six transcripts, there were a few occasions where the meaning and use of “mål” and “språkmangfald” were discussed with some of my participants. It would appear that the conceptual meaning of “mål” appears to remain a matter of open interpretation in the wider Nynorsk movement. In conversation with Svein Soldal Eggerud, the *nestleiar* (deputy chair) of *Norsk Målungdom*, I asked whether he was a language activist and whether older activists in *Noregs Mållag* would call themselves a “språkaktivist” (language activist). Eggerud responded by saying that he is a language activist, but older folk within the wider Nynorsk movement may have different perspectives. “Språkaktivist” is a label that can carry meanings that contrast with what “mål” has historically meant in *målrørsla*:

Eggerud: Ja, dette er meg som spekulerer litt då, men eg trur kanskje det er nokre som ikkje ville vore heilt komfortabel med, eller ikkje visste heilt kva det låg i den merkelappen [språkaktivist]. For dei ville kanskje berre kalla seg for målmann eller målkvinne, og at det var implisert at det var nynorsk dei jobba med. Men når eg kallar meg for språkaktivist, så inkluderer eg på ein måte synet om at eg ikkje berre jobbar eg for nynorsk, men alle, og for at alle språk har livets rett. Ein skal ha toleranse og respekt for andre språk.

[Yes, this is me speculating a little, but I think maybe some people wouldn’t be completely comfortable with or wouldn’t know exactly what that label [language activist] meant. As they would rather just

call themselves målmann or målkvinne, and it would be implied that it was Nynorsk they were working with. But when I call myself a language activist, I include in a way a view that I am not just working for Nynorsk, but everyone, and for that all languages have a right to life. You should have tolerance and respect for other languages.]

Understanding that the mid-20th-century activism of the Nynorsk movement had been campaigning for societal tolerance of Norway’s dialectal diversity (the “dialect wave”, *snakk dialekt, skriv nynorsk*, etc.), Eggerud’s contemporary stance appears to have broadened this position by appealing to “tolerance and respect for other languages”. Eggerud explains that “språkaktivist” might be too wide in scope for some Nynorsk activists in *Noregs Mållag* (who may prefer being called mål-man or mål-woman), whereas he conceptualises his own activism as more than a focus on Nynorsk in contrast with the older generation of activists. However, Eggerud’s characterisation of the older activist stance should not necessarily be dismissed. Earlier that week, in one interview with a long-standing employee of *Noregs Mållag* (Ingar Arnøy), I had noted that Norwegian “mål” could be differentiated from other types of “språk”. As with Eggerud, I asked Arnøy whether he is a “språkaktivist”:

Arnøy: Altså, eg er jo målaktivist, ja.
[So, I am actually a mål-activist, yes.]
Int.: Målaktivist?
[Mål-activist?]
Arnøy: Ja, det er jo ikkje det same som språkaktivist.
[Yes, it’s not really the same as language activist.]

Int.: Nei.

[No.]

Arnøy: For ein språkaktivist det kan jo mange vere, altså det kan det jo, ja, teiknspråkaktivist, døvespråk, altså, eller kort og godt ein som ønsker at det er språkglede skal du seie. Og, så, det er jo mange typar av, altså, av språkaktivisme. Målaktivisme er jo spesifikt for oss da. Men det er klart, eg er jo sjølvsagt ein språkaktivist òg, ja, det er eg jo.

[Because many people could be a language activist, so it can, yes, sign-language activist, Deaf-language, so in short anyone who wants there to be joy through language, let’s say. And so, there are of course many types of, basically, of language activism. Mål-activism is really specific for us. But clearly, I am of course a language activist as well, of course I am.]

The contradictory admission that “of course [he is] a language activist”, directly after stating that he was not, undercovers again wider, active conceptual associations between a targeted defined “mål” and a wider “språk”. “Mål” clearly has a specific, marked, Nynorsk-oriented meaning to Arnøy, despite acknowledging its conceptual links to “språk”. One can draw from his statement that “mål” is conceptually unique, although his comments also suggest that the distinction between “mål” and “språk” is a question of practical focus on the local context rather than a rejection of being associated with other language issues. Although Arnøy did not compare Nynorsk activism with Indigenous language advocacy, he drew in other forms of language—other forms of minority languages, specifically sign languages—against which his “mål-activism” can be compared.

Finally, I was able to speak with Gunnhild Skjold, and ask what *Norsk Målungdom* aims to do when interacting with other minority language communities. By reflecting on the language activist organisations that exist in Scotland, I asked her if it is important for activists within *Norsk Målungdom* to engage in work in solidarity. In response, she replied that it is a “tids- og kapasitetsspørsmål” (question of time and capacity), but that her organisation does set out to work alongside other language groups:

Skjold: Og det står også i statuttane til målungdommen, altså våre prinsipp-program, grunnlagsdokument og kva skal ein seie […] jo, at vi skal søke solidaritet med andre språkorganisasjonar. Og vi jobbar jo mykje med, i Noreg då, ikkje berre med nynorsk, men også med å støtte kvensk, støtte samisk, støtte andre språkgrupper i Noreg. Og den same tanken, den her språkmangfaldstanken som vi legg til grunn for arbeidet vårt.

[And it also says in the statutes of the Målungdom, basically our policy documents, our founding documents, what to say […] yes, that we will look for solidarity with other language organisations. And we work a lot with, in Norway, not just with Nynorsk, but also with supporting Kven, supporting Sámi, supporting other language groups in Norway. And the same idea, this idea of linguistic diversity which we base our work on.]

The last sentence of this excerpt refers to *Norsk Målungdom* having an “idea of linguistic diversity”, which suggests that the use of this term in their activism is an explicit and intentional act. Her statement reinforces the development of Nynorsk activism into a venture which “supports” other language issues, and that this is grounded in an appreciation of Norway’s

contemporary multilingualism. On wider reflection of the historical trajectory of the Nynorsk movement, the incorporation of Norway’s Indigenous languages represents a significant difference from the original ideologies that underpinned Norway’s National Romantic period. As a Nynorsk organisation, *Norsk Målungdom* has instituted a more ideologically sensitive role, and as shown in other examples, this is carried out to some extent in their activism and through internal outreach within the wider Nynorsk movement.

Before summarising, I should first state that the examples I have described are not exhaustive of the entire relationship between *Norsk Målungdom* and Sámi/Kven language issues, as I have only set out to retrospectively analyse a complex set of data where my attention was not principally drawn to Indigenous themes. Nevertheless, by drawing on some examples of organisational activity as well as one-on-one interviews, I will have demonstrated that “mål” has a dynamic range of meanings and does shift to and from Nynorsk-centred ideologies. Some Nynorsk activists—and primarily younger activists in *Norsk Målungdom*—have elaborated on the dynamism of Nynorsk activism and its metadiscourses by constructing ideological narratives which operationalise the minority status and wider civil society societal concern for minoritised languages such as Sámi and Kven. Talk about “language/linguistic diversity” reinforces an ideological discourse that Nynorsk and dialects form part of a diverse linguistic space, and that Nynorsk activism consequently can intersect with initiatives to promote and defend Sámi and Kven language interests.

3.7. Discussion and conclusion: more than Noreg and Norge

Within the unique sociolinguistic context of two standard orthographies of the same Norwegian language and the frequent use of broad dialects in social life, the *målrørsla* has traditionally fronted the simultaneous defence of both

Nynorsk and the Norwegian language’s dialectal diversity. Historically, Norwegian dialectal diversity has been operationalised as a cultural symbol to construct linguistic identity through dialectal idiosyncrasy, and the ideological foundations for this—and emergence of the Norwegian mål-movement—were not initially grounded in an ideology that encompassed other ethnolinguistic groups. Nevertheless, the discourse of contemporary Nynorsk language activism appears dynamic and can embed wider opposition to cultural hegemony through a celebration of modern linguistic diversity. Younger activists appear engaged in a rhetorical broadening of what is meant by “mål” (dialect/tongue/language) and “språkmangfald” (linguistic diversity) as terms in extant activist metalanguage. Active metapragmatic awareness allows activists to reframe these terms and rally behind Indigenous language issues, despite this not being their main organisational focus.

Engaging in a positive discourse about linguistic diversity and multilingualism is a strategy in language maintenance efforts, especially in the context of language revitalisation (see Wurm 2014, 15-17) where governments, non-governmental organisations and minority language advocates attempt to develop arguments that legitimise the institution of lesser-used language varieties by drawing on the educational/cognitive utility (see Havas & Vulchanova 2018) and socioeconomic value of linguistic diversity (see de Bres 2014). That Nynorsk activists have become engaged with Indigenous language issues as a matter of broader “språkleg mangfald” (linguistic diversity)—through signage campaigns, by supporting Indigenous language schools, demanding that Sámi and Kven names be instituted at both government and grassroots level, through raising awareness internally—is also not too surprising on wider reflection of the ideological radicalism of Nynorsk which, in this current context, envelopes some Indigenous themes (see Piller 2016, 29ff, cf. Kuhn 2020, xii).

The cases I bring forward suggest that within the younger Nynorsk activist community, the ideology of Nynorsk as representative of a campaign for “linguistic diversity” is continually recast to incorporate an ideologically modern concern for Indigenous languages to better reflect Norway’s multilingualism and build a coalition of solidarity (cf. Smith 1995, 18; Huss & Lindgren 2011, 10). As a historic platform of counter-cultural struggle and resistance against cultural hegemony, Nynorsk activists—more specifically, younger activists—have campaigned for minority issues that exist outside of the purview of traditional narratives about Nynorsk and its activist movement; in other words, the Nynorsk movement is not just about Nynorsk (cf. Allardt 1984, 197-8), something that has been exemplified before through activists’ engagement in various political campaigns in the past (Torp & Vikør 2014, 226). It is expected that language activists engage in different activities and discourses as a matter of reinforcing their own ideological cause, and whilst such behaviour is not uncommon (Combs & Penfield 2012: 473), it is under-researched.

I would posit that these activists are likely engaging in “emotional divestment” from traditionally more ethnocentric ideologies (Giles 2019, 259); younger activists are more attuned to how minorities had been systematically problematised by past governments and systemic, ideological exclusion (Heller & Duchêne 2016, 142; Fleming & Ansaldo 2020, 4), and now demonstrate “political will” as civil society to address institutionalised discrimination (Viinikka-Kallinen 2019, 14-15), even if through symbolic gesture politics (cf. Cincotta 2008, 357-9). It is appropriate to say that this performative allyship is demonstrably self-serving for Nynorsk activists; it reinforces their own narrative about Nynorsk being a disenfranchised minority language in need of societal and governmental support. Showing solidarity with other language groups gives the Nynorsk movement some currency in

debates about language as part of the rhetorics of preservation and political legitimation (see Blommaert 2011, 127; Perez-Milans & Soto 2016, 55). However, at no point in engaging with Sámi and Kven discourses have I witnessed these young Nynorsk activists intending to represent Indigenous people’s interests; they are not taking the lead in Indigenous linguistic or wider cultural reclamation (cf. Gresczyk 2011, 32). Norway’s Indigenous people will continue their drive for cultural reclamation regardless of what Nynorsk activists do in their own remit.

That being said, language scholars, linguists, and other engaged actors such as activists should/will come to realise that their participation in sociolinguistic discourses positions them as agents in the construction of dominant language ideologies (Hornberger 2017, 162-3). As instituting Kven and Sámi through language policy is not in itself a guarantor of use and societal acceptance, the symbolism of top-down legislation is “meaningless without institutional support” (Safran 2015, 259). Therefore, from their position, with their platform as another language organisation, there is enhanced awareness in *Norsk Målungdom* and the wider Nynorsk movement of how their own language activism necessarily intersects with other minority cultural efforts—specifically, languages like Sámi and Kven which have institutional recognition already—and how gaining further recognition and institutional use of minority languages is a collective common struggle (cf. Gal 2006, 17).

This article has shown that today’s young Nynorsk activists draw on Norway’s other linguistic minorities within a narrative that espouses “linguistic diversity”. They engage with nascent popular awareness of Norway’s multilingual reality through Indigenous languages and also legitimate their own ideological discourse through this narrative. One could interpret discussion of other languages by Nynorsk activists merely as a passing interest

or curiosity about other languages, although using this ethnographic work as a springboard, I propose—alternatively—their engaged interest constitutes a form of (supplementary) language activism. I have not presented these observations to argue that Nynorsk activists are Sámi or Kven language activists per se, but their activism does incorporate Sámi and Kven linguistic objectives, and active allyship in multilingual contexts, such as this one, offers important grounds for revaluating research traditions which discuss language activism more rudimentarily as a unifocal concern with a specific language. Further study would necessarily have to engage with how it may be problematic that organisations within *målrørsla*—grounded historically on a monolinguistic nationalist project—now engage with and embrace Indigenous language diversity as a form of ‘multilingual turn’-inspired performative allyship within the context of a minority language struggle.

In the postcolonial context, Norway’s sociolinguistic situation should be viewed as more than a conceptual divide between a Bokmål *Norge* and a Nynorsk *Noreg* when talking about Norwegian sociolinguistics (cf. Bull 2007, 139) as contemporary research now acknowledges Norway’s multilingual reality beyond traditional talk about Norwegian dialect diversity and the politics of Norwegian-specific language policy (see or example Røyneland & Jensen 2020). Through critical applied approaches to linguistic research, scholars are beginning to pay greater attention to who the participants in sociolinguistic discourse are, and this article reflects this trend. As a hypothesis-generating account of Nynorsk language activism, my findings foster a more critical and nuanced treatment of language activism (and what is meant by the term) universally and how activists and other social actors work beyond focusing on specific language communities, or even language itself.

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4. Linguists, academia, and the legitimation of the Scots language

Sent to *Ampersand*

Abstract: Results from Scotland's 2011 census reported that 26% of respondents have a speaking ability in the Scots language, the first time this was asked in a national survey. However, it is difficult to gauge to what extent residents of Scotland conceptualise Scots as an autonomous language variety, not least due to the Scots language's relative mutual intelligibility with English, dialectal diversity, and there being no official standard. As Scots has been discursively constructed over many decades by different social actors, this paper evaluates how academic engagement institutionalises both the naming of Scots as an autonomous language variety and metadiscourses feeding into activist narratives. Focusing on the contribution of academics in situated discourses of Scots language advocacy, I present a metapragmatic analysis of observational data at a site of Scots language advocacy and metadiscourse amongst academics, Scots language advocates and other members of the public. As part of sociolinguistics' ethnographic turn, newer theoretical perspectives position language activists as fluid communities of practice, and I discuss where distinctions between the prototypical "activist" and "linguist/academic" may be less evident in the Scots context due to historical co-operative engagement in the construction of metadiscourse where language ideological claims are legitimised.

