

End of Project Report

Language and Integration: Migration to Gaelic-Speaking Areas in the Twenty-First Century

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Executive Summary

This small exploratory study addresses two main topics in the context of in-migration to areas where Gaelic is traditionally spoken (in this study, primarily referring the Hebrides and the Highlands):

- a) The extent to which in-migrants *acquire* and *use* Gaelic
- b) Factors surrounding acquisition and use of Gaelic (or *lack of* acquisition and use of Gaelic)

The findings of this report are based on analyses of an online survey completed by 135 recent and returning migrants to the Highlands and Islands area as well as interviews with 25 recent and returning migrants. The main findings of the report are:

1. Nearly half of the survey respondents have been resident in the Highlands and Islands area for more than ten years, with a quarter reporting residency of over twenty years.
2. A desire for a different/better lifestyle is the most frequently reported reason for migration to the Highlands and Islands. Employment also ranks high as a motivation for in-migration.
3. In-migrants generally feel highly integrated into their host communities.
4. In general, in-migrants characterise the areas in which they live as having a high Gaelic linguistic vitality.
5. In-migrants generally have positive attitudes towards Gaelic.
6. Despite (3), (4), and (5), less than 30% of respondents claim to be actively learning Gaelic.
7. Despite (6), a comparison of respondents' use of Gaelic *pre-* and *post-* migration reveals that moving to an area where Gaelic is traditionally spoken *does* have an effect on Gaelic acquisition, even if this is mainly centred at the basic level. This claim appears most salient in the case of *understanding at the basic level* and *reading at the basic level*.
8. In terms of Gaelic use with different interlocutors, 'Colleagues at Work' is the most frequently chosen response for in-migrants who have learned Gaelic.
9. The perceived connection between Gaelic and the community plays a large role in in-migrants' motivations (or potential motivations) for learning Gaelic. Analysis of the qualitative data shows that in-migrant parents of GME students appear highly motivated to learn the language, but sometimes lack resources to do so.
10. In terms of perceived barriers to learning Gaelic, the most frequently chosen response is 'lack of time,' followed by the perception that Gaelic is a difficult language to learn.
11. The report makes two recommendations:
 - a. A pilot scheme of family-centred Gaelic-learning activities
 - b. Increased opportunities for learning Gaelic in the workplace

Introduction

Traditionally, the Gaelic-speaking stronghold of the Highlands and Islands is an area primarily associated with out-migration, from the forced emigration induced by The Clearances to the continual migration of Highlanders and Islanders to urban centres such as Glasgow for education and employment opportunities (see Withers, 1984; 1988; 1998). However, although migration in terms of traditional Gaelic-speaking heartland communities is usually conceptualised in the context of outward migration, these heartland communities have also seen a recent trend of in-migration to the area. When discussing this recent phenomenon, the term 'incomer' may immediately spring to mind. This appellation (sometimes considered pejorative by both 'incomers' and 'locals' alike) typically connotes a 'non-local' (in this context, often from England) who is considerably wealthier than the local population and who relocates to a rural Scottish area in search of an idyllic, pastoral existence. The various discourses around the term 'incomer' are encapsulated in the following quote from Jedrej and Nutall's (1996) book *White Settlers: The Impact of Rural Repopulation in Scotland*:

We have drawn attention to a powerful metaphorical dimension of meaning in the paired terms 'local' and 'incomer.' These terms are not literal descriptions of a demographic reality, the folk term equivalents of the demographers' concepts. As metaphors they draw their compelling obviousness and ambivalence from the inescapable experience of the asymmetries of social class. At the same time there are a number of reflexive processes which amplify the experience of duality of locals and incomers, such as those associated with the phenomenon of 'remoteness,' and with the paradox of strangers both inducing and subverting the structure of feeling 'belonging. (p.20)

This quote highlights the reflexive relationship intrinsic in an understanding of the terms 'incomer' and 'local' and further illustrates how incomers can both 'induce and subvert' a feeling of "belonging." Incomers, for example, are often blamed for pricing locals out of the housing market, thereby drastically altering community structure (see Damer, 2000). Incomers are also often seen to precipitate decline of local language and culture; for example, in 2008, referring the decision to hold Free Church communions in English (not Gaelic), *The Scotsman* reports that 'the move has been attacked by language supporters, who have accused the church of ignoring loyal Gaelic churchgoers to cater for a minority of English-speaking "incomers".' Incomers are also perceived to be unsupportive of Gaelic, as exemplified in a BBC article (2006) detailing the debate over whether or not to establish an all-Gaelic primary school in Sleat, Isle of Skye. Several comments ascribe the main opposing stance to the influence of incomers and/or cite incomers as a reason for the decline of the language (e.g. "The people who are fighting this decision are most probably, like myself incomers to the area and should not stand in the way of the protection of a piece of history as the Gaelic language is;" "This [effort to maintain Gaelic] is particularly so in the face of incomer opposition, many of whom have no real affinity to Gaelic, Gaeldom or and our intrinsic values;" "It's largely because of the people that are opposing it, i.e. the incomers, that the language has almost become extinct").

However, the extent to which these perceptions of in-migrants are justified, and the extent to which the cultural impact of in-migrants is tangible, have been questioned in recent research (see Lumb 1980; Boyle, 1997; Short and Stockdale, 1999; Stockdale Munro, and MacGregor, 2003). Boyle (1997), for example, shows that while the 'English incomer' is a socially distinguishable group, this particular group could not be differentiated from the local Scottish population on the expected variable of socioeconomic

status. Lumb's (1980) study of in-migration to seven communities in the Highlands and Islands concludes that the actual impact of in-migrants is contingent on a variety of factors regarding both the migrants themselves and the receiving community. For example in Eday, on Orkney, although the proportion of incomers to the local population is relatively low, the quick rate of migration and the relatively homogeneity of the incomer group means that their impact on the community is great, whereas in Ardgour, in the Highlands, incomers formed over half (55%) of the population, but the rate at which they migrated, and the heterogeneous origins of the group mean that their impact is minor in comparison to Eday. Lumb also finds that 'returning migrants'—that is, people who were born locally but who have spent significant periods of their lives away from the local communities and then move back—can have an important effect on the local community. For example, she discusses how the return of two cousins to Berneray to take up fishing increased the likelihood of other young people returning to their native island to take up similar occupations.

Research on the relationship between *migration and language*, however, remains scarce, as Stockdale, Munro, and MacGregor (2003) point out in their study of Gaelic Medium Education (GME) pupils in three areas where Gaelic has traditionally been spoken. They find that, contrary to the belief that incomers harbour unfavourable attitudes toward Gaelic and Gaelic in education, children are *more likely* to attend GME if their parents are migrants rather than locals. This coincides with MacDonald's (1997) ethnographic observations drawn from a community in Skye that in-migrants appear to harbour more favourable attitudes toward Gaelic and may take a greater role in involvement with cultural activities than locals. Further, the Western Isles Language Plan Project (2005) finds that residents who had migrated to the council area in the last ten years generally have an interest in the language, with over 60% of respondents claiming that they would contribute to Gaelic culture in the future by learning the language and speaking it.

The aim of this small exploratory study is to investigate issues of migration and language in terms of two main questions:

- 1) To what degree are in-migrants acquiring and using Gaelic?
- 2) What factors contribute to (or hinder) in-migrants' Gaelic acquisition and use (or lack of Gaelic acquisition and use)?

These questions will be addressed by examining the self-reported Gaelic language use and acquisition of both recent migrants and returning migrants, along with their self-reported integration into the community; language attitudes; and perception of Gaelic language vitality in the community. Discussion will centre primarily on the results of the survey, which will be augmented by quotes from the interviews.

Methodology

From June-September 2013 an online survey of twenty questions asking recent and returning migrants about their experiences moving to the Highlands and Islands area¹ was conducted. Questions centred on five central themes: in-migrants' integration into their community; the perceived linguistic vitality of Gaelic in their community; their attitudes toward Gaelic; the extent to which in-migrants have acquired Gaelic; and their experiences learning and using Gaelic. The survey was piloted in May 2013 and then made available online in June 2013. Various methods of recruitment, including e-mail lists, social networking, and advertising in local newspapers, were used to attract participants. As an incentive to fill out the survey, all survey respondents were entered into a drawing for one of two £50 Amazon vouchers. In total, 135 surveys were used for analysis. The following section presents the results of the survey. Using the programme 'R,' further statistical analysis was done to determine whether integration, perceived language vitality, or attitudes had any effect on the extent to which in-migrants acquired and used Gaelic.

