The Northern Subject Rule in first-person singular contexts in fourteenth-fifteenth-century Scots[1]

María Nieves Rodríguez Ledesma
Universidad de Sevilla

The article focuses on the operation of the Northern Subject Rule in the first-person singular in early Scots. It establishes that the first-person singular was under the scope of the NSR in the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries, with a near-categorical operation of the Proximity-to-Subject Constraint. In addition, it reveals the strength of this constraint, which in recent literature has generally been assumed to be less robust than the Type-of-Subject Constraint. A comparison with Northern Middle English suggests that Scots was more advanced in the operation of the NSR.

Keywords: Northern Subject Rule, Older Scots, Proximity-to-Subject Constraint

1. Introduction

The Northern Subject Rule (henceforth NSR) is one of the most distinctive features of Scots and northern English. It governs the selection of verbal inflections (∅ vs. *-s*) in the present indicative in relation to the type and the position of the subject. As Murray put it already in 1873, the zero inflection is used

> only when the verb is accompanied by its proper pronoun; when the subject is a noun, adjective, interrogative or relative pronoun, or when the verb

[1] This article is part of a research project (I+D+i FFI 2011–28272) financed by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation and the European Regional Development Fund. I would like to thank Julia Fernández Cuesta and Nikolaus Ritt for their helpful comments and suggestions on a draft version of this paper. I would also like to thank Keith Williamson for kindly answering my queries about *LAOS* and Christopher Langmuir for his help with the translation of the examples.

Folia Linguistica Historica 34 (2013), 149–172. DOI 10.1515/FLIH.2013.006
ISSN 0165–4004, E-ISSN 1614–7308

> and subject are separated by a clause, the verb takes the termination *-s* in all persons. (Murray 1873: 211–12)

A more recent description by Macafee states that

> in OSc (and to some extent still in ModSc) there are two systems of concord between subject and verb in the present tense. [. . .] if the subject is a personal pronoun (the Type-of-Subject Constraint), and comes immediately before (or after) the verb (the Proximity-to-Subject Constraint), the inflections are as follows:
>
> | | | |
> |---|---|---|
> | Singular | 1st | ∅ |
> | | 2nd | -is |
> | | 3rd | -is |
> | Plural | all | ∅ |
>
> Otherwise, the inflected form is used with all persons and numbers:
>
> | | | |
> |---|---|---|
> | Singular | 1st | -is |
> | | 2nd | -is |
> | | 3rd | -is |
> | Plural | all | -is |
>
> If a personal pronoun governs two conjoined verbs, the first is affected by the contiguity of the pronoun, the second not. (Macafee 2002: cxii)

Although the status of the NSR in varieties of early English has received considerable attention in recent studies (e.g. de Haas 2011, Fernández Cuesta 2011), it has also been pointed out that some questions are still open and need to be addressed. Thus, Fernández Cuesta (2011: 104) states that "more research is needed both in Scots and Northern English on the extension of the rule in first-person singular contexts". Similarly, de Haas (2011: 219) points out that exploring "later dialect data from Middle English and early Modern English may help to gain insight in the way the NSR and related patterns diffused, and especially in how variation in the adjacency condition progressed". Finally, Buchstaller et al. (2013) call for the investigation of "a wider range of production and historical data" (101, n. 18) in order to test the general importance of their finding that

> the PSC [Proximity-to-Subject Constraint], according to which subject pronouns tend to favour the NSR only when there is intervening material between the subject and the verb, is not significant, in [the varieties they studied, namely . . .] Hawick [. . . and] Newcastle. (Buchstaller et al. 2013: 100)

In sum, there are two issues in particular that appear to require further research: (1) the NSR in first-person singular contexts and (2) the operation of the Proximity-to-Subject Constraint. The present article addresses both issues by means of a corpus based study of Older Scots.

With regard to first-person singular contexts, the status of the NSR in Older Scots is insufficiently documented (cf. Meurman-Solin 1993 and Montgomery 1994 among others) and warrants a closer investigation also because the extent to which the first-person singular comes under the scope of the NSR in Northern Middle English has been the subject of some controversy (cf. de Haas 2011; Fernández Cuesta 2011).

As far as the Proximity-to-Subject Constraint is concerned, its status in Older Scots is interesting because it is generally assumed to be less robust than the Type-of-Subject Constraint (cf. de Haas and van Kemenade 2010, de Haas 2011, Fernández Cuesta 2011, Cole 2012a, Cole 2012b,), and is not reflected in modern Scottish dialects such as that of Hawick (Buchstaller et al. 2013) or the northern subset of *FRED*[2] (Pietsch 2005: 20). Yet Montgomery (1994) claims that in Older Scots it "operated for main verbs as strongly as the Type-of-Subject Constraint", and "regardless of the personal pronoun subject – *they*, *I*, *we*, or *ye* –" (1994: 88). Thus, testing the validity of Montgomery's assessment against a larger set of corpus data appears to be clearly worth the effort.

The present article is based on a corpus study. For investigating the two issues on which it focuses, the corpus of choice was the corpus of tagged texts constructed for producing the *Linguistic Atlas of Older Scots* (henceforth *LAOS*). While the focus of this article is on Older Scots, its results are compared to those obtained for Northern English (cf. Fernández Cuesta 2011), so as to make the specific status of the NSR in Scots more evident.

The article is organised as follows: Section 1.1 provides a survey of research on the NSR, with special focus on the first-person singular contexts. Section 2 reports how the NSR is reflected in the *LAOS* corpus. Section 3 compares the data from the 1380–1400 sub-corpus of *LAOS* to corresponding Northern Middle English data. Finally, Section 4 provides conclusions.

[2] The northern subset of *FRED* (*Freiburg Corpus of English Dialects*), consisting of approximately 300,000 words, is based on interviews between a fieldworker and informants from Scotland and the north of England (mainly elderly people of working-class background) recorded between the 1970s and the 1990s (Pietsch 2005: 9).