Keywords: *language activism, Scots language, linguistic ethnography, autoethnography, metadiscourse, metapragmatics*

4.1. Introduction

At the turn of the 19th century in Europe, conceptual associations between nationality and linguistic identity fervently developed in various territories and historical national communities, resulting in long-lasting ideologies about nationhood, literacy, and social mobility. The effects of this historical turn continue to permeate different discourses about national identity and cultural belonging across Europe and beyond, especially where language indexicalises a form of cultural and/or national differentiation. One can look to the development of written standards for the Norwegian language following independence from Denmark in 1814 (Bakke & Teigen 2001), the political discourse between different named varieties of south-eastern Slavic in former Yugoslavia (Ćalić 2018), or campaigns to give status to lesser-recognised language varieties. Each of these examples illustrates how various metadiscourses (social discourses about language; see Coupland & Jaworski 1998; Camps 2018) actively negotiate differing ideological stances in dynamic, complex settings in an attempt to garner both conceptual acceptance and institutional status of a language.

As a culturally regimented activity, the ideological conceptualisation of a language is framed by not just individual behaviours in as much as they represent the use of a given named language variety at a given point in time, but also various symbolic institutions such as governments, cultural entities and—as has been evident in the case of post-Romantic era Europe—educational institutions due to their role in implementing policy goals such as universal literacy (Kruse 2016). As such, dominant and emerging language ideologies are reinforced, disputed, or torn down by a wide range of contributing social actors—politicians, community leaders, activists—in dynamic and ever-changing settings, where different language ideologies represent active renegotiation of (a specific) language's cultural capital as a

symbolic resource. In turn, once-disputed languages may be instituted through political and cultural apparatus such as legislation or educational policy (see Jahr 2014 for a presentation of the case of modern Norwegian) and presumed differentiation between named language varieties can be actively contested in the public arena by different organisations and political groups (e.g., discourses around extending the use of the name Catalan to describe Valencian or Balearic dialects; see Joan & Marí 2019). One understudied example is the status and recognition of Scots in Scotland, its public figures, advocates or activists, and the role of different contemporary institutions in public discourse about the language today.[28]

Concerning the aims of this paper, I will present a metapragmatic analysis of ethnographic observations at a Scots language symposium at the University of Edinburgh in 2020, which I co-organised with other postgraduate linguists and academic staff (described further in section four). Specifically, I discuss how academic work around Scots necessarily engages with wider language activism. One may position academics, including linguists, as contributors in language activist communities of practice, since to engage in public-facing talk about Scots—a language with disputed status and public acceptance as a separate language—is to participate in a developing Scots metadiscourse. In other words, to speak of Scots within academic settings as a language contributes to processes of rhetorical and ideological legitimation where Scots is framed a language in its own right.

[28] By "Scots", I refer to the west Germanic language variety called Scots, historically related to Old English, and not Scottish Gaelic (a Goidelic Celtic language variety); see Lawson 2014b.

4.2. The Scots language before—and after—the turn of the millennium

Scots represents not just Scotland's administrative and intellectual past as an independent kingdom with its distinct institutions, but also a language variety with features preserved in the everyday spoken dialects of many communities in Scotland. Since the 1707 Act of Union between Scotland and England, and with political centralisation firmly rooted in England thereafter, standard English has over time emerged as the dominant standard for schooling and administration across Britain through a process of gradual Anglicisation (see Barbour 2000; Lawson 2014b). As such, there has been a consistent conceptual blur between *Scots* and (*Scottish*) *English*, not least due to the historically documented existence of a Scots language providing an opportune name to distinct vernacular Scottish speech (Lawson 2014b), but also the complex evolution of speech varieties descended from Old English (including dialects of Scots and English), and the relative mutual intelligibility between them along a vernacular continuum between what is considered "Scots" and, conversely, "English".

Cultural fervour in the late 1800s and early 1900s gave rise to what has been referred to as the "Scottish Renaissance", in which various poets, fiction writers and scholars recorded songs and folk tales in the vernacular tradition of lowland Scotland, documenting Scots oral tradition (Corbett 1999; Bann & Corbett 2015). This activity did not lead to the development of any instituted Scots written or spoken standard besides proposals of literary standards such as *Lallans* (see Murison 1977), although it did contribute to recognition of the Scots language with regard to its use as a "creative medium" in the arts than as a language of daily use, schooling, or administration (Lawson 2014a: 144-

5).[29] We see a continuation of Scots language documentation, revitalisation, and advocacy in various cultural and political waves today, including the updating of national dictionaries and continued documentation of dialectal variation (see Aitken 1994; Wilson 2012). In amongst this work have been various debates about the Scots language: not least what might be done to differentiate it from English sufficiently in the popular imagination (Lawson 2014b), but also how it ought to be standardised, how we encompass regional varieties of Scots which are considered distinct (for example "Doric", see Leslie 2020), and how to know what constitutes "good" or "bad" Scots stylistically or lexically (Kirk 1987: 69ff; see also Macafee 1994).

4.2.1. Contemporary use and the 2011 census

The dynamics of contemporary globalisation, industrialisation and socioeconomic mobility have hampered the autonomy of Scots in the public imagination as a separate language variety (cf. Eckert 2018: 17ff), and continued political union as part of the United Kingdom caused a literary language shift away from Scots and its own written conventions at the time (known as "Scottis", see Lawson 2014b: 5; compare developments in Dano-Norwegian, see Janson 2018), yet continued efforts by other cultural practitioners, politicians, authors and poets alike have maintained Scotland's linguistic distinctiveness in literary tradition and the spoken word, "[advocating the] use [of Scots], [promoting] its survival and [pointing] to its long and legitimate historical pedigree" as a marker of linguistic difference and national identity (Jones 1995: 15). Furthermore, despite union with

[29] However, the lack of an accepted Scots standard, and the multiple forms of written expression in contemporary Scots writing may allow the language to be both radical and "anti-national"; modern Scots is an exercise in opposition to remnant colonial ideologies about language, centralisation of power, and homogenisation of cultural identity (see Giles 2019)

England, many national institutions such as the Scottish church, education system and legal system to this day have not been absorbed into any sort of British amalgamation operated in London (cf. Orridge 1982).

However, despite ongoing political developments in the country, including the independence campaign in addition to debates about the extent of Scotland's devolution settlement, the role of language and national culture plays less of a significant role in discourse around national identity and cultural autonomy when compared to other countries; only infrequently do Scottish Gaelic or Scots come up as themes in debates about Scottish identity, and debates often resort to a more nuanced discussion around the economics of independence, as well as sustained differences of political opinion between Scotland and the rest of the UK (Kruse 2016; Craig 2018). Notwithstanding this historical context, recent developments in government policy have brought Scots language themes to the fore of Scotland's political institutions. Since the reconvening of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 and the establishment of the devolved Scottish Government, Scottish Gaelic, Scots, and British Sign Language have been recognised as Scotland's "other main language groups"[30], and both Scottish Gaelic and Scots are recognised as indigenous languages of Scotland through the UK's ratification of the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*. The listing of these languages together in publications has not led to any specific legal or material equity between them, although by naming Scots as one of them, top-down institutions such as the Scottish Government explicitly acknowledge the language alongside other named language varieties. More than a decade has passed since the government issued the 2011 national census which, for the

[30] "Languages": https://www.gov.scot/policies/languages/ - accessed 15 June 2022

first time, asked respondents to report their abilities in Scots.[31] Roughly 26% of the population reported a speaking ability in Scots (see Macafee 2017). The development of this census question had first and foremost followed out from the recommendations published in a report by the Scottish Government's 2009 Scots Language Working Group, in an attempt to determine various ways in which the Scots language could be promoted through top-down initiatives and have its status raised.

At the time of writing, we are awaiting the results of the 2022 national census, which once again asks respondents about their Scots language skills.[32] However, with no other census data on Scots for comparison in the meantime, the 2011 data evidently do not tell us if the perception of Scots as a language has increased or decreased, or whether more or fewer informants acknowledge Scots as part of their own personal linguistic repertoire. However, whilst the data do offer insights into the geographical distribution of where respondents have reported skills in Scots, and how the perception of Scots is stratified by other demographics such as age (Macafee 2017, also consult Leslie 2020), perhaps more importantly, the 2011 census laid down one of several modern-day institutional and symbolic foundations for Scots' ideological legitimacy as a language in its own right. The Scots language question is indicative of a successful attempt to intervene in an extant metadiscourse about the Scots language, using state instruments such as the census to legitimise ideological claims about the Scots language through a

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[31] *Census 2011*, Question 16 ("Which of these can you do? Tick all that apply. [English, Scottish Gaelic, Scots] [Understand, Speak, Read, Write]"); see https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/media/hy3dprby/language_topic_report.pdf -- accessed 27 June 2022

[32] *Scotland's Census 2022*, Question 14 ("Can you understand, speak, read, and write Scottish Gaelic or Scots? Tick all that apply."); see https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/documents/scotland-s-census-2022-question-set/ -- accessed 27 June 2022

survey category in a process of social scientific legitimation (Sebba 2019). The political and social contexts surrounding Scots today are by no means unique to Scotland—compare, as an example, English/Scots mutual intelligibility and historical relationship between the two with debates around non-standard regiolects such as Gallo and standard French in Brittany (see Keller 2019; Patton 2020)—but given the historical trajectory of Scots language issues in Scottish society, it is not just top-down political instruments such as the census which have moved forward with conceptual legitimation of the Scots language, as I will go on to illustrate.

4.2.2. Schools, universities, and wider academia

Political interest specifically in the Scots language likely goes back at least a century, when Scots dialects were interpreted as a cultural reference point for the Scottish nation in a post-industrial world (Costa 2012: 99), altogether indexicalising linguistic authenticity in the literature, poetry, and music of modern Scotland. Emerging out of the so-called Scottish Renaissance have been various special historical interest groups such as the *Scots Leid Associe* (Scots Language Society) and contemporary public bodies such as the *Scots Language Centre*, although no one single organisation fronts Scots language advocacy as a whole. Scots language activism is consequently represented by different actors in contemporary society, actively engaging authors, poets, playwrights, politicians, educators, and academic researchers (McClure 1980 & 2000; Wilson 2012; Giles 2019; Needler & Fairbairn 2021).

Scottish universities and other higher educational settings themselves act as a repository of cultural autonomy and study of national literature, folklore, and cultural history. Indeed, it was a perceived decline of Scots that had been brought up by communities at Scottish universities and national media that gave rise to an “increase in the use of Scots” as a counter-cultural

reaction of "literary and cultural independence" well into the 20th century (Unger 2010: 101-2). Modern-day interest in the Scots language is contextualised by a change in attitudes towards non-standard varieties of everyday vernacular speech, alongside emerging national sentiment in Scottish civil society, various university departments have engaged with Scottish studies from the 1950s onwards (Aitken 1994). As a result, we have witnessed cross-university, long-term corpus work such as the completion of the Scottish National Dictionary in the 1970s, the creation of literary journals like *Lallans: The Journal o Scots Airts an Letters*, and a translation of the New Testament (see Aitken 1994; Sebba 2019).

Alongside these developments, university societies such as the *Scots Leid Quorum* at the University of Aberdeen were established, attempts were made to teach Scots as an additional language, conferences on Scots were organised (McClure 1980) and, indeed, some have submitted PhD theses in Scots (for example, Allan 1998). Yet, aside from more recent policy declarations and the 2011 census, education and schooling have also become considerably instrumental in Scots policy initiatives, especially where research on bi/multilingualism and reported cognitive benefits are used to front the promotion of Scots literacy and oral skills amongst younger generations (see McPake & Arthur 2006). Whilst universal literacy in English through schooling was indeed one of the contributing factors to the decline of Scots, some schools have more recently been sites of various language initiatives such as student-led coursework projects in Scots (Needler & Fairbairn 2021) and the development of the Scottish Qualification Authority's *Scots Language Award* as part of the national literacy curriculum (see Unger 2013: 17ff).

The status and use of Scots as an autonomous language, rather than a non-standard variety or dialect of English, would suggest that both Scots and English are on the same level as autonomous languages, directly challenging

extant ideologies about linguistic identity and the status of this vernacular versus standard English. Consequently, in the run-up to the results of the 2022 census, further examination of the activities of various social actors in Scots language advocacy gives us an opportunity to witness the renegotiation of Scots ideologies in everyday life.

4.3. Language activism, observational fieldwork and metapragmatic analysis

Language activism is a site of critical enquiry in linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics, surveying social debates and actions where language issues represent campaigns for social justice (Putra 2018), the socio-political potential of language-users' agency (Heller & Duchêne 2016; Keller 2019), and processes of cultural revitalisation and reclamation (Albury & Carter 2018). My research is concerned with examining and assessing how (a) language and linguistic themes are engaged within the public space by varying social actors, and more specifically the "activists" or "advocates" amongst them. The research on Scots presented in the paper forms part of a broader doctoral project which comprises three different case studies of minority language activism in contemporary Europe; whilst other case studies (one on Norwegian Nynorsk, another on Catalan) are not referred to in this paper, there is overlap in methods and analytical approaches.

The study of language activism, advocacy, revitalisation, or reclamation all encompass a broad sociolinguistic survey of various individuals, collectives, movements, and socio-political motions where themes of identity, heritage, minority/majority status, migration, and contestation of power come together in a nexus of ideology construction. What makes an individual specifically an "activist", or how social action constitutes "activism" in the public space, are both open questions that this study addresses by focusing on the role of

universities and their academics in the metadiscourse of the Scots language. Whilst some studies have focused their analysis of language activism on activity specific to Indigenous communities subject to colonial legacies (Makoni & Criss 2017), assertions of ethnic identity and self-determination in the public space (Flores 2017; Dołowy-Rybińska 2018), or efforts to revitalise a severely threatened or extinct language (Sallabank 2013; Urla 2012), language activism may not necessarily need to be treated theoretically as a phenomenon with essentially defined attributes. Rather, due to the meaning-making nature of social action and language being used as cultural capital, "activism" may broadly constitute various cases of social action, related to language, which are performed by diverse actors within fluid communities of practice (De Korne 2021, see also Avineri et al. 2019).

With the construction of ideological discourse as a theoretical starting point, I focus primarily on associations between named language varieties (such as Scots), language more generally, and wider social or cultural debates by contextualising the behaviour of "culturally embedded speaker[s]" (Irvine & Gal 2008: 78), including academics as a category of social actor. That is to say that ideological stances are frequently represented and reinterpreted in the public space by actors with varying roles and responsibilities as they engage with a metadiscourse: evolving rhetorical narratives of *language about language* (Kymlicka 2001, Edwards 2006). This allows for activism to be interpreted as participative, accounting for speaker agency (see, for example, Schwartz 2018), notions of agentive *linguistic citizenship* in multilingual contexts (Stroud 2001) and allowing linguistic ethnographers like myself to also account for different or unexpected manifestations of language activism in social life (Combs & Penfield 2012).