In addition to the survey, twenty-five in-migrants were also interviewed for the project. Although the survey asked respondents if they would be willing to take part in an interview, it was found that the 'friend of a friend' approach (cf. Milroy, 1987) was most conducive to obtaining successful interviews. Some interviewees filled out the survey, though others did not. As an in-migrant to a Gaelic-speaking area and a Gaelic learner myself, I personally knew a number of recent and returning migrants. I also think that being an in-migrant and Gaelic learner myself made it easier to conduct interviews with both groups; for example, I think if I were a local native Gaelic speaker, some of my interviewees would have possibly been more reticent in expressing their views on their experiences using Gaelic in the community. Interviews were conducted in the language of the interviewee's choice and primarily took place in interviewees' own homes, if possible, though several interviews were conducted in my office at Lews Castle College. Interviews were either conducted individually or with family members together, as this technique further contributed to mitigating the effects of the Observer's Paradox (cf. Labov, 1972). Interviewees were offered £10 for participating in the interview, but many of them declined this token gesture of appreciation. Interviews were recorded and all interviewees' signed consent forms beforehand. All interviewees have been made anonymous and in certain cases, identifying details, such as locations, have been excluded or changed in the interview excerpts shown in this report. These changed or omitted details appear in square brackets in the transcripts. Great care has been taken to represent interviewees' speech exactly how it was said on the recording; further, write-in comments from the survey also appear exactly as they do on the actual survey.

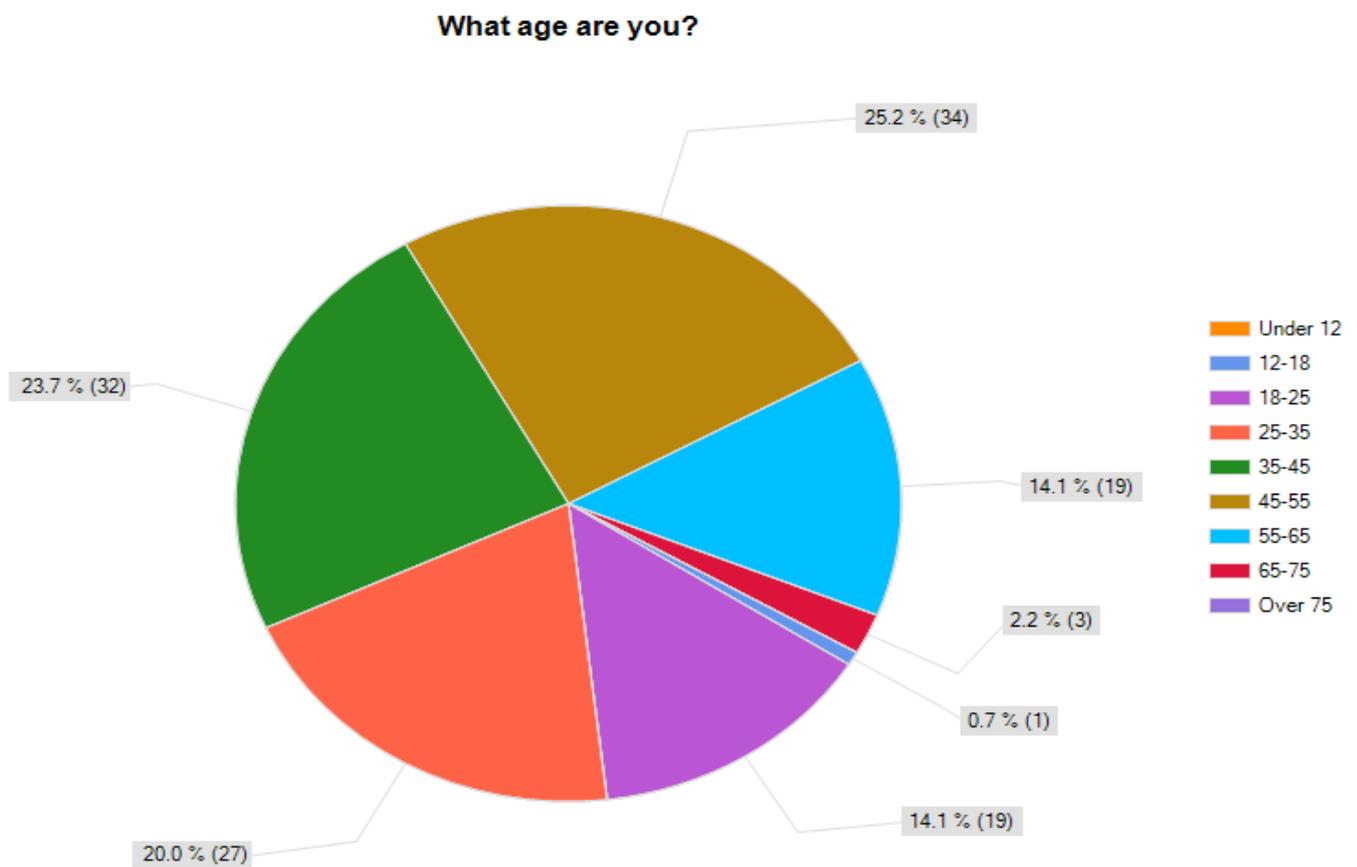
¹ The survey was targeted to in-migrants to the Highlands and Islands. The reason for this was because it was feared that marketing it as a survey for in-migrants to 'Gaelic-speaking areas' may result in a low response rate, as some respondents might feel that they do not live in a 'true' Gaelic-speaking area (e.g. there is the common perception that Gaelic is not spoken in Stornoway). Three surveys were deleted because they were filled out by in-migrants living in Orkney. The remaining surveys were filled out by in-migrants to areas where Gaelic is traditionally spoken.

Migrants' Backgrounds: Age and Length of Time Resident/Away

Respondents tend to have been resident in the Highlands and Islands area for a substantial amount of time (>10 years). Nearly a quarter of in-migrants have been resident for 20+ years. Returning migrants vary in terms of time away from the Highlands and Islands, but the greatest proportion had been away for only 4-6 years.

Overall, 135 surveys were used for analysis. Of the respondents, 88 were female and 47 were male. 117 respondents classed themselves as Recent Migrants and 18 classed themselves as Returning Migrants. The following graph illustrates the age breakdown of the respondents:

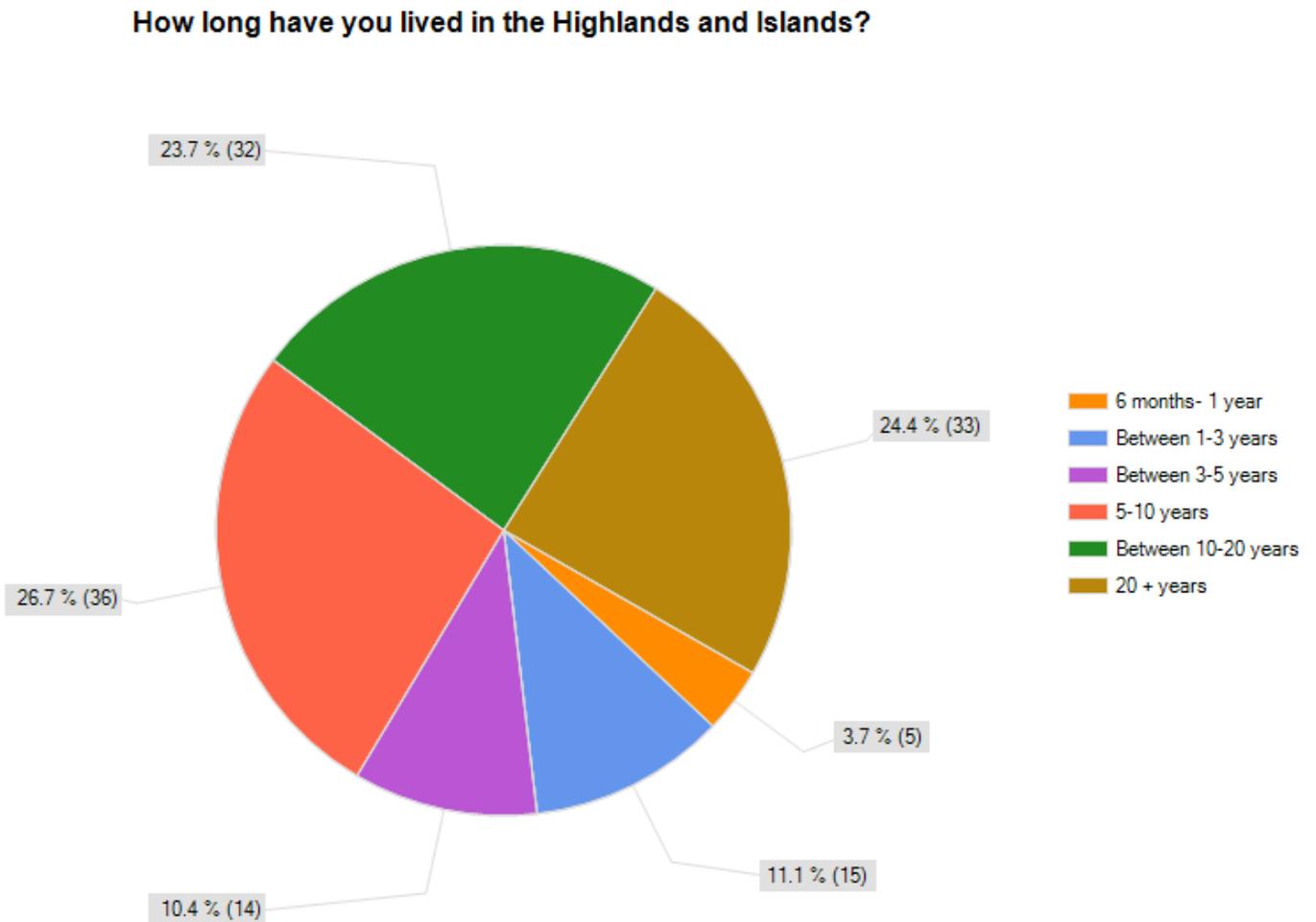
Graph 1: Age Distribution of Respondents (n=135)