1.1. The NSR in first-person singular contexts: A research survey

As indicated, verbs governed by the NSR take *-s* in the present indicative unless their subject is (a) a plural or first-person singular personal pronoun (Type-of-Subject Constraint) which (b) immediately precedes or follows them (Proximity-to-Subject Constraint). The following examples, taken from *The Complaynt of Scotland* (Stewart 1979), illustrate the operation of the NSR in sixteenth-century Scots: (1) exemplifies the Type-of-Subject Constraint and (2)–(6) the Proximity-to-Subject Constraint for the first-person singular and the plural:

(1) *thyr exemplis of thir tua philosophours makkis manifest* [. . .].[3]
'These examples of these two philosophers make manifest [. . .].'
(Stewart 1979: 134)

(2) *i beand summond be institutione of ane gude zeil, hes tane.*
'I, being summoned by an institution of good will, have taken [. . .].'
(Stewart 1979: 5)

(3) *i renunce ouer my takkis and steydingis and resingis them.*
'I renounce my leases and farms and resign them.' (Stewart 1979: 142)

(4) *ve indure tha exactions patientlye and exsecutis no traisonabil vengeance.*
'We endure the exactions patiently and execute no treasonable vengeance.'
(Stewart 1979: 104–5)

(5) *ȝe lament hauyly the cruel veyrs, and ȝe cry & desyris pace at god.*
'You lament heavily the cruel wars, and you cry and desire peace with God.'
(Stewart 1979: 131)

(6) [. . .] *quhen thai see, or heris tel* [. . .]
'[. . .] when they see or hear tell [. . .].' (Stewart 1979: 11)

As Murray (1873: 214) pointed out, a difference must be made between the *-s* in the plural and the *-s* of the first-person singular: while the former reflects the Old Northumbrian suffix (as in ONH *we cymes* 'we come'), the latter does not (cf. ONH *ih cyme* 'I come'). It is due either to analogy or to contact with Scandinavian languages, where all the persons in the singular end in *-r* (English *-s*). Murray finds traces of this inflection in the gloss to the *Lindisfarne Gospels* (10th c.), in a double gloss to Matthew viii. 9:

[3] In the examples, the verbal forms illustrating the operation of the NSR are underlined.

(7) *ic monn am under maeht, haefis or hæfo under mec* ðei3*nas*.
'I am a man under authority [that] has or have soldiers under me.'
(Murray 1873: 214).[4]

Furthermore, the verb *be* is a special case: its inherited plural forms did not end in *-es* (*aron*, *aren*, *are*, *ar*, *er*), and originally did not get that suffix under the NSR either, even if the appropriate conditions held (i.e. if their subject was not an adjacent personal pronoun). However,

> at a later date, the analogy of the other verbs, in which a form identical with the 3rd person singular was used in the plural in the absence of the pronoun, led to the use of *es*, *is*, in like cases for *ar*, *er*, *though only as an alternative form* [emphasis mine]. In the same way *was*, *wes*, intruded upon *wer*, *war* in the past tense. (Murray 1873: 213)

The following examples from *The Complaynt of Scotland* (16th c.) illustrate this later stage:

(8) *3our conditions & conuersations is mair lyik til barbarian pepil*.
'Your conditions and behaviours are more like barbarian people.'
(Stewart 1979: 131)

(9) *al men that euyr vas or euyr sal be*.
'All men that ever were or ever shall be.' (Stewart 1979: 121)

Nevertheless, the original plurals *ar*, *war* are also found as alternative forms in the same contexts, as in examples (10) and (11):

(10) *inglis men ar subtil and scottis men ar facile*.
'English men are subtle and Scottish men are ingenuous.' (Stewart 1979: 84)

(11) *the pepil that var affligit*.
'The people that were afflicted.' (Stewart 1979: 60)

Although there is strong evidence of the NSR in Older Scots, and although numerous studies document its productivity in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Scots,[5] they offer very little evidence for first-person singular contexts. Thus, Glenn (1987: 98) reports only a single first-person singular in *-is* in Haye's *Buke of the Ordre of Knychthede* (second half of the 15th c.); see (12).

[4] However, possibility of agreement with *monn* (3rd person), rather than *ic* (1st person) may account for this double gloss.
[5] See e.g. Kuipers (1964), Van Buuren (1982), Glenn (1987) and Rodríguez Ledesma (1994).

(12) *I rede wele oft and takis consolacioun* (I187).
'I read very often and take consolation.' (Glenn 1987: 98)

The construction is also scarcely attested in larger corpora, such as the *Helsinki Corpus of Older Scots*, which comprises 600,000 words and covers the period 1450–1700 (Meurman-Solin 1993), and the data corpus used by Montgomery (1994), which covers the period from the late fourteenth to the mid seventeenth century. In the *Helsinki Corpus of Older Scots*, constructions reflecting the Proximity-to-Subject Constraint with the first-person singular are "relatively rare in all time periods". There are only 35 tokens, which occur mainly in letters and diaries[6] (Meurman-Solin 1993: 248). Nevertheless, Meurman-Solin concludes that "there is a clear tendency to use suffixless first verbs and suffixed second and later verbs in the first-person singular" (1993: 255).[7]

Montgomery's (1994) corpus, too, provides only very little positive evidence that the Proximity-to-Subject Constraint was productive with the first person: 15 examples of non-adjacent *I*/*we*[8] from the fourteenth century, 13 from the fifteenth, and 41 from the sixteenth (see Table 1).[9]

Given the small number of examples, Montgomery's claim that the Proximity-to-Subject Constraint "operated for main verbs as strongly as the Type-of-Subject Constraint", and that in Old and Middle Scots "it operated regardless of the personal pronoun subject – *they*, *I*, *we*, or *ye*-" (1994: 88), clearly needs further corroboration.

[6] According to Meurman-Solin, the fact that this construction mainly occurs in letters and diaries "cannot be explained only by referring to the fact that the first person pronoun is less frequent in other genres" (1993: 248). I think, however, that that is precisely the reason.

[7] Besides, there are examples illustrating a different type, in which "the first person subject, always the writer of the text, is left implicit and a suffixed verb is used" (Meurman-Solin 1993: 248). These subjectless clauses, which in the corpus are attested only in letters, would exemplify the Type-of-Subject Constraint, rather than the Proximity-to-Subject Constraint. In this second type, the verb always takes the sibilant ending (Meurman-Solin 1993: 255).

[8] Montgomery does not include separate figures for each of the pronouns.

[9] As is the case with the *Helsinki Corpus of Older Scots*, Montgomery's corpus also includes many subjectless clauses illustrating the Type-of-Subject Constraint in first-person singular contexts, i.e., "contexts with a null subject –where the *I* is implied, often in fixed phrases at the close of letters" (Montgomery 1994: 89), as in:

(i) *Thus having presentlie no vthir occasioun, comittis zow in the protection of God. From Polnone, the second of Nouembir 1576; and geif credeit to the berar. Zour lufing gud friend assuritlie* (*Memorials of the Montgomeries*, 178).
'Thus, having presently no other occasion, [I] commit you to the protection of God. From Polnone, the second of November 1576; and give credit to the bearer. Your loving good friend assuredly.' (Montgomery 1994: 89)

Table 1. Occurrence of *-s* in main verbs after non-adjacent *I*/*we* in seven texts (adapted from Montgomery 1994: 87)

	n *-s*	**n Total**	**% *-s***
Fourteenth-century verse	0	0	0
Fourteenth-century legal	14	15	93
Mid fifteenth-century prose	0	0	0
Late fifteenth-century prose	12	13	92
Mid sixteenth-century letters	37	37	100
Mid sixteenth-century prose	1	1	100
Late sixteenth-century diaries	3	3	100