4.3.1. Data collection and analysis

I examine academia and universities as an ethnographic site of metadiscourse in as far as they are host to "situated social actors" whose behaviour can be interpreted through a metapragmatic analysis (Jaffe 2007: 57). As a snapshot of a broader set of observations, I offer situated perspective on Scots metadiscourse in an academic setting. As a metapragmatic analysis, I highlight language ideologies as they are "performed" in the public space (Blommaert 2011: 127ff), framed by broader contextualising cultural behaviours which indexicalise varying stances within Scots language metadiscourse. Other active ethnographic fieldwork which contextualises my observations, including semi-structured interviews which began in late 2019, took place prior to the Coronavirus pandemic. My other fieldwork data collected prior to 2020 included ethnographic jottings at public Scots language events (including the inaugural 2019 *Scots Language Awards* ceremony in Glasgow [33]), followed by notes taken at the University of Edinburgh's *Scots@ed* symposium on 25 January 2020.

Alongside three other postgraduate students at the University of Edinburgh, I co-organised a one-day Scots language symposium which was host to speakers and panel guests from a range of universities and civil society organisations—*Scots@ed*—on 25 January 2020.[34] This was the second iteration of this symposium at the university and drew on Scots and Scottish English being specialisations of the department of Linguistics and English Language. The event itself invited speakers from the Universities of Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Edinburgh, comprising both academic staff and doctoral

[33] Not to be confused with the *Scots Language Award* issued by the Scottish Qualifications Authority

[34] "Scots@ed": https://www.ed.ac.uk/ppls/linguistics-and-english-language/news/scots-ed -- accessed 15 June 2022

researchers.[35] In addition, individuals from government agencies and Scots advocacy organisations were also featured on our programme representing *Education Scotland*, the *Scots Language Centre*, and the recently constituted group *Oor Vyce*. Not all potential Scots organisations were present, such as the *Scots Leid Associe*.

I jotted notes throughout *Scots@ed* of examples of metalanguage during the presentations specifically given by academic staff and scholars, and these are mapped out in a chronological, descriptive analysis. I present the *Scots@ed* event as a metadiscursive site, limiting my focus primarily on how Scots metadiscourse is negotiated by academics in a public-facing setting. Ethnographic data in the form of jottings and fieldnotes are analysed by highlighting where and how they actively renegotiate and construct narratives about language, not just by explicit language ideological statements, but by various linguistic practices that "feed into" ideological discourse about language (Verschueren 1998: 65).

4.3.2. Positionality and ethics

In line with the University of Edinburgh's Linguistics and English Language ethics guidelines, observational data are gathered from events open to the public. I do not consider myself a speaker of Scots in as far as I grew up in the south of England until the age of 18. As an ethnographic study and given my own personal relationships with participants including my own active involvement in Scottish political activism, my positionality is informed by both my insider role as event co-organiser and friend to some of those attending the event, as well as an outsider role as I grew up in England.

[35] "Scots@ed Programme": https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/scotsed-2020-programme.pdf - accessed 15 June 2022

The implications of sharing common concerns and relationships with those engaged in the promotion and defence of a disputed language variety may be viewed as compromising for linguistic researchers (see Hudley 2013). Linguists' positionality can be polemicised where socio-political debates feature in their research, and one may abuse their position by neither addressing nor accounting for personal biases (Bowern 2015). However, following practice in Lubet (2018) and Gal & Irvine (2019), it is inherently implied that my gaze as participant-observer is drawn more to some sites and events, and less to others. Ethnographic methods are nevertheless an appropriate approach to situated research as they also are strengthened by building rapport with contacts as well as scoping out access to participants or connections to different organisations (see Bernard 2006; Copland & Creese 2015; De Fina 2020). Consequently, the aim of my fieldwork is to provide a specific account of metadiscourse in one social setting, and not from the perspective of a Scots speaker.

4.4. Scots@ed as a site of metadiscourse

An early-morning conversation between myself and one member of the public at the coffee-urn already highlights the significance of a Scots event in an academic setting. The event has yet to start, but after informing her of my role as co-organiser, she informs me about her own frustrations with the way Scots has been treated in the public arena—"I blame MacDiarmid"[36]—referring to the purported literary elitism that has been stoked by groups such as the *Scots Leid Associe*. To begin proceedings, the plenary talk from Glasgow's Joanna Kopaczyk is introduced by my colleague Lisa Gotthard. Kopaczyk is introduced

[36] Hugh MacDiarmid, pen name of Christopher Murray Grieve (1892-1978) – poet, political activist, and proponent of *Lallans*.

by her full title—Senior Lecturer in Scots and English—which Gotthard remarks is "quite the title", likely because it is the only role at a Scottish university which specifies Scots alongside, separately from and before English. I had met and spoken with Kopaczyk before, as we both gave short talks to the University of Glasgow's Linguistics Society at a pub during a nationwide university strike; activism as the role of a linguist or academic was a pertinent theme not just in conversation with her but also the students who were there to listen. Joanna starts her talk in Scots—it is a "gae pleasure" and she's "gae chuffed" to be able to present on the topic, "takin tent o Scots"—and this all evokes a certain vernacular style of language that differentiates itself from the more standard English she uses in the rest of the presentation: "my regular means of academic communication". Her presentation of Scots and her research on the language is focused on Scots being "a linguistic variety not uniformly recognised" and the role of academics is called into question.

In discussing this, she raises the issue of expectations of Scots speakers to use a form of language that is considered authentic; the main focus is always authenticity when Scots is compared to English and seen by the public as its "ugly sister". She draws in parallels with her own Polish identity, background, and infancy, where distinctions between "good" or "bad" language are a major learning exercise when studying a new language, and so in the Scots context, parents have a role to play in how they value the language they speak: "let's educate those parents as well". Kopaczyk then raises a question: "Scotland has a heritage of status-raising", and maybe we as an academic community are in a better situation than before to go back to the communities themselves and give confidence and legitimacy to the way people speak in a way that values Scots. One of the comments she receives from the audience suggests that "public awareness is the realm of linguists", to which Kopaczyk replies "why do you need a linguist to do this and that? … that's a problem!". She then

states that it is so ingrained that people do not treat Scots autonomously, much to her own frustration: “it [Scots] has a medieval history, for God’s sake”. The differentiation between groups of Scots speakers is presented as a result of historical parallels, and a denial of Scots’ role as a language which has a particular social function beyond the vernacular. She points to the example of Catalonia and use of Catalan in the public environment in an attempt to raise Catalan’s status. Scots, on the other hand, is assigned a low register socially, and there is a peculiarity where minds of Scots speakers are in part “colonised” by the situation and the obfuscation of what Scots is when compared with English.

After a while we are joined by Dawn Leslie from the University of Aberdeen who presents a summary of her PhD thesis. Her work is a perceptual dialectological study of Doric, referring to the name used to describe north-eastern Scots. The major initial block in a project like this is how Doric is discursively differentiated from Scots, with additional arguments about where Doric is actually located/where speakers are based. Leslie discusses different media interpretations of Doric, as “it might seem simple; it’s just a dialect in north-east Scotland”, but it is more than just a label for a linguistic group of Scots. The prevalence of Doric exceptionalism is, according to Leslie, a “fairly recent development”, but the use of Doric as a non-geographic term—beyond a vague “up a bit and to the right”—create further issues. Doric cannot be essentially defined, and it is not a purely linguistic issue; concerns about mutual intelligibility do not seem to convince those who insist that their language is Doric rather than Scots, and this also muddies the extent to which we can judge census data about Scots, for example.

We also hear from E Jamieson, a recent PhD graduate from the University of Edinburgh, at the time based at Glasgow. They have worked as part of a team to help develop the online interactive *Scots Syntax Atlas*, an

online resource not just for linguistic research purposes, but also for general education and personal curiosity.[37] Immediately from the start, Jamieson uses the interactive features of the online portal to highlight stratified dialectal variation and how it might intersect with people's own identities and relationships with both Scots and English. Jamieson appears enthusiastic about the way that the materials could be looked at from a non-insider perspective, with wider appeal to anyone who is interested in Scots: it is a "major new resource", they exclaim at one point. The way that data were collected not just by the team but by students who returned to their "home" community strikes me as an interesting way of doing Scots language advocacy—even passively—as active linguistic research is implemented for the sake of building a resource which can legitimise the study of Scots as a group of dialects and therefore a language variety itself. The resource and the data are not framed as varieties of English, but instead as the dialects spoken throughout Scotland, within a Scottish setting. The clearest issue, however, is that all the data and the analysis is still presented in academic English and talk about using the atlas for language planning or standardisation of the language is absent. Comments from Jennifer Smith (University of Glasgow), who is sitting in the audience, raise the point that traditionally we are used to a situation where "we talk 'around about' Scots", whereas this new resource gives academics and non-academics alike access to something tangible.

Later on, Edinburgh lecturer Warren Maguire presents research from his own background in Ulster Scots, a related language variety spoken in Northern Ireland. During his talk, he states that much of the contemporary talk about Scots is no longer an academic discussion behind closed doors, and like Leslie, Maguire points to the emergence of a plethora of arguments and opinionated

[37] *Scots Syntax Atlas* - https://scotssyntaxatlas.ac.uk/ - accessed 15 June 2022

exchanges online; “when you interact with Scots speakers online…” he problematises the lack of accessible information that people can use and relate to when talking meaningfully about Scots. He asks people in the room to respond to how they would pronounce “2”; some say *twa*, others *twae*, others indeed just say standard English “two”. Maguire tries to prove a point that “even non-linguists can access that sort of information”, and so the existence of variability and difference between different varieties of Scots can quickly become polemicised when it comes to accounting for what counts as Scots, and what does not.

To conclude the day, a panel comprising Joanna Kopaczyk, PhD student Claire Needler, teacher Jill Haywood, and writer Sam Best on standardisation is chaired by my colleague Stephen McNulty. Kopaczyk begins with the springboard of her own talk, announcing “let’s demythologise the standard”; the creation of standards for Scots has been a topic of Scots discourse for decades, and her own attitude towards it seems to be one of slight exhaustion with the constant debate due to how we typically conceptualise what a standard Scots would/should look like. A standard would essentially lead to the “formalising of the discourse of Scots”. Jennifer Smith contributes again from the audience, stating that “the standard is always an abstraction”, whereas actual Scots is the language spoken on the ground rather than in an idealised form. What previous attempts to standardise Scots have done is use Latinate vocabulary repurposed from before the Act of Union and “archaic vocab” which is “not relatable” for the Scots speaker today; there has been too much “top-down” policing of what Scots is without looking to examine language on the ground. Kopaczyk highlights parallels with the 17th century and how registers were constructed in writing. Best’s contribution addresses the “open-endedness of non-standard Scots”, which is “a strength”. From her perspective as a teacher, she says that a fluid way to Scots spelling and

standardisation would be an easier state of affairs as "every teacher would like to a take a red pen and tick it [the written work of the pupil]", rather than adhere to one representation of speech or stylistic expectations.

Other contributions from the audience suggest that "a standard would kill it [Scots]", and that a standard does not necessarily mean a *spoken* standard; rather, we are talking more specifically about the written form. There appears to be a tacit understanding in the room that any standard will inherently restrict the way Scots is written, yet this need not also be the case for how Scots is spoken. McNulty then draws the discussion to Claire Needler, whose fieldwork has taken place in a school where students have engaged with Scots language projects, asking whether written Scots is a form of "rebellion" against English; this brings up wider themes about Scottish cultural and political differentiation from the rest of the UK, such as opposition to Brexit. Kopaczyk notes that European frameworks around linguistic standardisation and language rights are being "side-tracked and denied"; we do not need to conceptualise linguistic issues like these as matters of rejecting one language to replace it with another. Towards the end, broader topics such as Scots language media akin to Gaelic's own are mentioned, as well as status planning to raise Scots' legitimacy in social use.

4.5. Discussion: Scots@ed in context—academia and legitimation of Scots

Academic interest in Scots and research into the languages of Scotland provide a rendezvous point for social actors in which Scots can be conceptually identified and ideologically positioned vis-à-vis standard English. These narratives furthermore engage with discourses of language minoritisation; as a matter of strategy for public engagement, Scots language ideologies may be legitimised if they are seen to correspond with a minority language community

and counter-cultural movement (compare Catalan discourses of minoritisation; Cortès-Colomé, Barrieras & Comellas 2016). Such naming and self-awareness do not come about through objective study but require individuals and the institutions around them to acknowledge a language community by buying into a discourse about a language both existing and being minoritised; if not one that is subject to conceptual colonisation, to paraphrase Kopaczyk. Likewise, to be a Scots speaker may be to engage in a self-labelling activity in a context of heightened awareness of a Scots language, and awareness is also built up by academic talk about Scots—such social action may be perceived by wider society as inherently ideological—as language activism alongside broad communities of practice comprising grassroots advocates and political campaigners.

From a broader ethnographic perspective, Scots in the 21st century is the site of the rhetorical and narrative construction of sociolinguistic debates and the desire by various social actors—including linguists and other academics—to address paralinguistic questions through various policies: status planning, standardisation, educational use, and media landscape, to name a few instances. In order to legitimise claims to recognition and status and further the ideological position of Scots in civil society, Scottish academia is one of many sites and platforms of legitimation and public-facing engagement in a broad, dynamic landscape of Scots language advocacy. This is a situation which subsequently implicates various linguists as contributors in much of the Scots metadiscourse that further social actors employ in Scots language activism, as the *Scots@ed* event demonstrates. Even by hosting and moderating an event which engages in talk about Scots as an autonomous language variety in a legitimising academic setting and inviting speakers from outside academia who also advocate for Scots in legislation and the national

education system, we as organisers too are implicated in an active site of the negotiation of Scots language ideology amongst other social actors.

As brought up in conversation, some Scots language advocates had before focused on the Scots language of the past and romanticised a language variety that is neither reflected stylistically or lexically in modern-day vernacular speech varieties, sometimes with the goal of removing influence from English or supposedly contaminated urban speech (see Macafee 1994 for further discussion). The engagement of today's linguists, conversely—whilst giving a platform to the discussion of Scots language topics through public institutions—engages a modern, diachronic framing of Scots, engaging in talk about Scots as a contemporary language variety with structural variation, that is still a language in active use today and can be tabulated and presented diachronically through online resources such as the *Scots Syntax Atlas* for public use. As a matter of how universities engage with the public, the public-facing discourse by linguists becomes one that therefore legitimises the stance that Scots can be interpreted as an autonomous variety—not essentially on the grounds of Scots' historical use as a national language prior to Union, nor specifically on the basis of Scotland's contemporary nationalism—but by identifying and engaging with the features of vernacular speech in Scotland, "constructing" a Scots language around it through an evolving rhetoric (Unger 2013).