As can be seen from this chart, no age group is particularly dominant in terms of the survey results. What is perhaps surprising is that only 2% of the respondents fall into the 65-75 age group. This is surprising because the age distribution for 65+ year olds nationally is considerably higher (16.8% of the total population) and even higher for the council areas in which a number of the respondents are based (21.6% for Eilean Siar and 18.5% for Highland [NROS, 2013]). Given the perception that in-migrants are often retired, this low number of 65+ year-old respondents perhaps suggests that this survey may not be completely representative of the entire population of in-migrants to Gaelic-speaking areas. Conversely, it could also suggest that this perception is somewhat exaggerated and that current migration patterns are primarily driven by factors other than wishing to retire to a remote rural area.

The following table shows how the amount of time individual in-migrants have been resident in the Highlands and Islands area:

Graph 2: Distribution of Amount of Time Resident in Area (n=135)



As can be seen from this graph, the threshold for qualifying for this survey was set at six months’ residency in the Highlands and Islands, but a maximum period was not set (the highest period was ‘20+ years’). Nearly half of all respondents chose either of the two longest residencies (‘Between 10-20 years’ or ‘20+ years’) and over a quarter then chose the third highest length of residency (‘5-10 years’). Migrants were self-selecting; that is, they identified themselves as ‘migrants,’ so the fact that nearly a quarter of them identified themselves as ‘migrants’ despite being resident in the community for over twenty years suggests that identifying as ‘local’ entails much more than having been resident in an area for a substantial amount of time. For example, as one recent migrant puts it,

Even people who live at the end of our drive are from [name of island], they would class themselves as incomers to [name of adjacent island], they wouldn't think of themselves as local. And they've lived in [name of island] all their lives but one of them, she was born in [place in the

Highlands] and her dad is from [place in England] and her her mum is from [place in the Highlands] but they moved here when she was a baby and she's always lived here. But she wouldn't say she was from [name of island] she'd say 'oh, well my dad's from [place in England] and my mum's from [place in the Highlands] and I was born in [place in the Highlands] but I've grown up in [name of island]' but she wouldn't even say-but I think to be classed as coming from here you've had to have lived here for like five generations basically (Interviewee 19)

This quote helps illustrate how why, despite living here for a substantial amount of time, people still identify themselves as 'migrants;' to them, being local is entails strong family ties to a place. A returning migrant also comments upon this perception:

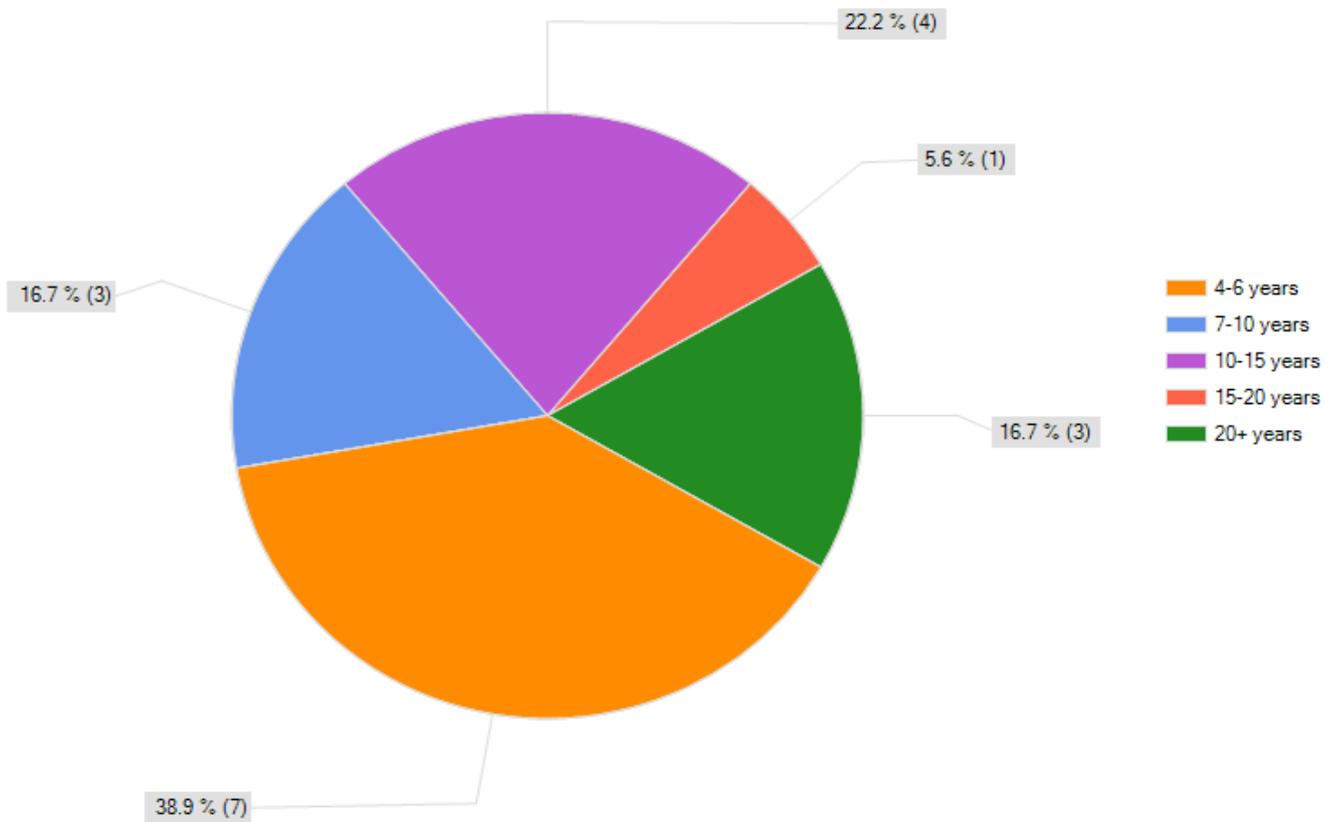
It [the term "incomer"] means their family's not from here, their lineage is not from here, their name's not from here, they've moved in here from a different area. That's really the definition of it in my eyes. Even if they've been here for 50 years- some of them have been here for a long time now- are they local? Yes they're local because they stay here. Are they local genealogy and history-wise? No. Did they take part in any clan wars? No, they didn't. Were they evicted off the land? No, they weren't. There's just too much history in this area for people to come in and say yes, I'm local. It's just not on. It'll never happen. It might happen in their own eyes but never in ours. (Interviewee 21)

For this returning migrant, being a 'local' embodies sharing specific historical ties and having a strong family lineage in the area. This interviewee also comments on the perception that a number of in-migrants might consider themselves 'local' but that that is not how 'locals' view them. This quote helps to further explain why even though in-migrants may be been resident for a substantial amount of time in the Highlands and Islands area, they still self-identify as migrants to this particular area.