In addition, the evidence of modern varieties is merely suggestive, not fully conclusive. Some varieties seem to support Montgomery's claim that the NSR must have been as strong in the first-person singular as in the plural, since it was transplanted to Ulster in the seventeenth century and later on to North America (Appalachian English, nineteenth-century African American speech). Thus, Pietsch (2005) documents examples of the operation of the NSR in first-person singular contexts in a number of Ulster speakers in the *NITCS* (*Northern Ireland Transcribed Corpus of Speech*):[10]

(13) *The women goes out and rickles, dear. I rickle my own turf. After I do my work in the daytime, I go out and rickles my turf. When I come home, I go away and rickles my turf.* [*NITCS*: L17.3]
'The women go out and rickle, dear. I rickle my own turf. After I do my work in the daytime, I go out and rickle my turf. When I come home, I go away and rickle my turf.' (Pietsch 2005: 21)[11]

Similarly, Schneider & Montgomery (2001: 400) document examples of the NSR in a corpus of Southern US Antebellum overseers' letters (*Southern Plantation Overseers Corpus*)[12] and point out that in the corpus

[10] The *NICTS* is a corpus of 230,000 words collected across 38 mostly rural locations in Northern Ireland. It is based on interviews conducted in the context of a dialect atlas project, the *Tape-Recorded Survey of Hiberno-English Speech*, during the 1970s (Pietsch 2005: 8).
[11] Montgomery (1997: 138) also documents the inflection *-s* on first-person singular verbs when not adjacent to the subject pronoun *I* in Scotch-Irish English, although he points out that "such contexts are rare".
[12] The corpus, comprising approximately 155,000 words, is based on letters from white overseers on rural Southern plantations before the end of the Civil War. They were produced by speakers born in the first third of the nineteenth century who had little education and

the Proximity-to-Subject Constraint operates for all grammatical persons, although "it appears most commonly in the first-person singular," as in:[13]

(14) *I have planted my corn & potatos & has taken in the balance & has got* [McCauly 8]
'I have planted my corn and potatoes and have taken in the balance and have got.' (Schneider & Montgomery 2001: 400)

(15) *I have nothing more to write to you at present but remains yours* [Meadow 11][14]
'I have nothing more to write to you at present but remain yours.' (Schneider & Montgomery 2001: 400).

On the other hand, the evidence of modern Scottish dialects does not seem to support Montgomery's conclusion. Thus, the Proximity-to-Subject Constraint is not attested in Hawick (Buchstaller et al. 2013: 100) or the northern subset of *FRED* (Pietsch 2005: 20). Pietsch (2005: 47), following Görlach (2002: 95), suggests that its absence in corpus data from speakers who otherwise display quite distinctively Scots features may be due to stigmatisation, and adduces the fact that the construction is generally avoided by modern Scots writers as evidence. Waddell, for example, in his translation of the Psalms, avoids

> a feature of Scots grammar that might be condemned by some readers as illiterate rather than truly dialectal: like most modern Scots authors, he avoids the use of *s* inflection after plural subjects despite its clear survival in spoken usage. (Tulloch 1989: 44)[15]

relatively low status and therefore may be considered to represent the "white vernacular" of that time (Schneider & Montgomery 2001: 389).

[13] In the syntactic context exemplified in (14) and (15) (second predicate of coordinated clauses) "the frequency of the suffix is far above average –34.9% of all verbs compared to 1.6% in the first-person singular (when simple and coordinated contexts are combined)" (Schneider & Montgomery 2001: 400).

[14] In spite of the formulaic nature of openings and closings such as this, the fact that many formulas are rendered in phonetic or semiphonetic spellings indicate that the writers are attempting to transcribe them from memory, rather than copying them from print (Schneider & Montgomery 2001: 395).

[15] In his translation of *Ruth* and *Psalm* 100, however, Murray inflects the verbs following the NSR, as illustrated in the following examples:

(i) *Aa fuok* àt *leeves, ònna the yerth, syng tui the Luord.* (*Psalm* 100)
'All people that live on earth sing to the Lord.' (Tulloch 1989: 118)

(ii) *. . . àz (y)ee've bein guid tui mey, an' tui thaim* àt*'s geane* (*Ruth* 1: 8)
'. . . as you've been good to me and to them that are gone.' (Tulloch 1989: 101).

The evidence of Northern Middle English is not conclusive either. In fact, there is disagreement about the extent to which the first-person singular comes under the scope of the NSR in these varieties. Thus, as Fernández Cuesta (2011: 92–93) points out, both the authors of *LALME* (I: 554; I: 555) and Laing & Lass in their introduction to *LAEME* (2008) refer exclusively to the plural when discussing the NSR. Also de Haas (2011) focuses on the plural and dismisses the first-person singular on the grounds that "the data from early ME show that the 1SG did not follow the NSR" (2011: 75, n. 8). She finds that "in Northern early ME, 1SG verb forms generally inflect in *-e*/*-∅*, even when the pronoun subject *I* and the verb are not adjacent. Of all 34 texts in the sample with 1SG forms, only one has a single verb form with *-s* [. . .] This form follows the NSR, occurring as it does in a non-adjacent context, but it contrasts with [. . .] 12 *–∅* forms in nonadjacent contexts in the same text" (de Haas 2011: 83). In contrast, Fernández Cuesta's (2011) analysis of the *LAEME* data for the North reveals signs in early Middle English that the Proximity-to-Subject Constraint did not only apply in the plural, but in 1st person singular contexts as well. Although she concedes that the evidence from *LAEME* is very scarce and seems to suggest – at first sight – that the NSR was not operative in that context (there are 26 non-adjacent contexts for first-person singular, of which 23 have reduced ending), she shows that once the ambiguous examples are removed (17 occur in rhyming position and in three cases the verb is in a subjunctive context), there remain only three unambiguous instances of reduced ending in non-adjacent context, which amounts to the same number of tokens that show consonantal endings in that context (Fernández Cuesta 2011: 104–105).[16]

To sum up, there seems to be a considerable lack of certainty concerning the extent to which the first-person singular came under the scope of the NSR. Since this seems to be due, primarily, to the small body of evidence which most studies and corpora mentioned above provide for first-person singular contexts, the present study addresses the issue with the aid of the largest corpus available for this period, the *Linguistic Atlas of Older Scots* (*LAOS*).

[16] The NSR in first-person singular contexts is also operative in the North in early modern English, since it is well documented in a corpus of fifteenth–sixteenth-century wills and testaments from Yorkshire (cf. Fernández Cuesta & Rodríguez Ledesma 2004 and Fernández Cuesta 2011).