By no means is this context of language ideological discourse unique to Scotland, and I would stress that one will find parallels in various contexts across Europe and the processes of post-19th century nation-building. One close parallel would be the development of standards for the Norwegian language after Norway's becoming semi-autonomous in 1814 and the establishment of its own government and national institutions, which required not just the input of the day's philologists and dialectologists "normalising"

politicised claims of Norwegian as a language deserving of its own orthography and daily use (Ljosland 2021: 156), but still continues to involve national research institutions working alongside public bodies such as the Language Council of Norway and the management of national dictionaries or official spelling rules, for example. Therefore, the case of Scots is an additional example of where societal talk about language is both a dynamic and situated act—naturally subjective—and therefore never neutrally positioned. In consideration of how social scientific work directly interacts with various publics, social discourse, and cultural contexts, it is not the case that linguists or other academics are able to be distanced from the rest of society, or that their interventions in the public space cannot be construed as part of existing or emerging ideological narratives about language.

Another side to this discussion is how we try to conceive of language activists as a set group within the complex dynamics of who exactly pioneers language variation, change and shift at any given time. As one example, in Blackwood's work on language activists in Corsica (2008) we are confronted with how we try to analyse language activism in the context of a minoritised language variety when there is a significant blur between those who are sympathetic state actors on the one hand, and grassroots language activists on the other, i.e., politicians who are also active members of civil society language organisations. These divisions often appear difficult to maintain objectively, especially as talk about language is not solely the reserve of the linguist or any other group; it is essentially something all users of language are invested in. We may posit that non-academic, "folk" discourse about language (see Coupland & Jaworski 1998: 23-4) is in a cyclical and symbiotic relationship with a supposed "expert" metalanguage of linguists and wider academic society, although how the category of expert in society is actually regimented

and enforced is rarely defined, and often is the result of subjective interpretations (Cameron 1998: 317ff).

The use of any cultural capital, such as (a specific) language is ultimately bound to "[accrue] sociopolitical meaning" (Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 379). Circulation of talk about Scots requires an unavoidable use of familiar public rhetoric and metalanguage, feeding into wider societal discourses not just about Scots but also the nature of language beyond the level of its structure, or how we even conceptualise a language in the public space (see Auer 2011). Both the explicit naming of Scots as a language variety and engaging in research on it drive processes of conceptual deliberation and ideological legitimisation. From this position, we must be sensitive to how language use and discourse about language may constitute language activism in the public eye, where language use is "interwoven" with speaker biographies (Bridges 2019: 45), cultural history and categories of identity over time.

* * *

As a concluding summary: this paper is reflective springboard towards further discussion of academic activity and its relationship with the development of language ideological discourse. I have presented a brief, yet contextualised and situated perspective on the position of academic research in relation to wider contemporary Scots advocacy as part of tracking a historical trajectory of language activism from the 20th century onwards. I have described how the both the disputed ideological and conceptual status of the Scots language forms part of academic discourse in Scottish higher educational settings, necessarily positioning academics who deal with Scots as contributors to and enablers of current narratives in nationwide Scots language advocacy. In doing so, I continue the conversation opened by Unger (2013) and others about how the Scots language is conceptually constructed by various social actors, and I

have integrated discussion about the cultural capital of language in social discourse and the blurring of conceptual boundaries between linguists, language activists or other categories of membership in the public space due to the participative reality of social life. As such, advocacy of Scots language issues continues to relate to a wider body of social action that moves in and out of social scientific research at Scottish universities where talk about Scots co-constructs Scots language ideology and contributes to metapragmatic discourses which, in the cases presented, support the stance of an autonomous and culturally distinct Scots language.

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Declaration of interest statement
At the time of writing, and for the purposes of my ethnography, I am an ordinary committee member of the Scots language advocacy group *Oor Vyce*. There are no other declarations of interest, and this work is my own.

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5. Discussion and conclusions

This doctoral thesis comprises studies which have examined case-studies of language activism; their outcomes collectively form a broader theoretical discussion around definitions and approaches to the description of terms such as “language activist” and “language activism”. As a collection of papers which study and reflect on contemporary discourses of minority and minoritised languages in Catalonia, Norway, and Scotland respectively, the conclusions of this thesis provide the basis for further discussion about how language activism may be both deconstructed as a theoretical term of reference, and evaluated through a lens which allows for greater discussion of what researchers mean by “activist” and what constitutes “activism” in these spaces.

As stated in the introduction, there has been considerable shift away from several of my original research objectives—namely around establishing a reformed theoretical framework to research language activism—and consequently the reader will note that the general outcomes of this doctoral research do not make any explicit attempt to address this thesis’ original 2018-19 research questions. Given the significant interruption experienced by higher education in 2020, each of the article manuscripts were written separately and in turn, and therefore reflect instead stand-alone attempts to make effective use of data collected prior to March of that year, generating insights on and around the topic of language activism as a matter of deeper theoretical discussion.

Although the scope of this thesis does *not* make any active attempt to compare and contrast the findings each of the three case-studies as a language policy and planning exercise, what this thesis *does* do is present examples of ethnographic research which evaluate discourses of activism, the dynamic sites in which they take place, and the fluid relations that exist between different types of social action, language-use and ideological orientations to

language, culture, and society at large. On these grounds, the discussion presented in this conclusion draws together a (meta-)theoretical commentary and springboard for future advances in sociolinguistic and linguistic anthropological research. Within both of these disciplines, there is increased interest and active research endeavours which attempt to study language "in real life contexts" and more specifically to evaluate sociolinguistic contexts in a manner that views language not solely as a cultural object, commodity or identity, but more so "as a form of social action laden with cultural values" (Ahearn 2017: 9-12).

5.1. Towards a different perspective

As a preliminary summary, the general conclusion of this thesis is that academics and non-academics alike are already known to use the terms "language activism" or "language activist" in multiple ways, and if we desire to employ these terms meaningfully within research on language in society and within linguistic frameworks of language variation, shift, and change, I would stress that we explore language activism in a manner that is not tied down to finite definitions or restricted, categorical set of behaviours. Rather, by considering the indexical and metapragmatic nature of language-use and wider social action generally, language activism may well encompass something much broader. If anything, this thesis may altogether present a case warning *against* the uncritical use of restrictive definitions of language activism, as all terms we use to conceptualise language in social life are inherently "fuzzy" (Janicki 1990: 55). Consequently, and as I will go on to further explain, the perspective I have taken on over the course of my doctoral research echoes what we may otherwise call a *non-essentialist* conceptualisation of sociolinguistic phenomena (Janicki ibid.).

Over the course of this thesis, I have attempted to engage with a perspective that observes language activism and language activists as embedded in wider social action and individual agency. Specifically, through an ethnographic and discourse-oriented approach, my gaze has been directed towards the broader peripheries of extant cases of language activism or advocacy. As a result of significant interruptions in my research plan and, indeed, as a formative part of my journey as an ethnographer, my own personal orientation towards examining language activism has evolved over the course of drafting these three manuscripts. The overall significance of this thesis to the field is that its component case-studies contribute to an informed theoretical critique of "language activism" and "language activist" as terminological devices, and propose an alternative complimentary perspective that draws on analyses on discourses of language activism, its relationship to metalanguage and ideological meaning-making, and reflect what may be summarised as a "fluid" framing of language activism within sociolinguistic research (De Korne 2021: 7).

As stated in the introduction, the analytical focus in each of my case-studies has been on the subject, or the language-user, in dynamic contexts. Subjects engage in various forms of social action, including the use of language and other culturally meaningful activities; how we use language, what our statements about language (metalanguage) do, and how our wider social behaviour reflects language ideological stances. By engaging in a so-called agentive "sociocultural" approach, we observe a metadiscursive life to activism as a form of social action, where subjects participate and co-construct language ideology as a matter of cultural practice (Hornberger & Johnson 2011: 284; see also Coupland & Jaworski 1998; Dołowy-Rybińska 2020). Within social scientific research, we may nevertheless strive to typologise and structurally engage with language activism in order to sufficiently theorise it

as a discreet concept. For some practitioners, this may be of particular use when establishing "structural-functional" frameworks in language policy and planning (Eckert 2018: 16). However, the studies in this thesis attempt to position language activism more specifically as a concept pointing to a myriad of examples of behaviour and cultural action which constitute a metapragmatic intervention in extant ideologies and prevailing attitudes towards language, identity, sociopolitical structures, and cultural meaning.

5.2. Reflection: some observations

As stated at the beginning of this thesis, my revised research trajectory has necessitated considerable rethinking about what exactly my informed observations of language activism in each of the case-studies could achieve with a much more limited set of qualitative data than had been anticipated. The three articles that make up the body of this thesis exhibit a number of ethnographic research trajectories and findings, and the research questions examined in each of these article manuscripts vary significantly and are products which attempt to organise frustrated and interrupted sets of qualitative data. However, these studies ultimately constitute examinations of activist discourses in sociopolitical settings with some politically contextual similarities between them. As was one of the more explicit grounds for the original 2018 research plan, each of the primary minority/minoritised languages discussed in these studies (Catalan, Nynorsk/Norwegian dialects, and Scots) exist alongside language varieties that are widely understood to be acrolectal, to a certain degree mutually intelligible, socioeconomically dominant, and also exhibit dynamic, fluctuating cultural and political currency in contemporary social life in each respective geographical context. Again, whilst the general focus of my conclusion is now directed towards a theoretical

discussion of language activism, I can briefly discuss some recurrent themes that I have observed over the course of my fieldwork.

In amongst the internal language debates in Catalonia and Norway, it is notable that the role of English as a global language plays a contributing role to much of the anxiety I observed amongst those I met and interviewed prior to March 2020; with both geographical contexts being the site of considerable economic activity in Europe, it is perhaps unsurprising that the use of English in academia and business contexts both pose perceived challenges to the role of Catalan and Nynorsk/Norwegian dialects. Specifically, the extent to which legislative policy concerning Catalan and Norwegian could be specifically enforced appeared to be of concern when dealing with advances in artificial intelligence and contemporary software. One explicit example I remember from my 2019 fieldtrip to Norway was that during a discussion of *Noregs Mållag* members of how to influence multinational corporations to incorporate Nynorsk into their user interface platforms, one participant exclaimed their frustration: “men Google har jo ikkje noko telefonnummer!” [but Google doesn’t even have a telephone number!], referencing to members’ inability to contact these organisations as easily as they might with domestic Norwegian businesses. Likewise, organisations such as *Plataforma per la llengua* were and still remain actively lobbying to make social media platforms and streaming services provide their services in Catalan, where they often default to Castilian or English instead.

Whereas the independence of the Norwegian state is no longer a disputed issue (besides dormant debate about Norwegian accession to the EU), there is also the topic of how the language activist movements of Scotland and Catalonia reflect their independence movements. There is perhaps a broader reality to reflect here, which is that the language activist discourses in each of my case-studies more or less reflect how “[s]truggles over language

are not centrally about language at all [but] struggles over power involving social groups whose categorization is somehow part of the fundamental principles of social organization of the people in question" (Heller 2014: 285). Language, or more specifically *a* language, is constituted by a range of linguistic practices used by an innumerable number of individuals who themselves exist in dynamic and overlapping communities. To speak a language, to write in a language, to engage in discourses that espouse one view or another about language, to generally use whatever is within our communicative repertoire to express a position or view – altogether these reflect how we endeavour to engage with language as a sort of economic resource (cf. Heller & Duchêne 2016).

It is not the case on the ground that users of the language varieties I describe in this thesis are necessarily unable to use them or see them in use, which would be the case in Catalonia (cf. Hawkey 2015), but rather there are wider debates about the extent to which ideological visions of the relationship between territory, its inhabitants and its languages are altogether presented and engaged with. Language in itself is an indexical system, and in amongst Catalonia's relative multilingualism, circulating ideologies with regard to identity and political affiliations are embedded into linguistic practices that are hotly contested and also reflect a longstanding question of national self-determination and the extent to which a Catalan nation goes hand in hand with Catalan language speakership. This, in part, allows us to contextualise the contemporary emergence of groups such as *No em canviïs la llengua* in an increasingly international and transnational age alongside the more prototypical and traditional civil society organisations that served to promote various Catalan language policy objectives and popular awareness in the advent of Spain's transition away from Francoism and Castilian supremacy.

With regard to the Scots case, I also observe how developments on the ground are a further indication of how interest in and use of Scots is both a practical and symbolic set of linguistic practices, even amongst those who either do not use Scots or consider the language to be a part of their linguistic repertoire. There is a simultaneous awareness of the language's former historical prestige—that is, as a named language variety considered separate from the Old English/Anglic varieties used elsewhere—and public acknowledgement of the minoritised status it has; the intervention of academics and linguists in the active discursive construction of the Scots language (vis-à-vis Scottish Standard English) becoming agents of a significant stance against the grain of dominant language attitudes in Scotland, chimes also with Scots' ongoing symbolism as that of one representing a national counter-culture: one that is not standardised, not controlled, if not unshackled, altogether representative of a form of cultural rebellion from prestige norms whilst also emancipatory in its ability to represent the vernacular of a significant proportion of the Scottish population (cf. Giles 2019). Its "value" as a cultural object, beyond the unwritten language variety spoken on the street, is legitimated further on a platform with considerable pull in Scottish society, given Scotland's academic heritage and the ongoing development of Scottish civil society through its own self-government and re-emerging national sense of self (Costa 2016: 54). It is not even activism or advocacy to necessarily meet a specific end—to engage in activist-like discourses and for linguistic practices to also reflect different stances on the matter, the outcome may just as well be to perpetuate the ideological fight, or, alternatively put in the Scottish context, the "charter myth" that justifies and rationalises the discussion of Scots in public discourse (Costa ibid.: 63).

With all of this said, what was originally going to be a proposed framework for understanding language activism in sociolinguistic research,

based on a comparative analysis of three case-studies with their comparable linguistic and sociocultural contexts, has now become a springboard for a broader reflection on what we mean by language activism in the first place. The revised main title of this thesis—*Intervention, Participation, Perception*—is drawn from three focal points that have emerged from theoretical observations in my papers: conceptualising the act of intervening in extant metadiscourse, how social actors participate in metadiscourses through their use of metalanguage, and the ways in which social action can be perceived as activism.

5.3. Discussion: finding activism—finding activists

The three studies in this thesis comprise discourse-oriented evaluations of language activism on the ground from the perspective of an informed insider-outsider. Fundamentally, the theoretical crux of this research critically assesses notions of language activism as a normatively defined concept, effectively "questioning what is taken for granted" in terms of how extant terms are used in sociolinguistic research and across the wider field of language studies (Barakos & Unger 2016: 3). It is important to stress in any case that whilst a proposal to reanalyse and theoretically reframe language activism is a possible venture, the work in this thesis as a set of ethnographies ultimately remains hypothesis-*generating* and open-ended, rather than hypothesis-*testing* and finite. In effect, one is sketching out biographies and experiences in addition to providing informed descriptions of observed life, rather than attempting to answer questions definitively and towards a theoretical end (Agar 1980).