The following graph details the amount of time that returning migrants had been away:

Graph 3: Distribution of amount of time spent away for Returning Migrants (n=18)

If you are returning after a significant period away, how long have you been away?



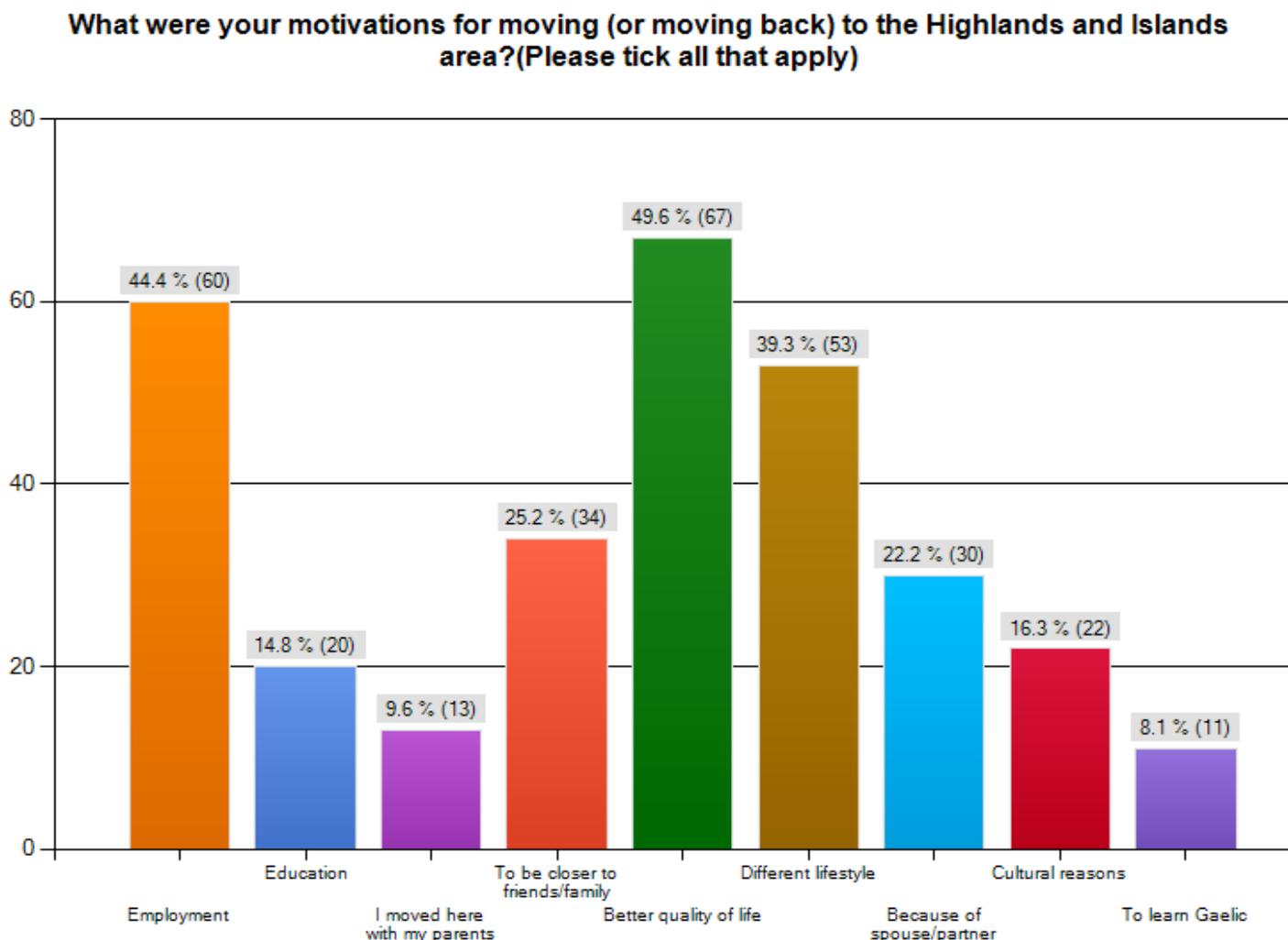
For this question, the threshold for being classed as a returning migrant was set at four years. As can be gleaned from this chart, the greatest proportion of migrants had been away for the shortest time span, 4-6 years (38.9%, 7 people). The second-largest proportion of returning migrants had been away for 10-15 years (22.2%, 4 people) followed by migrants who had been away for between 7-10 years (16.7%, 3 people) and 20+ years (16.7%, 3 people).

Motivations for Migration

Migration is motivated primarily by a desire for a different/better lifestyle, but employment plays an important role in in-migrants' choice to move to the Highlands and Islands.

The following chart details migrants' motivations for moving to the Highlands and Islands area.

Graph 4: Motivations for Migration (n=135)



For this question, the most frequently chosen reason for migration (67 respondents) is ‘Better Quality of Life.’ This coincides with popular perceptions that in-migration to a rural and remote community is often driven by a desire to escape an urban lifestyle (cf. Jedrej and Nuttall, 1996). However, it is important to note that the second most-chosen response is employment (60 respondents), which challenges perceptions that in-migrants to the Highlands and Islands are mainly retirees. This also is interesting in terms of the historical context of lack of employment driving out-migration in this area. The reasons ‘better quality of life’ and ‘employment’ are naturally not mutually exclusive; it was apparent from the qualitative data that often the decision to move to the Highland and Islands was precipitated both by the desire for a different/better quality of life as well as gaining employment. Interviewee 1, for example, explains how when she and her husband were living abroad and looking for work back in Scotland, both employment

opportunities and the place itself were important factors in prompting them to move to an island community:

bha sinn bha [mo dhuine] a' lorg obair [...] nam bhio- nam bhiodh sinn a' tilleadh a dh'Alba cha robh sinn airson fuireach ann na bailtean mora so bha sinn a' lorg obair anns an anns an Gàidhealtachd o chionn 's gun robh an aite nas cudromach na an seorsa obair. Bha an obair cudromach cuideachd ach bha an aite cho cudromach is no 's docha nas cudromach na obair [...] nam bhiodh obair sgoineil ann an Dùn Eideann cha bhiodh e cho deònach dol a Dhùn Eideann so emm so chunnaic e obair ann anns a' [Ainm Cholaiste] [...] agus emm uill smaoin each uill carson nach cuir mi iarrtas a-steach airson an obair sin dìreach o chionn 's gun smaoin sinn bhiodh yeah [Ainm Eilein] gu math snog airson an teaghlach you know a' chlann

We were- [my husband] was looking for work. If- If we were returning to Scotland, we didn't want to stay in the big cities so we were looking for work in the Highlands because the place was more important than the work. The work was important too but the place was so important or more important than the work. If there was a good job in Edinburgh he wouldn't be happy to go to Edinburgh so he saw work in the [Name of College] and emmm well thinking well why don't I put in an application for that job just because we thought [Name of Island]- yeah- would be good nice for the family you know the children (Interviewee 1)