2. The NSR in *LAOS*: A detailed quantitative analysis

The *LAOS* corpus represents the largest electronic corpus of early Scots, consisting primarily of local documents, i.e., texts which can be localised on non-linguistic grounds.[17] The reasons for choosing this corpus for the present analysis are manifold: first, it covers the period 1380–1500 and includes the earliest records of the language; second, it is based on diplomatic editions, transcribed directly from manuscripts or facsimiles, and therefore offers the most reliable data. Finally, it has the same structure and follows the same principles of tagging as *LAEME*, so that it can be easily compared with the latter.

2.1. First results derived by means of an automatic search

In contrast to previous studies and corpora, *LAOS* contains an impressive number of attestations of the relevant construction. A search for the tag 'vps11' (first-person singular present indicative) using the task 'Concordancing' returns 597 tokens. The task 'Tag dictionary + frequencies' divides these tokens into nine different syntactic contexts, which, for the purpose of the present article, have been regrouped as:

(a) /vps11<P+: The subject personal pronoun *I* is adjacent to the verb

(16) tyl al men j mak knawyn throw yeis p*re*sen lettrys
'to all men I make known through these present letters'
(Facsimile: Fraser, Red Book of Grandtully no. 138, 1385)

(b) /vps11<P-: The subject personal pronoun *I* is not adjacent to the verb. This includes second or later verbs in coordinated verb phrases, as in (17), or examples of the type: subject pronoun *I* followed by the name of the person and his status, as in (18):

(17) j wil & grante3 y^{t} our folowing be nocht herd as thing of na valu no of strenthe.
'I will and grant that our following be not heard as a thing of any value or strength.' (Facsimile: Papers of the late Professor A. J. Aitken, 1380)

[17] A subcorpus of literary texts in manuscripts from the period before 1500 is in preparation, but not available yet (*LAOS* manual).

(18) B[e] it k[e]nyt tyl al men thru^{t} yir p*re*sent l*ett*re3 j jame3 of d[o]ug[] of Ab*er*[]n" knicht is oblist & oblige3 me thru^{t} yer*e* my l*ett*re3

'Be it known to all men through these present letters, I James of D[o]ug[] of Ab*er*[]n, knight, am compelled and pledge myself through these my letters.' (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland MS 72, f.117v, 1387)

(c) /vps11<PO-: The subject is expressed by the oblique form *me* and is not adjacent to the verb:

(19) me nowtht throw strenthe na drede Led bot of my fre ande liberale wyll till haf gewyn ande grantyt ande throu yir*e* p*rese*nt lette*r*is geffis granttis ande co*n*fermys till a nobile man s*er* johon-Forst*er* of Corstorfyn knytht all ye Rytht clame possessioun or p*roper*te

'Me, led not by strength or dread, but of my free and liberal will, to have given and granted and, through these present letters, give, grant and confirm to a noble man, Sir John Forster of Corstorfyn, knight, all the right, claim, possession or property.'

(Edinburgh, National Archives of Scotland, HM General Register House AD1/32, 1408)[18]

[18] There are also sporadic examples in the corpus of two other constructions which would exemplify the Type-of-Subject Constraint:

a. /vps11<n- (1) The subject is a proper noun not adjacent to the verb:

(i) wil3a*m* of cokburn *com*perit in iug*is*me*n*t in ye tolbuth of dumfermlyn [. . .]& yar*e* stablit john-scot Robert-wrecht & tho*m*as-karniss procuto*uris* for me & i*n* my name [. . .] & bind*is* my gud*is* p*rese*nt

'William of Cockburn appeared in judgment in the town hall of Dumfermlyn [. . .] and there established John Scot, Robert Wrecht and Thomas Karniss procurators for me and in my name [. . .] and bind my goods present.'

(Edinburgh, National Archives of Scotland, HM General Register House B20/10/1, p. 56, 1495)

b. /vps11 (3) There is no explicit subject for the verb:

(ii) and als the said my lorde has gevin me the lande3 of Tulyfour and Tuloth-kery for all the terme3 of my lif thir forsaid lande3 liande in Tulth within the baronny of Cluny witt*is* me tobe oblyst and be thir p*rese*nte3 lettre3 obly*ß* me myne ayer*is* and myne assignais

'And as the said my lord has given me the lands of Tulyfour and Tuloth-kery for all the term of my life, these forsaid lands lying in Tulth within the barony of Cluny, [I] know myself to be compelled and by these present letters pledge myself, my heirs and my assignees.'

(Edinburgh, National Archives of Scotland, HM General Register House GD44/11/1/10, 1446)

Table 2. LAOS results for 1sg.pres.ind (tag dictionary + frequencies)

	n ∅	**n *-s***	**n Tot**	**% ∅**	**% *-s***
(a) Subject pronoun adjacent to the verb	**241**	3	244	**98.77**	1.22
(b) Subject pronoun not adjacent to the verb	1	**260**	261	0.38	**99.61**
(c) Oblique pronoun not adjacent to the verb	0	**114**	114	0	**100**

Note: The figures and percentages printed in bold conform to the NSR.

The results returned by the 'tag dictionary + frequencies' routine are set out in Table 2. Obviously, these results suggest very strongly that the NSR was indeed very productive in 1st person singular contexts. In fact, it faces only four exceptions: in examples (20), (21) and (22) the verb takes *-is* even though it is adjacent to the personal pronoun subject. The first two (20 and 21) contain the verb *oblige*/*obliss*. As will be argued in more detail below, this verb appears to represent a special case. It is a French borrowing and the fact that the usual form found in the corpus (*obliss*) ends in a sibilant may account for the exceptional presence of the inflection.

(20) j oblissis me my*n* ayer*is* executour*is* & my*n* assignays land*is* Rent*is* & possessionis

'I pledge myself, my heirs, executors and my assignees, lands, rents and possessions.'

(Edinburgh, National Archives of Scotland, HM General Register House GD220/2/1/49, Lennox Charters and Letters, 1455)

(21) j oblisis me my ayr*is* executour*is* & assig*na*is as said is to pay the said thretty pvndis to-gydd*er* & at anys

'I pledge myself, my heirs, executors and assignees, as is said, to pay the said thirty pounds together and at once.'

(Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland Adv. MS 34.4.3, f. 63v - f. 64r, item 220, 1470)

(22) j *con*stitut*is* & ordanis to Ressaue the said Sovm

'I order and ordain to receive the said sum.'

(Edinburgh, National Archives of Scotland, HM General Register House B22/22/1, f.3v–f.4r, 1492)

In example (23), on the other hand, the verb takes zero ending even though it is not adjacent to a personal pronoun subject.[19]

(23) j the for-said Robart granty*ß* me fully content and payit the fyrst penny and the last and all thar be-tuext And quyt-clamy*ß* And dyscharg the for-said wiljame his ary*ß* executory*ß* and assygnis[20]

'I, the aforesaid Robert, confess myself fully content and paid the first penny and the last and everything between, and quitclaim and discharge the aforesaid William, his heirs, executors and assignees.'