There has been considerable evolution away from sociolinguistic models which typologise language ideologies within dominant structures of power towards ones which interpret power and discourse as "a far more layered and

fragmented" phenomenon, necessitating a zoomed-in analysis of social life and the life of the individual linguistic subject (Blommaert 2018: 3). Consequently, whilst textual or codified language policies, government action and the work of established civil society groups all remain part of the sociocultural contexts that inform instances of discourse about language and documented instances of language activism, they are not the only factors which influence and contextualise our situated language practices and other forms of social action. The studies therefore highlight peripheral instances of language activism, such as the role of non-native speakers, relationships and common cause with other social campaigns, and the manner in which other social actors can be incorporated into a wider conceptualisation of the phenomenon. Each context is already the site of documented examples of language activism or minority language discourse, and so I entered the field as an informed observer wishing to draw focus on these same dominant themes and individuals engaged in discourses of activism. Nevertheless, the thesis presents the result of how I chanced upon the activities of other communities and individuals in spite of the original research questions being far more focused on the evaluation of already established major civil society organisations such as *Plataforma per la llengua* or *Noregs Mållag*. The disruption of 2020, whilst unfortunate, offered a unique opportunity to step back from the data and re-evaluate the intentions and theoretical significance of my work.

By engaging in an observation and synchronic research methodology, the ethnographer is often minded not to "commit […] to a naïve empiricism", or in other words, that the research conducted to understand the field should not be interpreted as summative or finite interpretation of a broader set of social phenomena (Asad 1994: 65-6). Ethnography offers a unique opportunity to absorb and reflect on extant perspectives and approaches to the

analysis of language in social life. What one discovers and describes along the way is not necessarily an attempt to shoot down dominant ideas and frameworks in any belligerent way, but to critique and build upon them. What comes out of ethnographic fieldwork are therefore further informed proposals and approaches, themselves open to the judgement of the wider academy and further research endeavours. To theorise through ethnography is not to create a rigid impression of what happens on the ground, but to "organise" observational data in a constructive, re-evaluative process (ibid.: 66). On broader reflection, the work in this thesis is more grounded in the methodological and philosophical angle of linguistic anthropology than defined models of language policy and planning; the work comprises an overall reassessment not just language activism in Catalonia, Norway and Scotland as described, but the concepts and perspectives used by me and other practitioners in order to describe them.

When attempting to 'find' the activism and to 'find' the activists within my ethnographic fieldwork, I actually often found myself attempting to enter this "different social world" where one 'does' language activism and sees activism being 'done' by others, and as such my ethnographic labour has been an endeavour in "[unravelling] internal rationality" (Argenter 2011: 45). To implement ethnographic research methods in this manner is to actively construct frameworks and conceptualisations of social phenomena that are therefore subject to change and non-finite, establishing modes of analysis along the way. As established, terms in language policy and planning and wider sociolinguistic research can be continually challenged, revised, and refined through the incorporation of newer descriptions of extant phenomena that ultimately "shed light" on what we thought we knew something about, but perhaps not completely (Camps 2018: 102). In my own case, I did indeed set out to develop a framework to research language activism—in essence,

find a more appropriate definition—based on a comparative analysis language activism in western Europe, wanting to draw in insights from three relatively comparable case-studies where Catalan, Nynorsk, and Scots each are challenged politically and conceptually by larger, acrolectal and mutually intelligible language varieties that also vie for sociocultural influence in an increasingly globalised and connected world. However, each of my case-studies has raised further questions about how we conceptualise activism or the activists themselves, and I have additionally described the contribution of unforeseen or unexpected activists.

In the context of increased academic attention to social justice in sociolinguistic research, it is still understandable that one might try to discern activism more specifically as intended or explicit action, "[using and supporting] strong actions to endorse or oppose an issue" and therefore a conscious attempt to take a side in an ongoing cultural struggle (Avineri et al. 2019: 145). However, this does pose further questions about how we holistically appraise social action that is perceived as activism by wider society in as far as behaviour may represent an endorsement or oppositional stance within context. Talk about language is a dynamic act and never neutrally positioned; the reality on the ground is that there is a circulation of ideology about language between linguists, other social actors, and all members of society.

5.4. Perspective: language activism and metadiscourse

Across all three studies, I stress that both "language activism" and "language activists" can be deconstructed and critiqued using a metapragmatic lens which highlights that participation in metadiscourse is not limited to any one category of social actor, and that social action in context can represent language activism or at least be perceived as such by virtue how using

language inherently makes meaning. Thus, the intention of this thesis has been to propose that language activism may be better evaluated as *metapragmatic intervention*, on the condition that we collectively accept that language activism as a theoretical term is not definable in finite terms, that it is used to describe a wide range of social activities, and that participation in metadiscourse is part and parcel of language-use. A critical perspective, for example, on social class within sociolinguistic fieldwork might necessitate us to focus in on how notions of class are never constant nor static; how class is perceived and practiced is context-dependent and very much is an indication of broader developments in a social movement, awareness of identity, and access to cultural or material resources in an ever-changing global community (Coupland 2016). Likewise, a critical perspective on language activism may wish to embrace multiple manifestations of the phenomenon and how it is perceived not just in academic research but also by the wider public. The unavoidable use of familiar rhetoric and metalanguage—however evaluatively and analytically precise—feeds into how language about language has meaning in the public sphere.

Indeed, linguists too have a potential role in the engineering of language ideology, and the naming and legitimation of Scots in academic practice in particular is an example of this deliberative social process. Whereas the Nynorsk study is a focused on the activities on an already well documented organisation and the extension of its activities and metalinguistic rhetorical strategy to other Norwegian language communities, the examples of language activism described in the Catalan and Scots contexts feature perhaps novel or unusual examples of activism when compared to other documented case-studies in sociolinguistic research. With *Scots@ed* I have presented academic research communities as potential contributors to the discursive construction of the Scots language and position this contribution as (indirect) activism in

as far as academic involvement in Scots discourse represents a form of ideological legitimation, and with *No em canviïs la llengua* I have witnessed first-hand language advocacy fronted by learners and second-language speakers of Catalan, a case which both complements and counters the more traditional organisations or groups which have been featured before in the literature describing language debates.

5.5. Deconstructing the concept

In each of the papers, I was able to frame my observations in terminology that is ultimately focused on the idea that all language-users have agency—all "speakers are agents of change" (Hickey 2012: 404)—and that all language-use in effect becomes meaningful, and therefore, ideological in context. This chimes with recent perspectives in social anthropology too: activism is ultimately a "core political *concept*" (Alexandrakis 2016: 1 [emphasis my own]) for many academic practitioners and social commentators alike, but the perpetual and obvious existence of other, alternative forms of social action and other alternative movements of resistance or advocacy illustrate that we can reorient our view of activism away from what is just explicitly political, outwith conceptual limitations of the apparatus of the state or other governing institutions, and focus far more on what has been interpreted previously as fringe or subsidiary activity. The study of sociolinguistic consciousness, speaker agency (in reference to Penny Eckert's work) even at the level of the individual, provides fertile ground for further analysis of how change, shift and variation is motivated at multiple levels of any given social structure:

> "[S]ociolinguistic changes can grow from speakers' consciousness and strategic performative use of specific linguistic forms such as vowel pronunciation to assert membership in particular

> communities. […] Such a model goes against the grain of the traditional Labovian sociolinguistic claim that major linguistic change from below the level of consciousness and is outside the control of the speaker's intentions and desires." (Woolard 2008: 438)

Within this mode of thinking, the focus of sociolinguistic analysis can be further extended to the social meaning-making constituted by linguistic practices, and the way these are reinforced and reified between individuals and throughout their lives; this is not necessarily a refutation of original principles set out by earlier variationists such as William Labov, but rather a further attempt of nuance when trying to tie together a fuller theorisation of linguistic variation and linguistic practices (Coupland 2016). At this juncture, the notion of "community of practice" may prove useful as an alternative conceptualisation of how language activists themselves belong to diverse groups and collectives "whose social practices and ideologies favor or disfavor divergent innovation" (Woolhiser 2007: 396). That is to say that for language activists to constitute one or several communities of practice, subjects exist in spaces in which they are able alter and renegotiate their behaviours (this being 'practice') in locally situated groups related to in-group notions of identity, cultural relationships, and common political cause (see Woschitz 2019a).

These communities are neither static nor permanent entities in and of themselves—rather, by situating activism as social action which takes place in "alternative spaces" from the ideological mainstream (paraphrasing Woschitz 2019b: 57), we are able to draw greater focus on activism more broadly as a contextualised performance, linked to not just to social relationships and ideologies, but also broader notions of identity, social justice, and individual agency (Fras 2017). Accordingly, we need not discount the wide body of

research and work that has given us accounts of language activism over time, but we can also incorporate wider social action around us into what we mean by this term and leave behind vague notions of activists being "significant participants in language management" (Spolsky 2009: 204). It was perhaps fortunate that as I began to write this thesis Haley De Korne's seminal monograph *Language Activism: Imaginaries and Strategies of Minority Language Equality* was also published; she rightly highlights that activists are "fluid" communities of practice, without trying to boil the concept down to any stubborn definition (2021: 7).

The articles in this thesis overall reflect a view that other linguists and academics are likely to also see in their own work, after the so-called ethnographic turn, in a sociolinguistics informed more and more through "bottom-up" and speaker-focused, sociocultural research within various communities and sites of cultural practice (Hornberger & Johnson 2011: 273). Likewise, linguists can work with language activism more as an "object and site" of discourse which uncovers a multitude of voices, ideologies, and agendas at multiple levels (Lewis 2020: 20-1). Specifically, where essentialised interpretations of language activism can be broken down through ethnographic introspection, the clearer it may appear that language activism is not the exercise of a limited set of activities or the domain of a specific group of individuals, but rather how situated behaviours and statements about language are embedded in the wider context of language ideological change, in as far as it is conceptualised to be one of various extant cultural practices. Consequently, this thesis brings together a study of activists within a wider and critical understanding of language activism as a running concept in sociolinguistic work.

5.6. Inherent fuzziness: non-essentialism and further research

This thesis has presented papers whose themes echo a broader discussion regarding how we can theoretically appraise sociolinguistic terminology. When talking about language activism and language activists, we may also face follow-up questions: how do we differentiate language activism from other forms of social action, who exactly are the language activists, what do they want, is their activity limited solely to discourse concerning language, and in which sites do we find them? Sociolinguistics has long been beset by "what-is" questions in its pursuit of a "better understanding of what happens linguistically around us but also [the alleviation of] language-related hardships and those going beyond language" (Janicki 1990: xi). But in a field of study that is highly focused on the conceptualisation and compartmentalisation of human behaviour through observation by other humans—a little different the study of a physical object, an acid, a biological species, a rock formation—it bears repeating that to ask what something is does not necessarily lead us to precise definitions. This is what Janicki refers to as "fuzziness" in modern sociolinguistics:

> "Such labels will always be fuzzy, and they will obviously invoke indiscreet boundaries. This leads to the conclusion that an individual linguist is free to conceptualize language the way he [sic.] wants to as long as his [sic.] is sensible in the context of the *problem(s)* that he is trying to solve. For instance, when one is confronted with the problem of how language influences the results of court trials, it would seem ridiculous to conceptualize language as an abstract set of grammatical rules, and to at the same time disregard linguistic behavior. In this particular case, conceptualizing language activism as *behavior* (whatever the remaining aspects of

> the concept might possibly be) would appear to be a reasonable prerequisite from the point of view of the problem to be tackled" (Janicki 1990: 55)

I would start the ball rolling towards a conclusion by acknowledging that language activism is but one way of terminologically describing what are examples of vivid, complex participation in discourse about language, which in turn contribute to the generation and regeneration of language ideological tropes, altogether playing a role in how we conceptualise language varieties, the politics of language, the interface between language and identity, and consequent structural change, shift, and variation. At this juncture, I would state that the observation of social behaviour via interpretive and ethnographic means throughout the domain of sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology will necessarily lead us to want to describe the social life of language with terms and concepts that are meaningful and that will help the linguist to develop nuanced theorisation of language in society. For many linguists, this work will also take place in an effort to solve so-called "language problems" (Nekvapil 2016: 14), to inform policymakers and political actors in the development of contemporary language policies (see Vari & Tamburelli 2020), and to challenge dominant power structures, racialised and ethnicised inequities, and socioeconomic developments which lead to discrimination and cultural hegemony and have led to endangerment and events of language loss (Grenoble & Whaley 1998; Wurm 2014). In the post-colonial context, it will especially be of imperative value—if not morally paramount—for many linguists to use their work as a matter of social justice and as a way to actively challenge structurally embedded inequalities where issues of language, culture and identity all come to the fore (see Piller 2016; Avineri et al. 2019).

The issue at hand is that many linguists desire theorisation—we desire that the terminology and frameworks we use in our descriptions of language in social life are relevant and can be identifiable, as "when clear definitions of […] concepts are provided, social theory can have direct relevance to the study of language in real-life social contexts" (Ahearn 2017: 302). The metapragmatic approach to conceptualising language activism I have employed in all three of my studies, and have outlined broadly in this final chapter, leaves the door open to a complementary theoretical perspective where we are at least cognisant of the risks of carving into stone a normative declaration of what language activism *is*. I do not necessarily perceive that linguists and other social researchers alike make problematic absolutist statements intentionally, nor that there is necessarily a malign intent to effectively gate-keep definitions of language activism or language activists. At least, this never appears to be explicitly the case in extant work on language activism. However, it is to be expected in social scientific research that its practitioners are bound to express their findings with terminology and descriptive devices that need to be seen to be explicitly meaningful, and their meaning will be effectively informed by the limited description of a given instance of the phenomenon; likewise, we talk about language activism as a phenomenon—as a *thing*—in the social world, so therefore it has to be something both observable in as far as it has been described a particular way by various progenitors. This is an inherent continuity:

> "The theory of practice as practice insists, contrary to positivist materialism, that the objects of knowledge are constructed, not passively recorded, and, contrary to intellectualist idealism, that the system of structured, structuring dispositions, the habitus, which is

> constituted in practice and is always oriented towards particular functions" (Bourdieu 1995: 32)

The important factor from this stance is that we consider experiences and our practices as part of a socio-cultural and historical interrelationship, and that we do not attempt to abstract these events and subjects out from their informing contexts. As referred to in my Catalan case-study, however, a "socially embedded" approach to sociolinguistic topics such as this requires us to start out with the view that when we theorise language and society, we are neither talking about separable worlds (Bell 2016: 407), nor can we develop theories that present an ultimate "totalizing view of power" and the factors at play, and instead we can embrace "a far more layered and fragmented [view], involving [multiple] actors […] and activities across the entire realm of social life, and an analysis zooming in on the smallness of situated practices" (Blommaert 2018: 3). This would necessitate examining language activism not as a finite or limitable concept in a liminal realm between language-use and wider social life, but as an interpretative lens on situated practices in multiple, multifilar and dynamic contexts. Reflecting on this more broadly, popular conceptualisations of language activism also do not necessarily depend on the effort on the part of an individual to explicitly identify themselves as an activist or to explicitly connote what they do as activism.