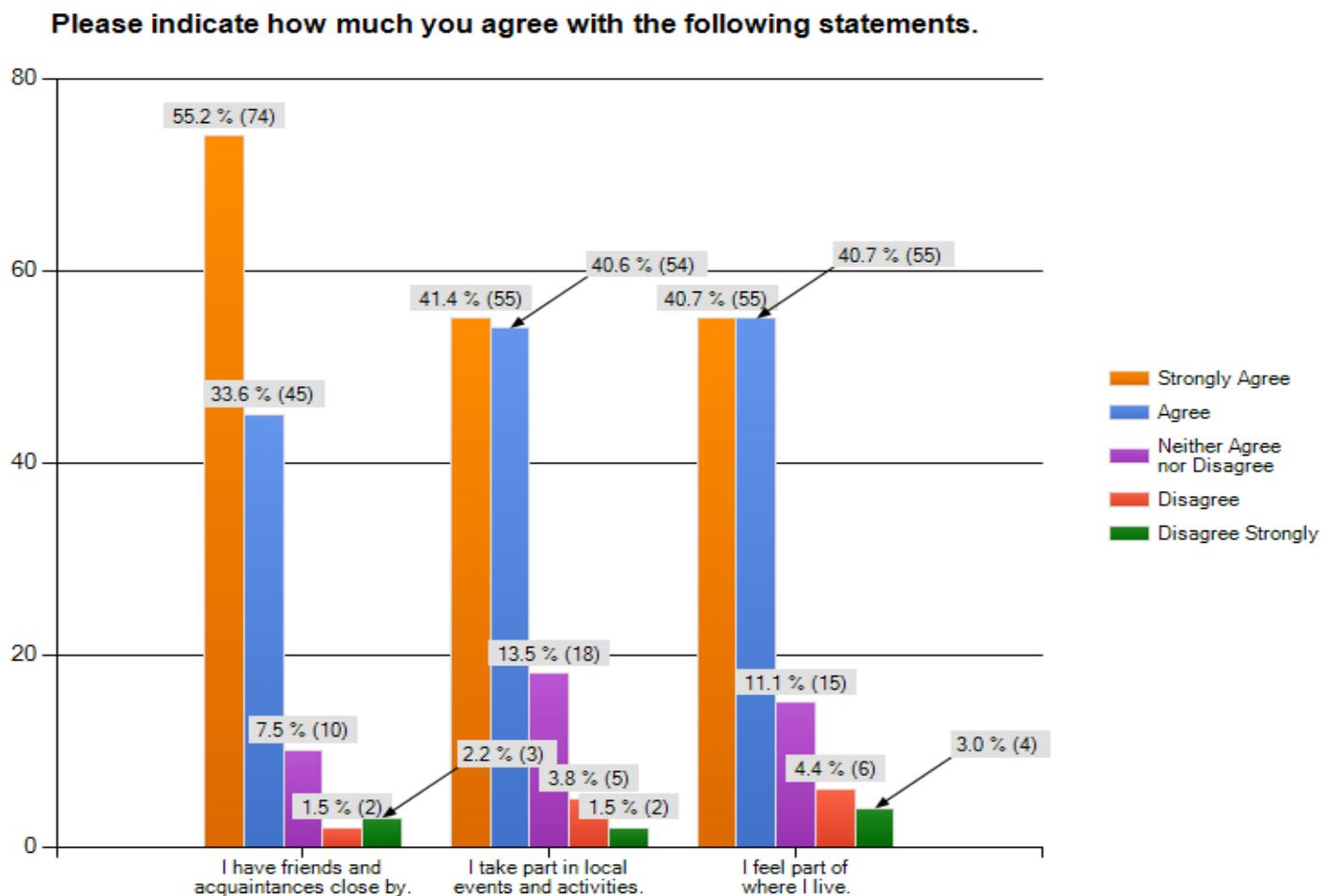
From the survey data, as well as evident from interview excerpts, it is clear that the desire for a better quality of life motivates in-migration, which coincides with popular views of in-migration to the Highlands and Islands. However, it is also important to note that other factors, such as employment opportunities, also play a substantial role in motivating in-migration to Highlands and Islands communities.

Integration

In-migrants feel well-integrated into their communities, despite perceptions of 'local/incomer' distinctions.

In order to gauge the level that migrants feel integrated into their new communities, respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed with the statements 'I have friends and acquaintances close by;' 'I take part in local events and activities;' and 'I feel part of where I live,' as seen below:

Graph 5: Integration (n=135)



The majority of respondents agree or highly agree with all three statements, particularly in terms of having friends and acquaintances close by, indicating that in-migrants generally feel well-integrated into their communities. In the interviews, respondents generally characterised their experiences moving to and living in a Highland and Island community in very positive terms. Interviewee 13, for example, remarked:

I actually found the move lovely, I didn't find it a difficult move at all, you know the weather wasn't exactly what I was used to but I found people really nice and welcoming. I found this to be the most easy place to settle in. I've moved around quite a lot in my life and had to make new

starts in different countries and different parts of Britain and here on [Name of Island] I found it to be the most easy transition of anywhere (Interviewee 13)

Even for Interviewee 19, who because of certain circumstances expected integration to be difficult, characterised her transition to an island community follows:

We moved up under slightly difficult circumstances in that um [...] so we sorta moved into a really small community- not very popular [...] so we were expecting it to be very bad but it was fine and everyone was very nice and we're still friends with them (Interviewee 19)

On the whole, in-migrants spoke mainly of feeling part of their communities. However, there were instances in which feeling like an outsider was noted, as seen in the following quote from excerpt from Interviewee 16 and 17's interview (Interviewee 16 and 17 are husband and wife):

Interviewee 17: when we go shopping either the people that serve us, or different faces around it got to that point where you say hello to people or have a conversation and I feel accepted in that way

Interviewee 16: I think that's true we do see people we know when we go out into dinner either people from the church or neighbours. Yeah people we come across in one way or the other

Interviewee 17: I must confess you know sometimes the shows they have on in the summertime- the agricultural show so they have one out at [island community name] and we usually go to that. I think then you may feel- I mean we've gone on our own- you realise that there's a real community spirit there that actually- you haven't got a past here like people come home for these shows if they've moved away or whatever. So you don't feel quite so integrated then. That's how I feel anyway

This excerpt illustrates that although both interviewees feel accepted in their community, Interviewee 17 is aware of her in-migrant status, as not having a 'past' in a particular area means that she does not feel 'so integrated then.' This awareness of a shared history as being a critical component of a local identity resonates with Interviewee 21's comments, where family and history were cited as crucial to a local identity. However, it appears that despite this distinction, on the whole, in-migrants feel integrated into their new communities.

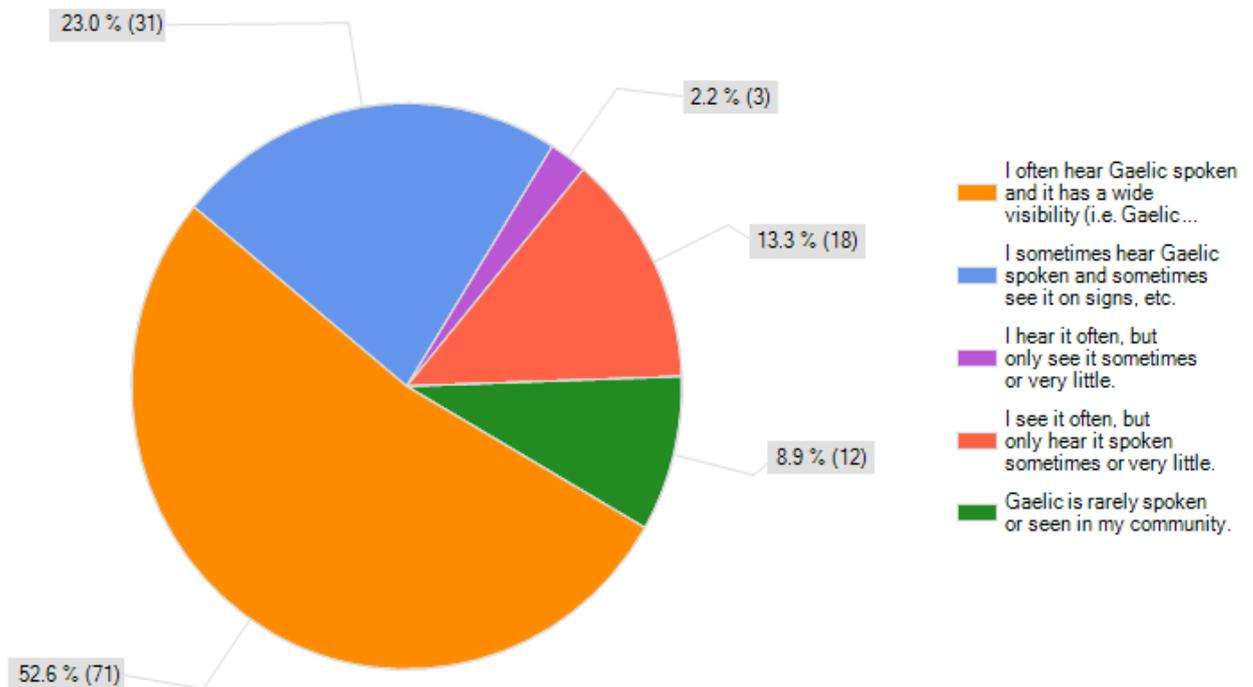
Perceived Language Vitality

In-migrants generally perceive Gaelic to have a high linguistic vitality in their communities. Respondents generally report seeing more Gaelic than hearing it spoken in their communities.

Participants were asked about their perceptions of Gaelic language vitality in their communities by categorising their community as one of the following: ‘I often hear Gaelic spoken and it has a wide visibility (i.e. Gaelic signs, etc.); ‘I sometimes hear Gaelic spoken and sometimes see it on signs, etc.’ ‘I hear it often, but only see it sometimes or very little.’ ‘I see it often, but only hear it spoken sometimes or very little.’ ‘Gaelic is rarely spoken or seen in my community.’ The following chart details how participants categorised their communities:

Graph 6: Perceived Linguistic Vitality (n=135)

Which do you think best describes the area in which you live?