(Orkney: Scottish History Society XCVI, Orkney Records: Facsimile 2, pp. 198–99, 1489)

2.2. Problems with the automatic search and results of a manually refined search

As mentioned above, the results in table 2 were obtained by using predefined *LAOS* search routines, more specifically 'Concordancing' and 'Tag Dictionary'. Strangely, however, the two routines return different results although both search for 'vps11' (first-person singular present indicative). 'Concordancing' returns 597 tokens, while 'Tag dictionary + Frequencies' counts 624 tokens of the construction in the corpus. This discrepancy made it necessary to carry out a manual search of the corpus in order to check the actual number of occurrences of the construction.

[19] There is another example in the corpus in which the verb takes zero ending when not adjacent to the personal pronoun subject:

(i) j {>} ye ?_m {>} gyf for dwm yt preste be drwnkky*n* or he ga tyll hyss beid
'I the ?m give as judgment that priest is [habitually] drunk before he goes to his prayer.' (Newburgh Court Book: f29r, 1468)

However, this example should not be taken into account, since the words intervening between the subject and verb are inserted above the line, as indicated in the transcription by placing them between two '>' symbols: the scribe may have selected the zero ending since the verb was adjacent to the personal pronoun, and afterwards added the interlined letters.

This entry in the manuscript, moreover, does not look like a 'proper' entry, but an annotation put in by a scribe mischievously(?). A drunken priest would be a matter for an ecclesiastical rather than a civil court, so the entry sits oddly with the subjects of the entries (Keith Williamson, personal communication).

[20] The other two verbs in the example, however, take a sibilant according to the operation of the NSR: *granty*ß*, quyt-clamy*ß*.*

A first look revealed the verbs which were not returned in the concordance.[21] They include forms of *have*, *be* and *oblige*/*obliss*, and sporadic examples of other verbs.[22] For the verb *have* only the form *hafis* (2 occurrences) is returned as an example with a sibilant suffix, whereas forms such as *has*, *hais*, *hes* are not. Something similar happens with *oblige*/*obliss*. Some forms are listed in the concordance, namely *oblis*, *oblyse*, *oblist* (as examples with zero endings), and *oblisis*, *obligez*, *obliges*, *oblesis*, *oblisys*(*s*) (as examples with sibilant endings). On the other hand, forms such as *obliss*, *oblyss* are not returned. Finally, in the case of *be*, no instance of this verb in the first-person singular present indicative is returned in the concordance.

For these reasons, a complete manual search of all corpus files was carried out in order to get a precise and complete picture of the operation of the NSR in first-person singular contexts in *LAOS*. Before being summarised in Table 4, the results are first presented and briefly discussed separately for four different groups of verbs:

1. *Oblige*/*obliss* (and other verbs ending in sibilants)
2. Lexical verbs (not ending in sibilants)
3. *Have*
4. *Be*

2.2.1. Oblige/obliss *(and other verbs ending in sibilants)*

Occurrences of the verb *oblige*/*obliss* are discussed first, because they represent a special and rather problematic case, which has wider implications for this study. As the high number of spelling variants shows, the fact that its stem ended in a sibilant seems to have left scribes undecided about the question whether or not to represent inflectional *-s* suffixes graphically. This has resulted in a distribution of spellings that often makes it impossible to decide whether or not an *-s* suffix should be assumed to be present morphologically speaking. The following variants are attested in the relevant contexts:

[21] Searching for 'inflexions' only returns verbs which have a suffix that has been tagged separately from the stem (Keith Williamson, personal communication).

[22] These include the following (unless otherwise stated, there is only one example of each):
   a. With pronoun subject adjacent to the verb: *suposß*, *wryt*, *aw*, *bynde*, *graunt*, *bere*, *rayß*.
   b. With pronoun not adjacent to the verb: *bindis* (2 occurrences), *grantis*, *declaris*, *menys*, *adnullis*, *casß* (3).
   c. Without an explicit subject: *grantis*.

(a) With subject pronoun adjacent to the verb: *obliß* (9 occurrences), *oblyß* (7), *oblis* (7), *obliss* (2), *obleiß* (2), *obelisß* (1), *obelysß* (1), *oblyss* (1), *oblisss* (1), *oblisis* (1), *oblissis* (1), *oblyse* (1), *oblyce* (1), *oblist* (1), *obleß* (1). (Total: 37)
(b) With subject pronoun not adjacent to the verb: *obliß* (27), *obliss* (13), *oblisß* (5), *oblisis* (4), *oblysss* (1), *oblisss* (1), *obligez* (1), *obleß* (1), *oblisß* (1), *oblissis* (1), *oblisiss* (1), *obliges* (1), *oblyß* (1). (Total 58)
(c) With the oblique pronoun *me* not adjacent to the verb: *obliß* (21), *obliss* (9), *oblisis* (6), *oblyss* (3), *oblisß* (2), *oblisss* (1), *oblesis* (1), *oblisys* (1), *oblisyss* (1). (Total: 45)
(d) With no explicit subject: *oblyß* (1), *oblisis* (1). (Total: 2)
(e) With a non-adjacent noun functioning as subject: *obliß* (1).

Although some of the spellings look like clear examples of zero endings (*oblis*, *oblyse*), and others as examples of sibilant endings (*oblis*(*s*)*is*, *obligez*, *obliges*, *oblisys*, *oblesis*, *oblisys*), there is also a considerable number of forms, such as *obliss*, *oblyss*, *obliß*, which are difficult to analyse and could be ascribed to any of these groups.[23]

As I see it, the large number of variants attested for *oblige*/*obliss* may be due to the fact that its stem ended in a sibilant, and that it was a recent, not fully naturalised loan. As a result, no clear distinction seems to have been made between inflected and uninflected forms, and the same spelling variants are found performing different functions. Thus, the form *obliß* is used for both the infinitive (24) and the third-person-singular present indicative (25).[24]

[23] This is the case, for example, of the variant *oblisß*, which in text 112 is analysed first as consisting of *oblis* + 1sg.pres.ind. inflexion *–ß* (i), and some lines later is tagged simply as 1sg.pres.ind. without further analysis (ii):

(i) me Neile-stewart of forthyrgil [. . .] be y*ir* my p*rese*nt l*ett*res & ye faith~ & treucht i*n* my body bind*is* & oblis*ß* me
'I Neile Stewart of Forthyrgil [. . .] by these my present letters and the faith and truth in my body, bind and pledge myself'

(ii) j bind & oblis*ß* me to my said lord
'I bind and pledge myself to my said lord' (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland Ch B 1936, 1489)