As brought up in the introduction of this thesis with regard to how an activist may be associated with other social movements (e.g., Welsh advocacy vis-à-vis Welsh nationalism) by cultural or political association, the indexicality of "activism" or "activist" in different contexts may well lead to active avoidance of the term or needing to specify what sort of activist they are, and therefore what they are not (cf. *'Mål' means 'språk'*; "målaktivist" versus "språkaktivist"). That is to say, individuals "might not identify as

‘activists’ per se, [yet] most of them would be recognized as such” by wider society (Lewis 2020: 20). This may be further exhibited by the actions of someone using Catalan in a context where the use of Catalan has ideological reflexes of nationalism, independence from Spain, and/or challenging the normative use of Castilian in certain domains and challenging notions of legitimate speakership and/or claims to Spanish, Catalan or hybrid identity between the two (see Pujolar 2020). Likewise, the use of Nynorsk has frequently been associated with counter-cultural reflexes that have historically challenged both the once ubiquitous use of Danish (and later, Bokmål) in domains of written Norwegian, but there are wider tropes linked to scepticism of Norwegian membership of the European Union, agrarian opposition to political centralisation, and as featured in this thesis an emerging sympathy with other minority language causes in popular discourse (see Almenningen 1981). As regards Scots, whilst many do explicitly write and publish in Scots as a matter of advocacy and cultural autonomy, those who engage with what has been termed as the “discursive construction” of Scots through its naming and by giving it academic credence, this also sets the scene for a wide number of individuals—linguists included—to participate in constructing discourses of Scots language besides those individuals and collectives who are seen to more explicitly dedicate their free time or even their careers to sociopolitical campaigns favourable to Scots (see Unger 2013).

Fundamentally, I have attempted to use my studies to highlight where the use of the term language activist or language activism neither operates solely in the realm of “expert metalanguage” nor in the everyday language of those outside of it—rather a critical appraisal of language activism may necessitate awareness of how these terms are effectively generated and renegotiated in public rhetoric and also appropriated by the academy (and vice versa) to describe various cases of behaviour relevant to structured

taxonomies of language variation, shift, and change (Cameron 1998: 313). A critical analysis of language activism cannot sufficiently distance the researcher from the case-study in as far as the terminological devices used to describe language activism are both varied and do not exist solely in the purview of the academy nor the general public. From this perhaps more poststructuralist angle—assuming it makes sense to talk about sociolinguistic research experiencing a poststructuralist turn (see Tusting 2020)—I do not believe that a conceptualisation of language activism such as the one I propose is necessarily radical, given pressure to adoption of more self-aware and critical conceptualisations of what is meant to speak a "language" versus have a "communicative repertoire", or even what fluency or to be multilingual means in practice in linguistic research—although it does open the door to theorisation that could embrace anyone being a language activist and that idealised boundaries between prototypical language activism and wider social action are effectively broken down and significantly diluted (Gilmore 2011: 122; see also Jaffe 2007; Makoni 2011; Piller 2016).

On these aforementioned grounds, language activism as a concept may encompass both explicit participatory activity *and* perceived phenomena by virtue of the way that social action (with indexical relationships to language-adjacent topics) becomes meaningful in context. Put another way, language activism may well have the potential to extend to the social action of anyone by virtue of what it could metapragmatically represent. At this final stage of this doctoral thesis, my hypothesis is that it is feasible—at least using a metapragmatic, discourse-oriented lens to describe social action—to apply the same kind of analysis of language activism on explicit revitalisation and advocacy efforts as on the periphery which encompasses not just associated cultural or political events but also wider social action and language-use.

Nevertheless, to argue that language activism is essentially ubiquitous could well prove contentious. What are the effective ramifications of effectively deconstructing language activism so far as to not distinguish it from any other form of behaviour? To follow this line of thought may defeat the point of wanting theorise language activism in a sufficient and rigorous manner, especially in exercises which endeavour to identify those who are active in issues of language reclamation, revitalisation, and many other embodiments of social action with regard to language, culture and identity (cf. Meek 2011; Hornberger 2017; Patton 2020). Hereafter, linguistic behaviour is social behaviour, and its analysis can benefit from further ethnographic introspection—further critical "observations of action" (Blommaert 2018: 5)—to draw out inevitable complexities and keep conversations like the one in this thesis going. After all, not only will many forms of social action be perceived as language activism, but linguistic and language-related behaviour requires social actors to necessarily participate in the metadiscourses that inform their conceptualisation of language, how they use language, how others use language, whether a language is conceptualised in society as a language, or the status and allocation of cultural capital and resources to a named language variety within the constraints of the sociopolitical institutions they build around them.

As others may ponder about what necessarily distinguishes activism from social action, I have proposed across all three articles that we are witness to cases of intervention in the metapragmatic space, where language-use and other related behaviours are meaningful within the context of extant metadiscourses. A non-essentialist conceptualisation of language activism and language activists may offer the researcher a less rigid set of tools to work with, and the capacity to extend analyses of prototypical language activism to the realm of the linguistic subject, wider reflexes of sociolinguistic discourse

and both political and cultural tropes which reinforce, challenge, reify and deconstruct the way in which language is used in social life.

As a matter of principle, the study of language activism, regardless of the theoretical persuasion of the researcher, necessitates the observation of transient, complex human beings and their limitless capacity for social interaction with one another through language and other cultural means. The original idea I ran with—that one could attempt to peg down an exact definition of *who* an activist is or *what* constitutes activism, and that one could do this within the constraints of a doctoral thesis—is a challenging goal to set oneself. Yet, any desire and willingness to do so is part of the theorising nature of this subject, and it would prove ineffective to aggressively campaign against those who wish to typologise and frame social phenomena in a way that deepens our collective understanding of not just ourselves, but the cultural, political and social structures that govern everyday life, and as is pertinent to this thesis, the life of language within social discourse. This is part and parcel of the academic experience; to speak of language activism or any other phenomenon is to refer to a concept within the usual "hegemonic modes of understanding" linguists and other academics operate within (Zienkowski 2016: 10). These modes of understanding can be challenged and reappraised along one's research journey.

"Language activism" and "language activist", whilst forming part of formalised language policy and planning frameworks in the past and being the focus of various papers and monographs across different disciplines, are still relative terms of convenience for linguists and other academic practitioners. Fuzzy terms indeed, and by no means is this an issue unique to theoretical discussions of this specific concept and the ongoing nature of language variation, change and shift. We can continue to hypothesise and draw out thicker, more detailed descriptions of this phenomenon and others, but we

must remain conscious that definitions and conceptualisations of language in social life are continually generated and reinterpreted along a perpetual chain of varying, complimentary descriptions. The questions to ask are perhaps not what language activism is or who language activists are, and I would warn against the uncritical use of definitions or assumptions about the nature of language activism without first acknowledging the limitless capacity for subjects to act and the metapragmatics of language-use and other situated practices. Instead, the matter at hand is to promote the view—and indeed the principle—that any sociolinguistic concept, and the terminology used to describe it, is by necessity imprecise in an imprecise world of multiple actors existing within diverse relationships and engaging with dynamic social action and linguistic practices.

5.7. Linguist or activist: some personal reflections

As a supplementary commentary, I would like to take the opportunity to reflect in broader, autoethnographic terms about my research journey. This is less grounded in my wider theoretical discussion, and more so a personal commentary on what I have been first-hand witness to both before and during my observational fieldwork and interviews. The reader will know by now that one article is already fully published, a second has been revised and resubmitted, and the remaining one is still under review; it is a laborious and exhausting process to compartmentalise ethnographic work into article-sized chunks, especially when so much context and rapport-building has to be condensed as part of the writing process. The ethnographic routes I had taken whilst undertaking this doctoral research would not be what they are, were it not for the fortunate contacts I have built over time and my own political activity back home. As part of the peer-review process, aspects of who I am, what I have done, and where I have been have to be sufficiently anonymised,

which often puts a damper on my ability to truly express the level of contact I have had with those I have observed and the individuals I have spoken to.

There is also the question of how to properly account for other formative experiences I have had outwith the four years it has taken to put this work together. For example, my current positionality within Nynorsk circles likely would not have been what it is, had I not been interviewed on various occasions in 2015 and 2016 in the Norwegian media about my use of Nynorsk as a foreign-born individual. From that moment on, I too became clearly embedded within the activist circles I was simultaneously investigating, and I had never doubted from that moment on that I would be perceived by others in Norwegian society as yet another "målungdom" with opinions, perhaps with a personal vendetta against Bokmål, very strong opinions about the European Union, or a disdain for the supposed Americanisation of Norwegian society. In truth, over time it has become clearer to me that whilst these tropes might have a modicum of truth when it comes to what (some) Nynorsk activists believe, the people I know and the friends I have within the wider Nynorsk movement have a variety of opinions and stances on different topics.

Clearly not all of them were from rural municipalities, a handful spoke languages other than Norwegian at home and with their families, and it was not uncommon to meet members of *Norsk Målungdom* who still used Bokmål in their daily lives, or who perhaps were not confident Nynorsk users. Rather, what brought them into *målrørsla*-circles was their sympathy with the goals of the organisation—be it *Noregs Mållag* or *Norsk Målungdom*—and their enthusiasm for the campaigns that were happening at the time. Yes, the Nynorsk movement has been defined at various points in its modern history by its political radicalism and status as a movement of political pressure in Norwegian civil society, but I have found it important at various times to remind myself that whilst the people I observe and interview constitute a

formative whole, they as individuals do not all share the same background and identical political motivations. Reflecting back on an interview I used in my undergraduate Honours dissertation, I vividly remember one of my informants explaining that they did not see themselves *strictly* as a Nynorsk activist, but as an "organisasjonsmenneske"—an organisation-person—someone who enjoys being part of a group, and also likely belonging to a community. It helps to remind myself at times that the people I speak to are more placidly engaged as activists—if they see themselves as activists at all, that is.

* * *

In 2014, I participated in a Catalan language summer school in Andorra and Girona, and explicitly remember having to answer to a frustrated café worker in an airport—in Catalonia—why I had decided to place my order in Catalan and not Castilian, which he appeared to have taken badly; this might suggest he was not accustomed to being talked to in Catalan by customers, and/or as one of my papers discusses, he would have expected that I should switch to Castilian as a matter of courtesy or politeness. One might want to put this interaction in wider context, however. At the end of the day, I had just ended two weeks of intense Catalan language immersion with a group of other foreign-born learners and had been encouraged to use Catalan when in shops, restaurants, and cafés throughout. To end my trip by using Castilian or English, and not Catalan, in a setting where signage was clearly in Catalan, and many other travellers in the airport were themselves Catalan-speaking residents of Catalonia—well, I would think that it would have contradicted the linguistic self-confidence that had only just been built up through my participation in this summer school.

I carry this experience (amongst others) in the back of my head whenever travelling to a Catalan-speaking destination, and despite only ever having been nothing more than a tourist during these opportunities, it is something that has implicated me in routinely and explicitly using Catalan with my interlocutors even when it is least expected of a pale, blond-haired foreigner. To say that I ever embarked on my academic research in Catalonia with purely academic curiosity would completely wash over these earlier experiences that inform my attitudes to Castilian-Catalan code-switching in amongst the broader dynamics of Catalonia's sociolinguistic culture and ongoing trajectory. I very much regret that I was not able to continue my Catalan fieldwork, and it still feels that it was a premature decision to draw a line under it despite the capacity of this thesis to offer a (hopefully) compelling comparison of Catalan language topics especially with my Nynorsk work.

Had the articles been written in a different order, I may have been able to incorporate my observations from earlier this summer when I was in Catalonia once more for what had been meant to be a little writing and marking retreat, but then abruptly also became another opportunity to meet with Catalan nationalists and language activists. I mention earlier in this thesis that I was also actively involved in Scottish politics as an executive member of a party which currently forms part of the Scottish Parliament's current pro-independence majority and governing administration, and in this capacity, I had earlier met in Glasgow the then-president of *Assemblea Nacional Catalana*, Elisenda Paluzie. During my visit to Barcelona, I was then invited by her and the organisation to attend a pro-independence demonstration in Vic, yet this was also shadowed by yet more public debate about the role of the Castilian language in publicly funded schools in Catalonia. As part of the demonstration in the town square, a banner was unfurled with the slogan *El català ets tu*.

Parla'l.[38] I was promptly invited to meet with a retired Catalan language teacher, Jaume Sastre, who was on hunger strike in protest against decisions by the Spanish courts to insist that a proportion of Catalan schooling should be done in Castilian, which in effect would end the system of Catalan language immersion pioneered by the Catalan government after the death of Franco and Spanish constitutional reform.

I mention all of this because, in truth, I was not exactly sure what proverbial hat I was meant to be wearing, or indeed, *should* have been wearing; Paluzie referred to me in a tweet as both a co-ordinator of the Scottish Greens and a PhD candidate in linguistics, but when I think about what I was actually doing at the time, I struggle to come to terms with whether I was attending the demonstration and visiting Sastre as a linguist, a politician, both, or something else.[39] This is also very much the case with my involvement in Scots language circles, because my involvement in Scottish politics is already explicit, yet I am also engaged in academic research which deals with a disputed language variety. Contemplating exactly how I am meant to sufficiently triangulate my research with my politics as a qualitative sociolinguist has been a headache and constant concern throughout the writing of this thesis, and I would assume that the only way I can know if I have gone about this work in the right way will depend ultimately on its reception by other linguists.

Altogether, however, undertaking this research and—if anything else—capitalising on my rather unique positionality has allowed me to be involved in particularly gripping interactions across three different geopolitical contexts. I am unbelievably fortunate to have access to these spaces, although

[38] "The Catalan language is you / The Catalan is you. Speak it [the Catalan language]."

[39] https://twitter.com/epaluzie/status/1518326809493975042 (accessed 31 August 2022)

I have been constantly aware (and often quite fearful) of the repercussions of my methodological choices and relationship with the subject matter. That I have been able to present some of this work at international conferences should hopefully be testament enough that I can speak openly about my findings and extract from them theoretical observations that may contribute to discussions about not just how we conceptualise language activists and activism itself, but how we conceptualise the linguistic subject (you the reader, me, "linguists" and "non-linguists" alike) in dynamic, complex, ideologically-laden spaces of discourse and social action. I believe I have concluded writing (and then amending) this thesis just as much as a linguist (of sorts) as I have as an activist (of sorts). But in the grand scheme of things, I must remind myself that I am only a product of my social connections, cultural awareness, and communicative repertoire: just another linguistic subject existing in manifold, dynamic social contexts. That I call myself one thing or another, or that I am perceived as such by others, is not the be-all and end-all of my own character or social role.