This chart suggests that the majority of respondents would class their community as having a relatively high Gaelic linguistic vitality, as 52.6% of respondents report that they often hear and see Gaelic in their communities. A further 23% report that they sometimes hear and see Gaelic within their communities.

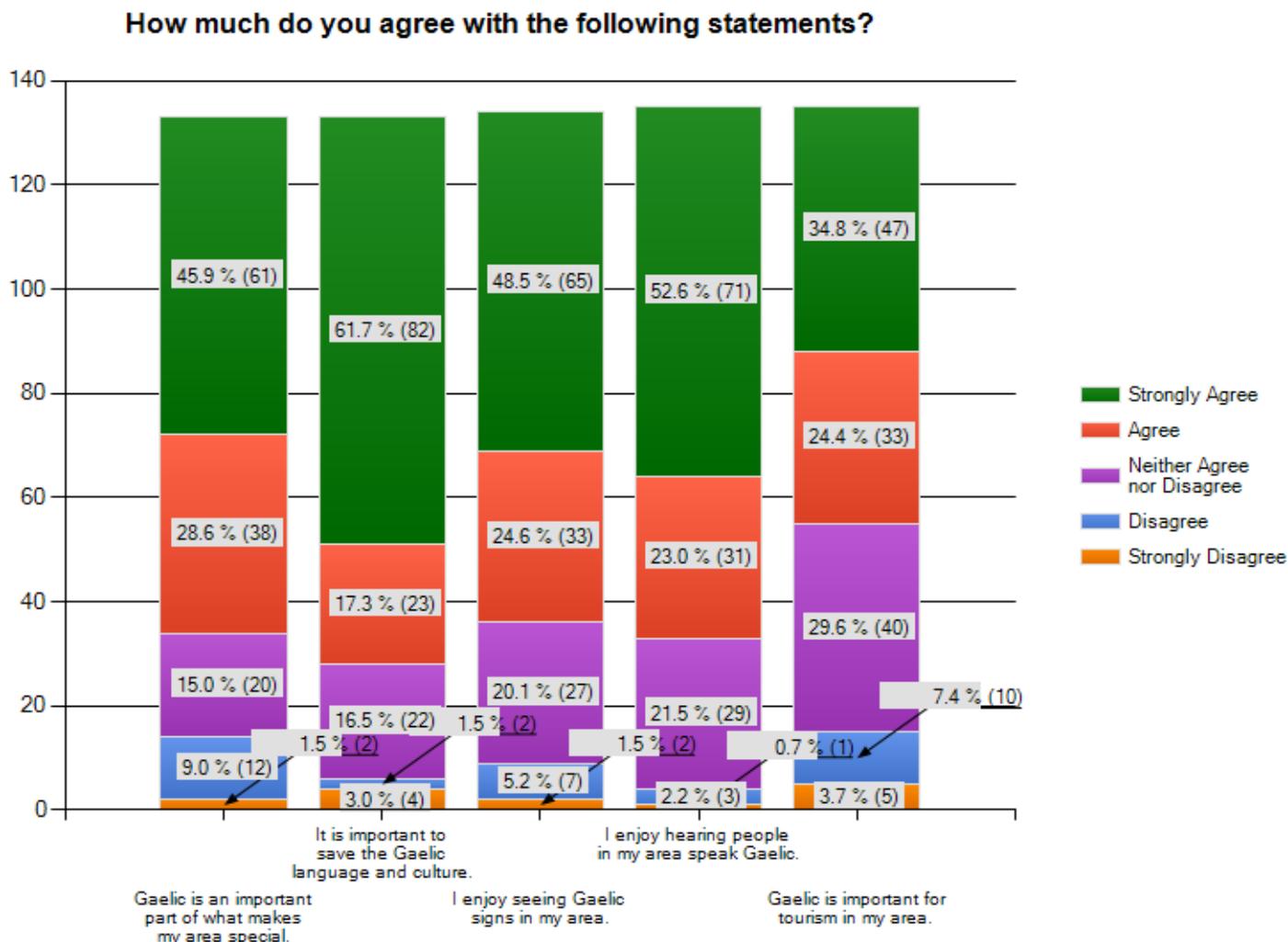
More respondents see Gaelic in their community than hear it (13.3% of respondents report high visibility but low spoken use, while 2.2% of respondents report the opposite), possibly suggesting the impact of Gaelic signage in areas where the spoken language has undergone intense shift. A further 8.9% report that they live in a community in which the linguistic vitality of Gaelic is very low.

Language Attitudes

In-migrants generally have very positive attitudes toward the Gaelic language. However, some respondents indicate that they harbour very ill feelings toward the language.

Respondents' language attitudes were gauged by evaluating their agreement with the following five statements: 'Gaelic is an important part of what makes my area special,' 'It is important to save the Gaelic language and culture,' 'I enjoy seeing Gaelic signs in my area,' 'I enjoy hearing people in my area speak Gaelic,' and 'Gaelic is important for tourism in my area,'² as seen on the following graph:

Graph 7: Language Attitudes (n=135)



As seen from the graph, respondents generally highly agree or agree with the five statements and in particular, respondents tended to highly agree or agree with the statement 'It is important to save the

² It was decided later that the category 'Gaelic is important for tourism in my area' was not as indicative of 'language attitudes' as the other four categories and therefore was excluded from the statistical analysis using 'R.'

Gaelic language and culture.’ This indicates that in general, respondents harbour positive attitudes toward Gaelic. Only a minority of respondents appear to disagree with the statements and indicate negative attitudes toward the language. It is worth noting, however, negative attitudes were sometimes expressed in other parts of the survey; for example, in the comments section at the end of the survey, three different respondents made the following comments:

Gaelic has been developed recently in an academic lab and can no longer be classed as a true organic native language (Respondent 9)

Gaelic is a pointless language with no relevance in today's society other than to suckle the teat of European funding and waste local council budgets. Gaelic is only favoured by bearded idiots at *bord na gaidhlig* who want to continue to work in pointless jobs by claiming Gaelic is part of our cultural heritage and claim free money. I don't see anyone trying to save Brythonic languages... Gaelic also holds zero cultural significance. Should I consult this ancient Gaelic book on philosophy, ethics, society? No, because they don't exist. It's all drunk islanders singing about dark windy islands and whisky. And they are rude. "oh you don't have the Gaelic" no thankfully I haven't been infected by this pointless language that should be forgotten. (Respondent 54)

How can the Highlands and Islands justify spending so much money on the Gaelic language when there are people receiving food parcels and over 50% of rural communities are in fuel poverty? O attend *ulpan* through my place of work, which is paid for by them, as I feel I would be discriminated against if I didn't and would not be considered for promoted posts. (Respondent 128)