[24] The tendency seems to be for a text to use a particular form of this verb regardless of the syntactic context. Thus, in text 371, the same variant, *oblyß*, is used once with an oblique pronoun not adjacent to the verb (example i) and twice with a subject pronoun adjacent to the verb (examples ii and iii):

(24) Ande to yame fathfully to binde obli*ß* & *com*promit
'And to them faithfully to bind, pledge and compromise.'
(Edinburgh, National Archives of Scotland, HM General Register House GD220/2/1/92, 1493)

(25) Ande in lyk manere the saide lorde of lorne~ obli*ß* hym~ his ayris ande successour*is*
'And in like manner the said lord of Lorne pledges himself, his heirs and successors.' (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland Adv. MS 34.4.3, f. 46r, item 175, 1456)

Furthermore, a similar variety of forms is also found for the third person singular present indicative, although this context is not so frequently attested as the first person (37 tokens). The following are the results obtained using the task 'Tag Dictionary + Frequencies': *oblisß* (15), *obliß* (9), *oblyß* (4), *obleß* (3), *oblissis* (2), *oblisis* (1), *obligez* (1), *oblysß* (1), *obbliß* (1). Since many of the different variants found for this verb cannot be clearly analysed as representations of forms with a zero ending or as representations of forms with a sibilant ending, it is not possible to establish whether the forms found in the corpus show the operation of the NSR or not. Thus, they represent, essentially, uninterpretable evidence for the purpose of this study.

There are only very few other verb tokens in the corpus whose stems – like that of *oblige*/*obliss* – end in sibilants: they include *suposß* (1), *rayß* (1) and *casß* (3). Since it cannot be ruled out that their spellings were affected by the same kind of insecurity, however, they have likewise been taken out of the present study.[25] Instead, only such lexical verbs have been investi-

(i) Me patrik lord ye grahame [. . .] be tenour of yir p*re*sent*is* fathfully stratly byndis & oblyß me to Ryt honorable & worschypfull lordis [. . .]
'Me, Patrick lord the Graham, [. . .], by tenor of these presents, faithfully, strictly bind and pledge myself to the right honourable and worshipful lords'

(ii) j oblyß me in ye stratest fourm~ of obligacion~ to hald ye for-said lord*is* yar ayr*is* executur*is* and assigneis vnhurt vnharmyt & vnskathit [. . .]
'I pledge myself in the strictest form of obligation to hold the aforesaid lords, their executors and assignees unhurt, unharmed and unscathed.'

(iii) j oblyß me my*n* ayr*is* executur*is* and assigneis and al my land*is* Rentis possessionys
'I pledge myself, my heirs, executors and assignees, and all my lands, rents, possessions.'
(Edinburgh, National Archives of Scotland, HM General Register House RH1/6/65, 1455)

[25] That these verbs form a subset, separate from the other lexical verbs, is confirmed by the fact that they also show special behaviour with regard to the adoption of *-s* for the third-person singular present indicative (Stein 1987: 427–428). Stein talks about the "sibilant verb

gated whose stems did not end in sibilants, because in their case the presence of a sibilant graph can be unambiguously interpreted as signalling the presence of a suffix.

2.2.2. *Lexical verbs (not ending in sibilants)*

Table 3. LAOS results for the 1sg.pres.ind of lexical verbs (not ending in sibilants)

	n ∅	**n -*s***	**n Tot**	**% ∅**	**% -*s***
Subject pronoun adjacent to the verb	**217**	1	218	**99.54**	0.45
Subject pronoun not adjacent to the verb	1	**225**	226	0.44	**99.55**
Oblique pronoun not adjacent to the verb	0	**105**	105	0	**100**

2.2.3. Have

(a) With subject pronoun adjacent to the verb: 214, all of which take zero ending.
(b) With the oblique pronoun adjacent to the verb: 1, with zero ending.
(c) With subject pronoun not adjacent to the verb: 38. Of these 36 (94.73%) end in sibilants (*has*, *hess*, *hafis*, *hais*(*s*), *hase*) and 2 (5.26%) take zero endings (texts 857 & 863).
(d) With the oblique pronoun *me* not adjacent to the verb: 2, of which one ends in a sibilant and another takes zero ending (text 200).

2.2.4. Be[26]

(a) With subject pronoun adjacent to the verb: 31, all of which take the form *am*(*e*).
(b) With subject pronoun not adjacent to the verb: 5, three of which take the form *am* (texts 80, 191, 1409) and 2 the form *is* (text 172).
(c) With no explicit subject (vps11): 1, which takes the form *is* (text 860).

Table 4 summarises the results for all verbs except those ending in a sibilant. The results show that the verb *be* behaves differently from the other verbs, since the NSR operates only as a variable rule in this case, thus con-

constraint" and explains that this type of verb seems to have been conservative in adopting the 'new' ending *-s* for the third-person singular.

[26] As mentioned in the introduction, in the case of the verb *to be* the operation of the NSR can be observed not only in the present, but also in the past tense. Thus, *was* can be found instead of *were* in plural contexts when the subject is not a personal pronoun adjacent to the verb. However, this distinction cannot be observed with the first-person singular, which takes the form *was* regardless of the operation of the NSR.

Table 4. LAOS results for the 1sg.pres.ind of all verbs (not ending in sibilants)

		Lexical verbs	**have**	**be**
Subject pronoun adjacent to the verb	n *-s*	1	0	0
	n Tot	218	214	31
	n ∅	**217**	**214**	**31**
Oblique pronoun adjacent to the verb	n *-s*		0	
	n Tot		1	
	n ∅		**1**	
Subject pronoun not adjacent to the verb	n *-s*	**225**	**36**	**2**
	n Tot	226[a]	38	5
	n ∅	1	2	3
Oblique pronoun not adjacent to the verb	n *-s*	**105**	**1**	
	n Tot	105	2	
	n ∅	0	1	

Note: The figures printed in bold conform to the NSR.

[a] In contrast to the limited evidence found in previous studies, *LAOS* offers abundant data for first-person singular contexts. As mentioned above, only 35 tokens of verbs inflected with non-adjacent *I* are found in the *Helsinki Corpus of Older Scots* (Meurman-Solin 1993: 248), whereas Montgomery's corpus documents 15 examples of non-adjacent *I*/*we* in the fourteenth century and 13 examples in the fifteenth century (Montgomery 1994: 87). In contrast, *LAOS* attests 479 tokens of first-person singular with non-adjacent *I*/*me* in the period 1380–1500. Besides the verbs illustrated in Table 4 [lexical verbs (331), *have* (40) and *be* (5)], this figure includes the examples of the verb *oblige*/*obliss* (103).

firming earlier studies, such as Murray (1873: 213) cited above, Kuipers (1964: 96), Rodríguez Ledesma (1994: 97–100) and Montgomery (1994: 90), among others. Therefore, although there is evidence in the corpus for the Proximity-to-Subject Constraint operating on *be*, as illustrated in example (18), the figures corresponding to this verb have not been included in Table 5.