Edinburgh, 5 May 2023

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Appendices

Information sheets & interview participant consent documents

Scots

A. Information sheet for ethnographic observations

Study title:	*Language Leagues, Platforms, and Societies: A Descriptive Analysis of Contemporary Language Activism in Catalonia Norway and Scotland*
Principal investigators:	Dr. Guy Puzey; Prof. John E. Joseph
Researcher collecting data:	James K. Puchowski

We have contacted you with this attached information sheet to inform you about our research interests and what we plan to do. If you have questions about the research, or are curious about what our research methods entail, we invite you to contact us as soon as possible. Contact details are listed below.
The researcher is interested in examples of 'language activism', and the various activities and events associated with it. He has identified this organisation, alongside cases and examples in other countries, as being active in the promotion and support of different language-related objectives.
The researcher intends to attend your organisation's events which are open to the public and/or its membership as a participant. He will attend various events between September 2019 and August 2022. As well as attending and participating as normal, he will be recording fieldnotes and collecting textual materials you distribute.
If you are familiar with research methods, this is *ethnographic* research.

His fieldnotes will relate to the following principal questions:

- How does local socio-political context correspond to different types of language activism around the world?
- What do the sociolinguistic situations of Catalan, Norwegian Nynorsk and Scots have in common? What do they not?
- Who contributes to the political and cultural discourse(s) around these languages?
- Who is a 'language activist'? How do language activist organisations operate?
- How is language activism portrayed in the media?
- Can linguists get a better theoretical understanding of language activism, and if so, how?

The researcher speaks Norwegian and Catalan, as well as English – and is sympathetic to the goals of your organisation. It is important that he is able to attend events and activities as a normal participant.
At some point he will ask active members in your organisation to take part in separate, discussion-based interviews. These are not compulsory, but they will help him to make progress with the project. We hope this document explains the motivation behind this research project.
If you have further questions, please write to: **j.k.puchowski@sms.ed.ac.uk**

B. Information sheet for interview participants

What is this document?
This document explains what kind of study we're doing, what your rights are, and what will be done with your data.

You should keep these pages for your records. After you read this, continue to the final page.

Nature of the study.

We have identified you as someone who is openly active in an organisation or movement associated with language-related issues in your community.

You are about to participate in a study which involves a discussion about language activism, your language activist organisation/group (if applicable), and the sociolinguistic situation in your community.

We have prepared some specific questions, but we will also discuss questions and topics that are related to these questions. This is an open conversation with open-ended questions. Please treat this discussion as an informal conversation; we are not testing you, and this is not an interrogation.

We may talk to you as an individual participant, or in a group of several people. Your session should last for up to 1 hour and will be conducted in English/Scots, Catalan or Norwegian.

You will be given full instructions shortly and will be able to ask any questions you may have.

Compensation.

You will not be paid or given anything in exchange for your participation. Your participation is completely voluntary.

Risks and benefits.

There are no known risks to participation in this study. Apart from having the work of language activist organisations and movements discussed in an academic doctoral thesis, there are no tangible benefits to you. You will be contributing to our knowledge about language in society.

Confidentiality and use of data.

All the information we collect during the course of the research will be processed in accordance with Data Protection Law in Scotland. We will store any personal data (i.e., audio/video recordings, signed forms) using the University of Edinburgh's secure encrypted storage service (a cloud-based server) or in a locked filing cabinet at the University of Edinburgh.

As you are an individual openly and publicly associated with organisations and movements we are interested in, it is not possible to provide you with full anonymity.

You have the right to withdraw from this research **now**, and also **before the submission** of the final thesis. If you wish to withdraw, you must let the researcher know now, or later in writing (e-mail or letter). By taking part in this research, you understand that your name and position within a language activist group or organisation may be published in the final written thesis.

The data collected during this study will be used for research purposes. **With your permission**, identifiable data such as recordings may also be used for research or teaching purposes and may be shared with other researchers or with the general public (e.g., we may make it available through the world wide web or use it in TV or radio broadcasts).

What are my data protection rights?

The University of Edinburgh is a Data Controller for the information you provide.

You have the right to access information held about you. Your right of access can be exercised in accordance with Data Protection Law. You also have other rights including rights of correction, erasure, and objection.

For more details, including the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office, please visit www.ico.org.uk. Questions, comments, and requests about your personal data can also be sent to the University Data Protection Officer at dpo@ed.ac.uk.

Voluntary participation and right to withdraw.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you withdraw from the study during or after data gathering, we will delete your data and there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

If you have any questions about what you've just read, please feel free to ask, or contact us later. You can contact us by email at j.k.puchowski@sms.ed.ac.uk.

This project has been approved by PPLS Ethics committee.

If you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant, they can be contacted at 0131 650 4020 or ppls.ethics@ed.ac.uk. If you have any questions about what you've just read, please feel free to ask them now.

Thank you for your help!

Now please complete the consent form on the next page.

C. Participant consent and agreement to data usage

Please mark 'yes' or 'no' for every statement below:

Participant's name:

Participant signature:

Today's date:

Consent for participation:

I consent to take part in the above study, including audio recording.

YES [ ] NO [ ]

Agreement to identifiable data usage requests:

I agree that recordings of my voice and transcriptions may be made publicly available for general use (e.g., used in radio or television broadcasts, or put on the world-wide web).

YES [ ] NO [ ]

I agree that recordings of my voice and transcriptions can be shared with other researchers and used for teaching or research purposes (e.g., presentations and publications).

YES [ ] NO [ ]

Catalan

A. Information sheet for ethnographic observations

Títol de l'estudi: *Language Leagues, Platforms, and Societies: A Descriptive Analysis of Contemporary Language Activism in Catalonia Norway and Scotland*

Investigadors principals: Dr. Guy Puzey; Prof. John E. Joseph

Investigador que recull les dades: James K. Puchowski

Us contactem amb aquest full informatiu que us explica els nostres interessos i propòsits de recerca. Si teniu preguntes o dubtes sobre la nostra investigació, o si teniu alguna curiositat sobre el que implica aquesta recerca, us convidem a posar-vos en contacte amb nosaltres al més aviat possible. Més avall trobareu l'adreça de correu on podeu escriure'ns.

L'investigador està interessat en exemples d' 'activisme lingüístic', i, en les diferents activitats i esdeveniments que hi estan associats. Ha identificat la vostra organització, a més d'altres a altres països, com a organització que treballa obertament per a la promoció i el suport de diferents objectius relacionats amb la llengua catalana.

L'investigador voldria assistir als esdeveniments de la vostra organització que normalment estan oberts al públic i / o als vostres socis i militants. L'assistència a diversos esdeveniments seria entre el setembre del 2019 i agost del 2022, quan s'acabarà el projecte de la tesi. A més d'assistir com a participant normal, escriurà notes de camp i recollirà exemples de material textual que distribuïu. Si esteu familiaritzats amb aquest mètode de recerca, es tracta d'una investigació *etnogràfica*.

Les notes de camp estan relacionades amb les següents preguntes principals:

- Com influeix el context sociopolític local en els diferents tipus d'activisme lingüístic arreu del món?
- Què tenen en comú les situacions sociolingüístiques del català, el neonoruec i l'escocès de les terres baixes? I què no?
- Qui contribueix als discursos polítics i culturals a l'entorn d'aquestes llengües?
- Qui és l'activista lingüístic? Com funcionen les organitzacions actives i compromeses amb la seva llengua?
- Com es mostra l'activisme lingüístic als mitjans de comunicació?
- Els lingüistes poden tenir una millor comprensió teorètic de l'activisme lingüístic? En cas que sí, com?

L'investigador parla el noruec i el català, així com l'anglès, i és partidari dels objectius i la feina de la vostra organització. És important que pugui assistir als esdeveniments com a participant normal.
En algun moment demanarà a alguns socis i militants de la vostra organització que participin en entrevistes discursives, separades d'aquesta observació etnogràfica. No són obligatòries, però ajudarien a l'investigador a avançar amb el seu projecte.
Esperem que aquest document expliqui la motivació d'aquest projecte de recerca.
Si teniu alguna pregunta, escriviu a:

B. Information sheet for interview participants

Què és aquest document?

En aquest document, li expliquem de què tracta aquest estudi. Conté informació sobre els seus drets, i què farem amb les seves dades.

Preguem que conservi aquest document. Després de llegir aquesta secció, continuï fins a l'ultima pàgina.

Les motivacions d'aquest estudi.

L'hem identificat com a persona que és militant/soci d'una organització i/o que treballa obertament per a aconseguir objectius relacionats amb la llengua al seu país.

Participarà en un estudi on tindrem una conversa sobre l'activisme lingüístic, la seva participació en l'organització d'activistes lingüístics (si s'escau), i la situació sociolingüística al seu país.

Ja hem preparat algunes preguntes especifiques, però li farem altres preguntes quan surtin i parlarem de diferents temes relacionats. D'aquesta manera, és una conversa oberta amb preguntes il·limitades. Si us plau, voldríem que tractés aquesta conversa informalment; no és una prova ni un interrogatori.

Aquesta conversa es pot fer amb vostè individualment o en grup. La seva sessió pot durar fins a una hora, i parlarem en anglès/escocès, català o noruec.

Li donarem instruccions completes d'aquí a poc, i tindrà la possibilitat de plantejar-nos qualsevol pregunta.

Remuneració/compensació.

No se li pagarà, ni li donarem res a canvi per la seva participació. La seva participació és completament voluntària.

Riscos i beneficis.

Pel que sabem no hi ha cap risc en aquest estudi. Igualment no hi ha cap benefici per a vostè. A part de tenir il·lustrat acadèmicament el que *és* l'activisme lingüístic, i el que fan les seves organitzacions o moviments, no hi ha cap benefici tangible. Contribuirà al nostre coneixement del llenguatge i la seva llengua en els seus contextos socials.

Confidencialitat i l'ús de les dades.

Tota la informació que recollirem a través d'aquest estudi la tractarem d'acord amb els reglaments de protecció de dades a Escòcia. Emmagatzemarem totes les dades personals (per exemple: gravacions de vídeo/àudio, formularis firmats) utilitzant els serveis xifrats i segurs de la Universitat d'Edimburg (un servidor basat en núvol ('cloud')) o la mantindrem en un arxivador tancat a la Universitat d'Edimburg.

Com que és una persona obertament i públicament associada amb organitzacions o moviments que ens interessen, no és possible d'oferir-li l'anonimat complet.

Té el dret de retirar-se d'aquesta recerca **ara**, i també **abans de la presentació** de la tesi. Si vol retirar-se'n, haurà d'informar l'investigador ara, o més aviat per escrit (correu electrònic o carta escrita). En participar en aquest estudi, ha entès que el seu nom i la seva posició dins d'una organització o grup d'activistes lingüístics es podria publicar a la tesi.

Les dades que recollirem en aquest estudi s'utilitzaran per a propòsits d'investigació.

Amb el seu permís, les dades identificables, com per exemple gravacions, podrien ser utilitzades per a propòsits de recerca o d'ensenyament, i les podríem compartir amb altres investigadors o amb el públic en general (és a

dir, faríem disponibles aquestes dades en línia, o les utilitzaríem a les emissions de televisió o la ràdio).

Quins són els meus drets de protecció de dades?

La Universitat d'Edimburg és controlador de dades per a tota informació que proporcioni. Té el dret a tenir accés a la informació que tenim de/sobre vostè. El seu dret d'accés es pot exercir d'acord amb els reglaments de protecció de dades. Té altres drets, incloent-hi el dret de correcció, d'esborrat i d'objecció. Per a tenir-ne més detalls, hi incloent el dret de presentar una queixa al despatx de la comissió d'informacions, visiti www.ico.org.uk. Les preguntes, comentaris i sol·licituds referents a les seves dades personals es poden enviar també a l'encarregat de protecció de dades a la Universitat d'Edimburg – dpo@ed.ac.uk.

Participació voluntària i el seu dret de retirar-se.

La seva participació és voluntària, i pot retirar-se d'aquest estudi en qualsevol moment i per qualsevol motiu. Si se'n retira durant o després, esborrarem les seves dades i no hi ha cap penalització ni pèrdua de beneficis als quals tingui dret.

Si té qualsevol pregunta sobre el contingut d'aquest document, digui'ns o contacti'ns al més aviat possible. Se'ns pot contactar per correu –

Aquest projecte ha estat aprovat pel comitè ètic del departament de PPLS. En cas que tingui preguntes o comentaris relacionats amb els seus drets com a participant, contacti el comitè per telèfon (00 44) (0) 131 650 4020 o per correu ppls.ethics@ed.ac.uk. Si té preguntes sobre aquestes pàgines i la informació que s'hi presenta, si us plau, faci'ns-les ara.

Moltes gràcies!

Si us plau, ompli el formulari de consentiment a la pàgina següent.

C. Participant consent and agreement to data usage

*Please mark 'yes' or 'no' for every statement below/**si us plau, marqui 'si' o 'no' per cada d'aquestes afirmacions**:*

Participant's name/**nom del participant**:

Participant signature/**firma del participant**:

Today's date/**data d'avui**:

Consent for participation/**consentiment de participació**:

> *I consent to take part in the above study, including audio recording.* ***Accepto participar en l'estudi esmentat, la gravació d'àudio inclosa.***
>
> YES/SÍ [ ] NO [ ]

Agreement to identifiable data usage requests/**acord per a sol·licituds per a l'ús de dades identificables**:

> *I agree that recordings of my voice and transcriptions may be made publicly available for general use (e.g., used in radio or television broadcasts, or put on the world-wide web).* ***Accepto que les gravacions de la meva veu i les transcripcions es puguin fer disponibles per a l'ús general (per exemple, a la radio o per a emissions televisuals, o en línia).***
>
> YES/SÍ [ ] NO [ ]

I agree that recordings of my voice and transcriptions can be shared with other researchers and used for teaching or research purposes (e.g., presentations and publications). ***Accepto que les gravacions del a meva veu i les transcripcions es puguin compartir i utilitzar per a propòsits de recerca o d'ensenyament (per exemple, presentacions o publicacions)****.*

YES/SÍ [ ] NO [ ]

Nynorsk

A. Information sheet for ethnographic observations

Tittel på studien:	*Language Leagues, Platforms, and Societies: A Descriptive Analysis of Contemporary Language Activism in Catalonia Norway and Scotland*
Hovudforskarar:	Dr. Guy Puzey; Prof. John E. Joseph
Forskaren som samlar inn dataa:	James K. Puchowski

Me har tatt kontakt med dokker, med dette vedlagte informasjonsarket, for å informera dokker om forskingsinteressene våre, og kva me har planlagt å gjera. Dersom dokker har spørsmål om forskinga, eller vil veta meir om kva forskingsmetodane går ut på, så ber me dokker om å ta kontakt så snart som mogleg. Kontaktinformasjonen ligg under.

Forskaren er interessert i døme av 'språkaktivisme', og dei mange aktivitetane og arrangementa som er knytt til dei. Han har identifisert denne organisasjonen, med andre døme og eksempel frå andre land, som ein som driv med og promoterer fleire språkrelaterte objektiv.