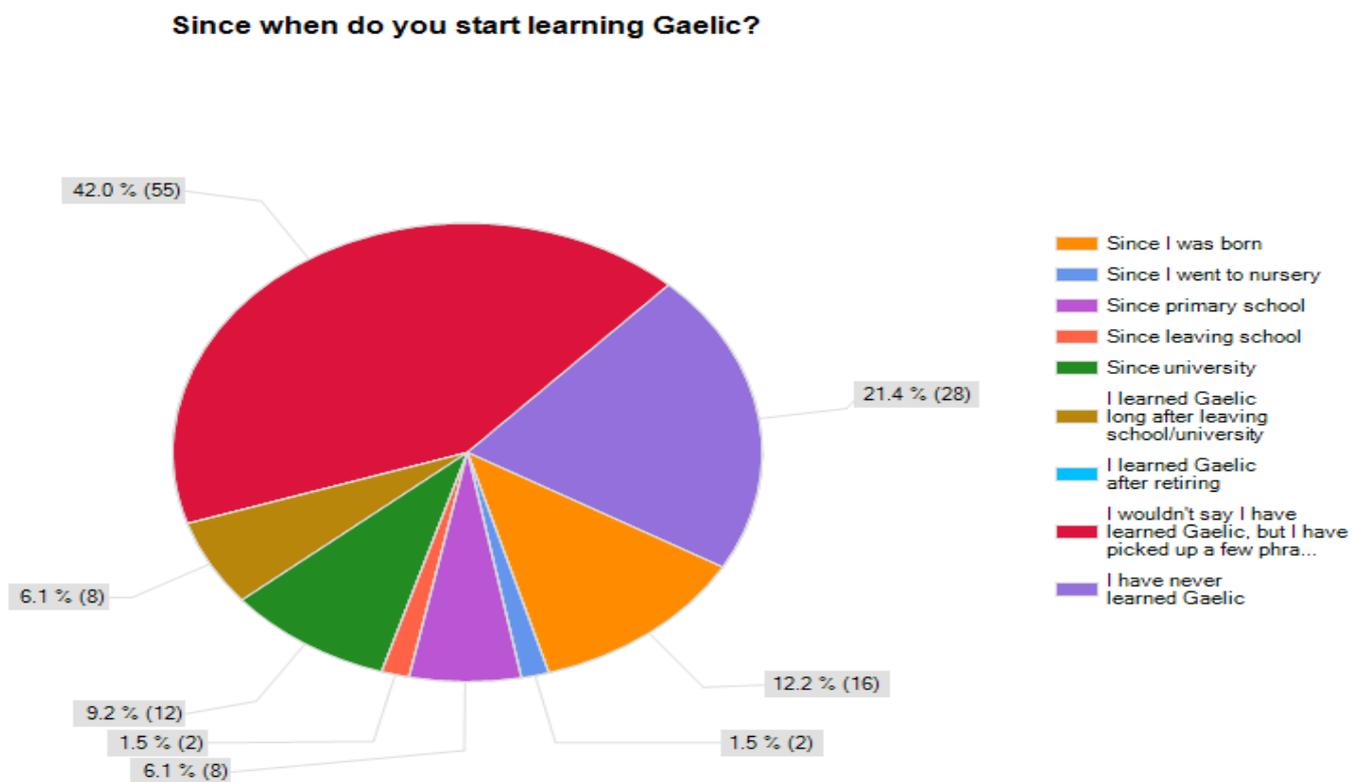
These comments clearly demonstrate that despite overall positive attitudes toward Gaelic, some in-migrants harbour very unfavourable attitudes toward the language. Respondent 9 comments on what he perceives as the lack of authenticity of the language, stating that Gaelic has ‘been developed recently in an academic lab.’ Both Respondent 54 and Respondent 128 mention the perceived ‘cost’ of Gaelic as a negative attribute of the language, with Respondent 128 characterising Gaelic as a ‘waste [of] local council budgets’ and characterising what he refers to as the ‘beard[ed] idiots at [Bò]rd na [Gà]idhlig’ as ‘claim[ing] free money.’ Respondent 54 also states that Gaelic ‘holds zero cultural significance,’ further claiming that the language is only spoken by ‘drunk islanders’ who are ‘rude’ and considers himself glad not to have been ‘infected’ by a ‘pointless language.’ It is quite clear from the content of what Respondent 54 writes, as well as his word choice (e.g. characterising learning Gaelic as becoming ‘infected’) as well as his extremely negative perceptions of Gaelic speakers that he harbours intensely unfavourable, if not vitriolic, attitudes toward the language. In terms of the survey responses overall, therefore, it is important to bear in mind that while in general in-migrants appeared to harbour positive attitudes toward the language, some in-migrants harboured very negative attitudes toward the language.

Gaelic Acquisition and Use

In-migrants generally report to have acquired only a very basic level of Gaelic (a few words/phrases), with 21.4% reporting that they have learned no Gaelic at all. However, when comparing respondents' use of Gaelic pre- and post- migration, it is clear that moving to a Gaelic-speaking area has a tangible positive effect on Gaelic acquisition, especially in terms of reading at the beginning level. In terms of Gaelic use with different interlocutors, the greatest number of in-migrants report using Gaelic with their work colleagues (44 respondents).

The following four graphs detail the in-migrants acquisition and use of Gaelic. The first chart details the length of time that in-migrants have been learning Gaelic:

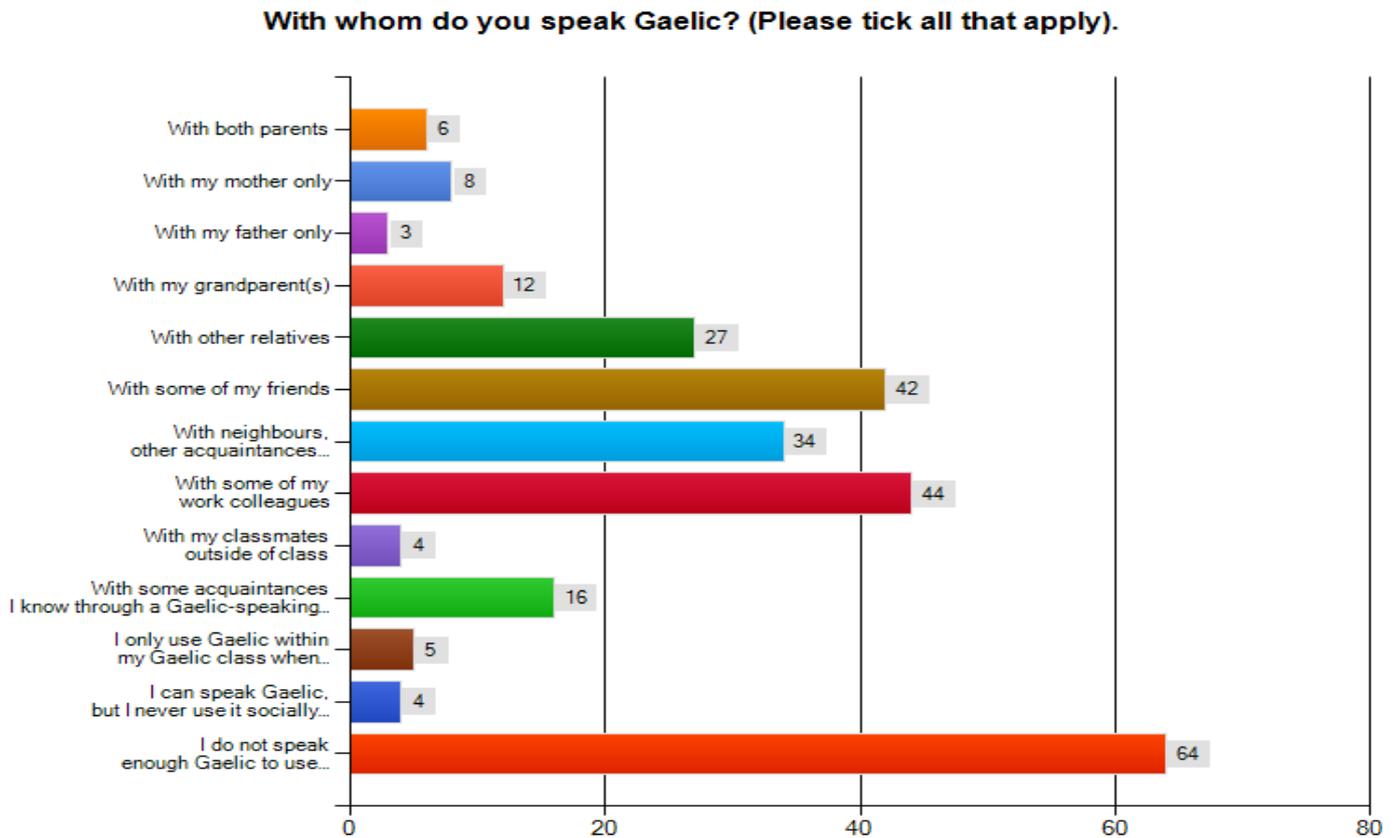
Graph 8: Length of Acquisition (n=135)



In terms of Gaelic learning, the greatest number of respondents (55 respondents, 42%) chose ‘I wouldn’t say I have learned Gaelic, but I have picked up a few phrases here and there.’ The second most-chosen response is ‘I have never learned Gaelic’ (28 respondents, 21.4%). These two groups together form the majority (63.4%) of in-migrant respondents, suggesting that acquisition is low among the in-migrant population, especially given that a further 12.2% of the in-migrant population have spoken Gaelic since birth (presumably as these respondents are returning migrants). Overall, this graph suggests that less than 30% of the in-migrant population appear to be actively learning Gaelic since they migrated to the Highlands and Islands area.