The verb *have*, on the other hand, does seem to pattern with the lexical verbs with regard to the operation of the NSR.[27] Table 5 illustrates the results obtained when grouping them together.

We are now in a position to answer the questions which this study has attempted to address. As our findings show very clearly, the NSR was highly productive in first-person singular contexts in Scots between

[27] See also Kuipers (1964: 96) and Montgomery (1994: 86).

Table 5. LAOS results for the 1sg.pres.ind. of *have* and lexical verbs (not ending in sibilants)

	n ∅	**n *-s***	**n Tot**	**% ∅**	**% *-s***
Subject pronoun adjacent to the verb	**431**	1	432	**99.76**	0.23[a]
Oblique pronoun adjacent to the verb	**1**	0	1		
Subject pronoun not adjacent to the verb	3	**261**	264	1.13	**98.86**
Oblique pronoun not adjacent to the verb	1	**106**	107	0.9	**99**

Note: The figures printed in bold conform to the NSR.
[a] This percentage is lower than Montgomery's (1994: 87), who finds one occurrence in 112 contexts of *-s* with a personal pronoun adjacent to the verb (a rate of 0.9%).

1380–1500. Likewise, our data demonstrate that the Proximity-to-Subject Constraint was respected almost categorically: out of a total of 371 examples in non-adjacent contexts in the corpus, 367 (98.9%) take a sibilant ending (98.9%). Thus, the preliminary assessments of Meurman-Solin (1993) and Montgomery (1994) can clearly count as corroborated.

It is also noteworthy that the percentage of first-person *-s* forms in non adjacent contexts is much higher in *LAOS* than in the corpus of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century wills and testaments from Yorkshire analysed by Fernández Cuesta (2011), where consonantal suffixes were attested in only 64 per cent of all non-adjacent contexts in the early period (1450–1500), and became even less frequent afterwards (2011: 96). More on the differences between Scots and Northern Middle English will be said in the following section.

3. Comparison of the *LAOS* 1380–1400 subcorpus with Northern Middle English

This brief section concentrates on the earlier period of the *LAOS* corpus, 1380–1400, with two objectives in mind: first, to compare the Sots data obtained from *LAOS* with the Middle English data obtained from *LAEME*,[28]

[28] With regard to the time period covered by both corpora, and although *LAEME* includes some earlier texts for the North (thirteenth century), non-adjacent contexts are only found in the fourteenth-century texts (1300–1350), such as *Athelstan*, *Cursor Mundi*, *Lazarus*, or *The Prophecy of Scottish Wars*. Therefore, the periods covered are similar, although slightly earlier in the case of Northern English (first half of the fourteenth century) as compared with the Scots material (second half of the fourteenth century).

Table 6. LAOS results for the 1sg.pres.ind of *have* and lexical verbs in the subperiod 1380–1400

	n ∅	**n *-s***	**n Tot**	**% ∅**	**% *-s***
Personal pronoun adjacent to the verb	**20**	0	20	**100**	0
Personal pronoun not adjacent to the verb	1	**9**	10	10	**90**

and second, to establish whether there are any differences between fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Scots with regard to the operation of the Proximity-to-Subject Constraint.

There are only 36 texts in *LAOS* for this subperiod and only eight of them[29] contain first-person singular contexts in which the NSR could have applied. The results are presented in Table 6. Although the data for this subperiod are scarce, they testify to the operation of the NSR in first-person singular contexts and the strength of the Proximity-to-Subject Constraint, since nine out of ten examples (90%) take a sibilant ending in non-adjacent contexts. In *LAEME*, on the other hand, the NSR operates only as a variable rule, with reduced endings and consonantal endings being equally frequent in non-adjacent contexts. (Fernández Cuesta 2011: 105). The results, therefore, show no difference between fourteenth and fifteenth-century-Scots and seem to suggest that Scots was more advanced than Northern English in the operation of the NSR in first-person singular contexts.

4. Conclusions

1. Despite the negative evidence provided by modern Scottish dialects, the established view that the NSR was well established in Older Scots in all contexts and that the Proximity-to-Subject Constraint was as strong as the Type-of-Subject Constraint can count as corroborated. In particular, we have seen that the first-person singular was under the scope of the NSR in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Scots already, with a near-categorical operation of the Proximity-to-Subject Constraint. These findings are in line with Montgomery's (1994), who claims that, throughout his corpus, the Proximity-to-Subject Constraint "operated for main verbs as strongly as the Type-of-Subject Constraint" and "it operated regardless of the personal

[29] Texts 67, 91, 93, 172, 200, 748, 840, 948

pronoun subject – *they*, *I*, *we*, or *ye* –" (1994: 88). He argues that "the small number of contexts for this type of subject in the pre-seventeenth-century data do not significantly question such a conclusion, since the constraint operated at greater than 90 per cent in all but the Grandtully letters (mid seventeenth century)" (Montgomery 1994: 88). At the same time, our data clearly falsify de Haas's claim that the NSR started to become relevant in this context only in early Modern English (de Haas 2011: 75 n. 8, 2011: 82).

2. A comparison of the *LAOS* data with those from Northern Middle English seems to suggest that Scots was more advanced than Northern English in the implementation of the NSR. In this respect, the NSR seems to resemble other Northern features, such as the use of ⟨i⟩ as a diacritic indicating vowel length, which is attested in Scots earlier than in Northern English (cf. Kohler 1967: 56 and Benskin 1989: 16).[30]

3. The data from *LAOS* confirm earlier statements about the behaviour of different verbs with regard to the operation of the NSR (Murray 1873, Kuipers 1964, Montgomery 1994, among others): in the case of *be* the NSR operates as a variable rule (it applies optionally and inconsistently), while *have* patterns with lexical verbs and follows the NSR practically categorically.

4. The *LAOS* data show that the oblique pronoun *me* behaves in the same way as nominative *I* with regard to the operation of the NSR. Subjects represented by the oblique pronoun are very rarely found in immediate adjacency of the finite verb, but quite frequently otherwise (152 tokens). In 99% of all cases where subject *me* is separated from the present tense verb form it governs, the verb takes an *-s* suffix, as the NSR requires.

5. Finally, the present study has revealed early evidence (fourteenth century) of the operation of the Proximity-to-Subject Constraint on the verb *be*, namely example (26):

(26) B[e] it k[e]nyt tyl al men thrut yir p*re*sent l*ett*re3 j jame3 of d[o]ug[] of Ab*er*[]n" knicht is oblist & oblige3 me thrut yer*e* my l*ett*re3 yat fra yis day furth for al ye t*er*me off my life j Sal be & is becu*m*myn to my Reu*er*ent lord and fadir s*er* jame3 of Dougl*as* [. . .].