Av den grunn vil forskaren vera med på arrangementa (som vanleg deltakar) til organisasjonen dokkar som vanlegvis er opne til alle eller medlemskapet. Han vil vera med på ulike hendingar mellom september 2019 og august 2022. Så vel som å ta del som vanleg, så kjem han til å ta feltnotat og samla tekstlege materiale dokker gjev ut. Det kan henda at dokker allereie er kjende med forskingsmetoden – den heiter *etnografisk* forsking.

Feltnotata angår desse hovudspørsmåla:

- Korleis svarar ein lokal sosiopolitisk kontekst til forskjellige døme på språkaktivisme verda rundt?
- Kva har dei sosiolingvistiske stodene til katalansk, nynorsk og skotsk til felles? Kva har dei ikkje til felles?
- Kven kontribuerer til dei mange politiske og kulturelle diskursane som gjeld desse språka?
- Kven er 'språkaktivisten'? Korleis funkar språkaktivistiske organisasjonar?
- Korleis blir språkaktivismen portrettert i media?
- Kan lingvistar og språksosiologar få ei betre teoretisk forståing av språkaktivismen, og viss ja, korleis?

Forskaren snakkar norsk og katalansk, så vel som engelsk – og er sympatisk til organisasjonen sine mål. Det er viktig at han får ta del i hendingane som vanleg deltakar.
På eit tidspunkt kjem han til å spørja nokre aktive medlemer til å ta del i separate, diskusjons-baserte intervju, som ikkje er obligatoriske.
Ideen er at dei skal hjelpa forskaren til å gjera framsteg med prosjektet.
Me håpar dette arket forklarar motivasjonen vår bak dette prosjektet.
Har dokker fleire spørsmål, skriv gjerne til: **j.k.puchowski@sms.ed.ac.uk**

B. Information sheet for interview participants

Kva er dette dokumentet?
Dette dokument skildrar kva for ein studie me held på med, kva rettane dine er, og kva skal gjerast med dataa dine.
Du burde halda på desse sidene som referanse. Ein gong du har lese dette, så kan du halda fram til neste side.

Kva slags forsking er dette?

Me har identifisert deg som nokon som er openlyst aktiv i ein organisasjon eller ei rørsle som er knytt til språkrelaterte spørsmål i samfunnet ditt. Om kort tid skal du ta del i ein diskusjon som handlar om språkaktivisme, den språkaktivistiske organisasjonen din eller gruppa di (viss det er aktuelt), og språkstoda i samfunnet ditt.

Me har utarbeidd nokre spesifikke spørsmål på førehand, men me vil også diskutera spørsmål og emne som er relaterte til desse spørsmåla. Det er i alle fall ein open diskusjon med opne spørsmål, og me ber deg om å betrakta samtala uformelt; det er ikkje nokon test, og det er ikkje ein forhøyr.

Det kan henda me snakkar til deg og berre deg, eller i ei gruppe med fleire personar. Sesjonen din bør vara opp til ein time og kan utførast på engelsk/skotsk, katalansk eller norsk. Snart skal du få resten av instruksjonane, og du vil kunna stille kva som helst spørsmål.

Honorar.

Du skal ikkje bli betalt eller gjeve noko i bytte for deltakinga di. Deltakinga di er heilt friviljug.

Risiko og fordelar.

Så vidt me veit så er det ingen risiko knytt til denne delstudien. Fordelen er at du hjelper oss til å forstå meir om språkaktivismen og språk i sosial kontekst, og situasjonen i samfunnet ditt skal skildrast i ei akademisk avhandling. Det er ingen konkrete fordelar for deg.

Fortrulegheit og databruk.

All informasjon me samlar inn i løpet av denne forskinga skal behandlast i samsvar med datavernslova i Skottland. Me skal lagra alle personlege data (dvs. lyd/videoopptak, signerte skjema) ved å bruka Universitetet i Edinburghs sikre, krypterte lagringsteneste (ein cloud-basert server), eller i eit låst arkivskap ved Universitetet i Edinburgh.

Sidan du er nokon som er openlyst knytt, på ein offentleg måte, til organisasjonar og rørsler me er interesserte i, er det ikkje mogleg å gje deg full anonymitet.

Du har retten til å trekkja deg frå denne undersøkinga **nå**, og også **før innleveringa av avhandlinga**. Dersom du ønskjer å trekkja deg, så må du seia ifrå til forskaren **nå**, eller **seinare skriftleg** (e-post eller brev). Ved å ta del i denne forskinga forstår du at namnet ditt og stillinga di i ei språkaktivistisk gruppe kan bli publisert i avhandlinga.

Dataa me samlar i denne studien skal brukast til forskingsformål. **Med løyva di**, så skal identifiserbare data som lydopptak brukast til undervisings- og forskingsformål, og kan delast med andre forskarar eller publikum (for eksempel kan me gjera dataa tilgjengelege via Internett, eller bruka dei på TV eller radio).

Kva er mine datavernsrettar?

Universitetet i Edinburgh er datastyrar for informasjonen du gjev oss.

Du har retten til å få tak i informasjonen me har om deg. Retten din til tilgang kan utøvast i samsvar med datavernslova. Du har også andre rettar, inkluderte rettar til retting, sletting og innvending.

For fleire detaljar, inkludert retten din til å klaga til kontoret til informasjonskommisæren, så kan du gå til www.ico.org.uk. Spørsmål,

kommentarar og førespurnadar om dei personlege dataa dine kan òg sendast til universitetets datavernsansvarleg ved å skriva til dpo@ed.ac.uk.

Friviljug deltaking og retten til å trekkja deg.

Deltakinga di er friviljug, og du kan trekkja deg frå studien når som helst og av kva som helst grunn. Dersom du trekkjer deg frå studien under eller etter datasamlinga, så skal me sletta dataa dine og det blir ingen straff eller tap av fordelane som du elles har rett til.

Har du spørsmål om kva du har lese, ikkje nøl med å seia ifrå, men du kan ta kontakt seinare. Du kan skriva e-post til oss – j.k.puchowski@sms.ed.ac.uk er adressa du treng.

Dette prosjektet har blitt godkjent av etikk-komiteen hjå PPLS. Dersom du har spørsmål eller kommentarar i forhold til rettane dine som deltakar, så kan du ta kontakt med komiteen per telefon (00 44) (0) 131 650 4020 eller e-post ppls.ethics@ed.ac.uk. Har du spørsmål om kva du har lese, så får du stilla dei nå.

Tusen takk for hjelpa!

Nå ber me deg om å fylla ut samtykkeskjemaet på neste side.

C. Participant consent and agreement to data usage

*Please mark 'yes' or 'no' for every statement below/**ver venleg og kryss av anten ja' eller 'nei' for kvart utsegn**:*

Participant's name/**deltakaren sitt namn**:

Participant signature/**deltakaren sin signatur**:

Today's date/**dagen sin dato**:

Consent for participation/**samtykke til deltaking**:

I consent to take part in the above study, including audio recording. ***Eg samtykkjer i å ta del i den ovannemnte studien, inkludert lydopptak.***

YES/JA [ ] NO/NEI [ ]

Agreement to identifiable data usage requests/**samtykke; identifiserbare databrukførespurnadar**:

I agree that recordings of my voice and transcriptions may be made publicly available for general use (e.g., used in radio or television broadcasts, or put on the world-wide web). ***Eg samtykkjer i at opptak av røysta mi og transkripsjonar kan offentleggjerast for allmenn bruk (t.d. radio- eller TV-sendingar, eller på nett).***

YES/JA [ ] NO/NEI [ ]

I agree that recordings of my voice and transcriptions can be shared with other researchers and used for teaching or research purposes (e.g., presentations and publications). ***Eg samtykkjer i at opptak av røysta mi og transkripsjonar kan delast med andre forskarar og kan brukast i undervising og ytterlegare forsking (t.d. presentasjonar og publikasjonar).***

YES/JA [ ] NO/NEI [ ]

Timeline: fieldwork and interviews

In chronological order (doctoral research period only)

20-21 September 2019: 'Dagsseminar' in Oslo with *Noregs Mållag* on 21 September 2019; approximately 36 A5 pages of jottings during various seminar sessions at the offices of *Samlaget* (publisher specialising in publications in Nynorsk). Discussions and speeches concerned the publication of a new statement of principles for *Noregs Mållag* in light of growing use of English in everyday life in Norway, the internet age, and the upcoming new language law in Norway ('Språklova').

21-22 September 2019: 'Samling for unge vaksne' in Oslo with *Noregs Mållag*; approximately 31 A5 pages of jottings during various sessions and talks at the headquarters of *Noregs Mållag* ('skrivarstova'), specifically for members of *Noregs Mållag* under between ages of 25 and 40. Discussions and talks focused on evolving online technologies (chatbots, open-source language dictionaries) and how to write complaints when public authorities do not use Nynorsk as required by law. Featured celebratory dinner on 21 September and guest speech from Kjersti Wøien Håland (screenwriter of NRK TV-series 'Lovleg' and winner of the 2019 Målpris)

27 September 2019: Inaugural *Scots Language Awards* at the *Mitchell Theatre* in Glasgow; approximately 11 A5 pages

containing reflections from wine reception, personal interaction with nominees, and examples of metalanguage from host Alistair Heather as well as nominees and winners on stage.

25 January 2020: *Scots@ed* in Edinburgh at 50 George Square at the University of Edinburgh; 12 A4 pre-tabulated pages with jottings filled in for every scheduled talk and panel discussion. Did not take notes during the Burns Supper organised in the evening following the conclusion of the main event.

17 February 2020: 'Premis Martí Gasull i Roig', organised by *Plataforma per la llengua catalana* at the *Teatre Poliorama* in Barcelona; (unbeknownst to me, the event was to be fully recorded and later uploaded to YouTube); approximately 15 A5 pages of jottings written throughout ceremony, mainly focusing on examples of metalanguage to describe the state of the Catalan language, and speeches given by award winners. Invited to a late-night dinner ('sopar') with the *grup tècnic* afterwards but did not take notes for this as this invitation was not planned and unexpected.

20 February 2020: 'Dia de la llengua materna' organised by *No em canviïs la llengua* at the *Orfeó Martinenc* community theatre in Barcelona; approximately 11 A5 pages of jottings focusing on metalanguage of co-organisers Matthew Tree and Rosario Palomino, as well as contents of stories/tales in the "mother tongue" of participants on stage.

Timeline: fieldwork and interviews

21 February 2020:	Notes from conversation between myself, Javier Moreno Rivero (PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge) and member of communication staff at headquarters of *Plataforma per la llengua catalana*; approximately 3 A5 pages of jottings, noting down comparable themes between work at *Plataforma* vs. *Noregs Mållag* and *Norsk Målungdom* (attitudes campaigns, use of social media, press, comms protocols), international outreach, geographical strategy (e.g. Barcelona Metropolitan Area vs. rest of Catalonia).
[23 March 2020:	UK and Scottish governments issue Coronavirus restrictions and subsequent lockdown rules; active fieldwork ends]
[May-July 2020:	*Interruption*; health leave – no writing during this time]
20 October 2020*:	Notes from periodic *Oor Vyce* meeting organised via Zoom; approximately 2 A4 pages of notes covering strategy for 2021 Scottish Parliament election and running the #ScotsPledge campaign with outreach to electoral candidates (such as myself for the Scottish Green Party).
[May-July 2021*:	*Interruption*; internship with Scottish Government through SGSSS scheme]
25 September 2021*:	Third (second in-person) *Scots Language Awards* at the *Gardyne Theatre* in Dundee; approximately 13 A5 pages containing reflections from drinks reception prior, personal interaction with guests and hosts

Alistair Heather & Len Pennie; like with 2019, noting examples of metalanguage from hosts as well as all nominees and winners on stage.

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* These events occurred outside the active fieldwork period, which effectively ended following the 2020 pandemic. As these events nevertheless likely informed my ethnographic gaze during my write-up period, they are included in the list for transparency.

Interviews concluded:

24 September 2019: Ingar Arnøy (employee at *Noregs Mållag*); 00:47:36

24 September 2019: Gunnhild Skjold (then-chair (*leiar*) of *Norsk Målungdom*, previously participated in one of my undergraduate dissertation research interviews alongside Håkon Remøy); 00:34:01

24 September 2019: Vegard Opdahl ('convert' to Nynorsk; taught supplementary Nynorsk lessons to students on behalf of *Studentmållaget i Oslo* during Erasmus exchange, 2015-16); 00:15:25

24 September 2019: Svein Soldal Eggerud (then-deputy chair (*nestleiar*) of *Norsk Målungdom*); 00:31:38

24 September 2019: Karl Peder Mork (former chair (*leiar*) of *Studentmållaget i Oslo*, former *leiar* of *Norsk Målungdom*; both he and I wrote letters of protest to Oslo student newspaper *Universitas* during my Erasmus exchange, 2015-16); 00:36:56

Timeline: fieldwork and interviews

24 September 2019: Anna Rekdal (member of *Norsk Målungdom* during my Erasmus exchange, 2015-16); 00:22:09

4 December 2019: Paul Malgrati (PhD student at University of St. Andrews, first met at 2018 *Scots Leid Associe* annual Collogue in Perth); 00:52:26

9 December 2019: Sheena Blackhall (poet and writer at the *Elphinstone Institute* at the University of Aberdeen, winner of the Janet Paisley Lifetime Achievement Award at the inaugural 2019 *Scots Language Awards* in Glasgow); 00:54:46

15 December 2019: Billy Kay (writer and broadcaster, winner of Scots Media Person of the Year at the inaugural 2019 *Scots Language Awards* in Glasgow); 00:42:45

19 February 2020: Matthew Tree (English-born Catalan-language writer and broadcaster, one of the co-ordinators of *No em canviïs la llengua*); 00:50:42

21 February 2020: Daniel Roldan (employee at *Plataforma per la llengua catalana,* liaised via e-mail and provided a free ticket for Premis Martí Gasull i Roig in Barcelona, invited me to the following dinner with the *grup tècnic*); 00:33:57

21 February 2020: Miquel Gil (employee at *Plataforma per la llengua catalana,* was also at dinner with the *grup tècnic* which followed Premis Gasull i Roig in Barcelona); 00:43:00

Question list for semi-structured interviews

- What was [event] meant to achieve?
- What did you know about [event] before attending?
- Do you think things are going well for Catalan/Nynorsk/Scots?
- Do you identify as a “language activist”?
- Alternatively, do you think your actions would be perceived by others as “language activism”?
- Who are the “language activists” in Catalonia/Norway/Scotland?
- What do “language activists” do?
- Are “language activists” just **language** activists?
- What does “activism” mean?
- Are there different types of “language activism” around the world or within Catalonia/Norway/Scotland?
- Who is **not** an activist?
- I am not from Catalonia/Norway/Scotland – where would someone like me find (more) “language activists”?
- What role does [organisation] play in Catalonia/Norway/Scotland?
- What sort of relationship does [organisation] have with other organisations/authorities?
- I am researching language activism in Catalonia, Norway, and Scotland: are there any questions that you would like to ask me?