'Be it known to all men through these present letters, I James of D[o] ug[] of Ab*er*[]n, knight, am compelled and pledge myself through these

[30] Analysis of a corpus of fifteenth–sixteenth-century legal documents from Yorkshire reveals that the use of ⟨i⟩ as a diacritic for vowel length is a late feature, occurring mostly in wills from 1520 onwards (Fernández Cuesta & Rodríguez Ledesma 2004: 291).

> my letters, that from this day forth for all the term of my life I shall be and am become to my reverend lord and father, sir James of Douglas [. . .].' (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland MS 72, f.117v, 1387)

This early attestation is interesting, because Montgomery claimed that the extension of the NSR to *be* "began before the end of the fourteenth century, as evidenced by the Old Scots legal writings" (1994: 89), but did not find evidence of the Proximity-to-Subject Constraint operating on *be* before the sixteenth century (1994: 90).

References

Benskin, Michael. 1989. Some aspects of Cumbrian English, mainly mediaeval. In Leiv Egil Breivik, Arnoldus Hille & Stig Johansson, eds. *Essays on English language in honour of Bertil Sundby*. Oslo: Novus Forlag, 13–46.

Buchstaller, Isabelle, Karen P. Corrigan, Anders Holmberg, Patrick Honeybone & Warren Maguire. 2013. T-toR and the Northern Subject Rule: Questionnaire-based spatial, social and structural linguistics. *English Language and Linguistics* 17: 85–128.

Cole, Marcelle. 2012a. The Old English origins of the Northern Subject Rule: Evidence from the Lindisfarne gloss to the Gospels of John and Mark. In Merja Stenroos, Martti Mäkinen & Inge Særheim, eds. *Language contact and development around the North Sea* (Current Issues in Linguistic Theory 321). Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 141–168.

Cole, Marcelle. 2012b. *Old Northumbrian verbal morphology in the glosses to the Lindisfarne Gospels*. Seville: University of Seville dissertation.

De Haas, Nynke K. 2011. *Morphosyntactic variation in Northern English: The Northern Subject Rule, its origins and early history*. Utrecht: LOT.

De Haas, Nynke K. & Ans van Kemenade. 2010. *Middle English dialect syntax and the rise of the Northern Subject Rule*. MS. Nijmegen: Radboud University.

Fernández Cuesta, Julia. 2011. The Northern Subject Rule in first-person singular contexts in early Modern English. *Folia Linguistica Historica* 32: 89–114.

Fernández Cuesta, Julia & Mª Nieves Rodríguez Ledesma. 2004. Northern features in 15th–16th-century legal documents from Yorkshire. In Marina Dossena & Roger Lass, eds. *Methods and data in English historical dialectology*. Bern: Peter Lang, 287–308.

Glenn, Jonathan A. 1987. *A new edition of Sir Gilbert Haye's Buke of the Ordre of Knychthede*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame dissertation.

Görlach, Manfred. 2002. *A textual history of Scots*. Heidelberg: Winter.

Kohler, K. J. 1967. Aspects of Middle Scots phonemics and graphemics: The phonological implications of the sign ⟨i⟩. *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 32–61.
Kuipers, C. H. 1964. *Quintin Kennedy (1520–1564): Two eucharistic tracts. A critical edition*. Nijmegen: University of Nijmegen Ph.D. dissertation.
LAEME = *A linguistic atlas of Early Middle English. Compiled* by Margaret Laing. Electronic text corpus with accompanying software, index of sources and theoretical introduction (with Roger Lass). [http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/ihd/laeme1/laeme1.html], 1150–1325.
LALME = McIntosh, Angus, M. L. Samuels & Michael Benskin. 1986. *Linguistic atlas of late Mediaeval English*. 4 vols. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press.
LAOS = *Linguistic Atlas of Older Scots*, Phase 1: 1380–1500 [http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/ihd/laos1/laos1.html].
Macafee, Caroline. 2002. A history of Scots to 1700. In Margaret G. Dareau, Lorna Pike & Harry D. Watson, eds. *A dictionary of the Older Scottish tongue*. Vol. 12, xxix–clvii. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Meurman-Solin, Anneli. 1993. On the morphology of verbs in Middle Scots: Present and present perfect indicative. In *Variation and change in early Scottish prose. Studies based on the Helsinki Corpus of Older Scots*. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 246–258.
Montgomery, Michael. 1994. The evolution of verb concord in Scots. In Alexander Fenton & Donald McDonald, eds. *Proceedings of the third international conference on the languages of Scotland*. Edinburgh: Canongate Academic and The Linguistic Survey of Scotland, School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh, 81–95.
Montgomery, Michael. 1997. Making transatlantic connections between varieties of English: the case of plural verb *-s*. *Journal of English Linguistics* 25: 122–141.
Murray, James A. H. 1873. *The dialect of the southern counties of Scotland: Its pronunciation, grammar, and historical relations. With an appendix on the present limits of the Gaelic and Lowland Scotch, and the dialectal divisions of the Lowland tongue*. London: Philological Society.
Pietsch, Lukas. 2005. 'Some do and some doesn't': Verbal concord variation in the north of the British Isles. In Bernd Kortmann, Tanya Herrmann, Lukas Pietsch & Susanne Wagner, eds. *A comparative grammar of British English dialects. Agreement, gender, relative clauses*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 125–210.
Rodríguez Ledesma, Mª Nieves. 1994. *Anglificación y estandarización lingüísticas en The Complaynt of Scotland* [Anglicisation and standardisation in *The Complaynt of Scotland*]. Seville: University of Seville dissertation.
Schneider, Edgar W. & Michael Montgomery. 2001. On the trail of early nonstandard grammar: An electronic corpus of southern U.S. antebellum overseers' letters. *American Speech* 76: 388–410.
Stein, Dieter. 1987. At the crossroads of philology, linguistics and semiotics: notes

on the replacement of *th* by *s* in the third person singular in English. *English Studies* 68: 406–431.
Stewart, A. M., ed. 1979. *The complaynt of Scotland*. Edinburgh: The Scottish Text Society.
Tulloch, Graham. 1989. *A history of the Scots bible*. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press.
Van Buuren, C. 1982. Introduction. In *The buke of the sevyne sagis*. Leyden: Leiden University Press, 1–130.

Author's address:
María Nieves Rodríguez Ledesma
Departamento de Filología Inglesa (Lengua Inglesa)
Facultad de Filología
Universidad de Sevilla
C/Palos de la Frontera, s/n
41004 Sevilla
Spain
nrodriguez@us.es