Respondents were also asked about their Gaelic use with different interlocutors, as detailed in the graph below:

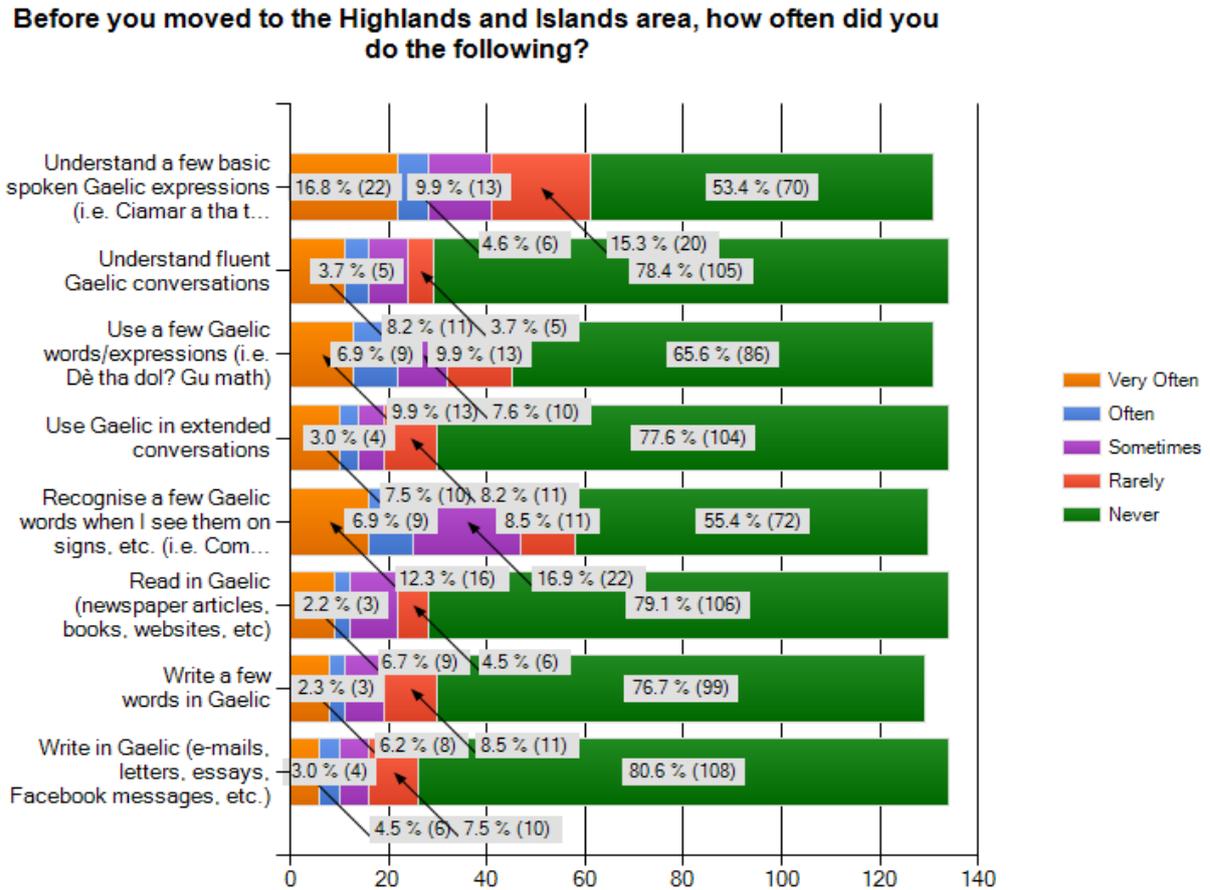
Graph 9: Gaelic Use with Different Interlocutors (n=135)



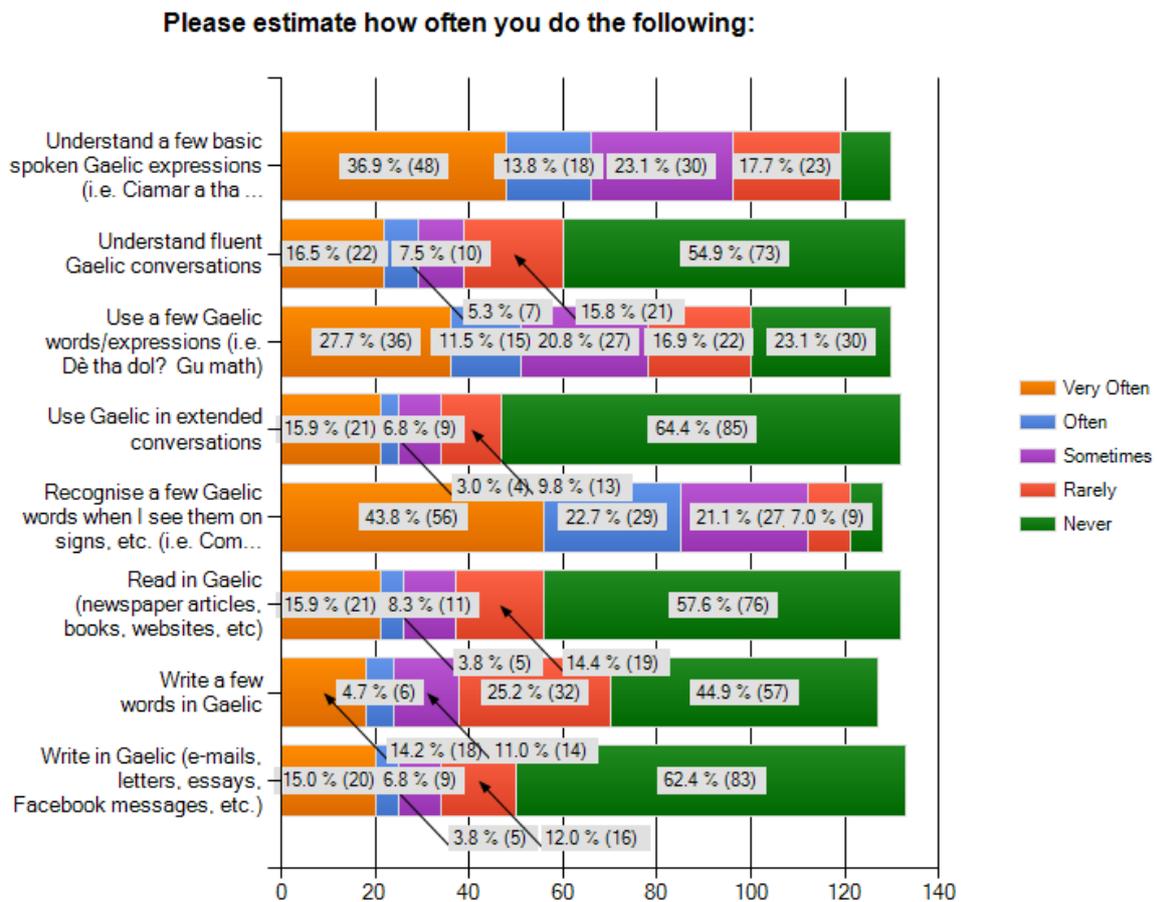
For this question, the most frequently chosen response (64 respondents) is ‘I do not speak enough Gaelic to use it with anyone,’ which coincides with the findings of Graph 8. The second most frequently chosen response (44 respondents) is ‘With some of my work colleagues,’ which is interesting in terms of Gaelic’s historical low prestige and lack of use in the workplace (see, for example, MacKinnon, 1977). This finding is possibly reflective of the heightened status of Gaelic and the rise of Gaelic in a professional setting, particularly in terms of Gaelic development agencies and the media (see McEwan-Fujita, 2008; Dunbar 2011). The perceived importance of Gaelic in the workplace is also eluded to even in one of the negative comments following the attitudes results, where Respondent 128 perceives that he ‘would not be considered for promoted posts’ if he did not attend Ùlpan courses through his place of work. It is possible that the fact the survey was disseminated through the Lews Castle College mailing list, the University of the Highlands and Islands newsletter, the Bòrd na Gàidhlig facebook page, and e-mails to the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar may also account in part for the high proportion of Gaelic use in the workplace, as these are all professional places where Gaelic is not only encouraged, but in some cases, such as Bòrd na Gàidhlig, required. As discussed in the analysis following Graph 4, ‘Employment’ was the second most-chosen motivation for migration to the Highlands and Islands, and this, coupled with ‘With some of my work colleagues’ emerging as the second most-chosen interlocutor category for Gaelic use, possibly suggests that some in-migrants may be moving to the Highlands and Islands specifically for Gaelic-centred professions or may find Gaelic increasingly important in their workplaces.

The following two graphs detail in-migrants' use of Gaelic before and after moving to a Gaelic-speaking area. The difference between these two graphs suggests that, despite the fact that as evident from Graphs 8 and 9, the majority of in-migrants appear to only acquire Gaelic to a very basic level or fail to acquire the language at all, the impact of living in a Gaelic-speaking area is nonetheless tangible in terms of Gaelic acquisition:

Graph 10: Gaelic Use Pre-Migration (n=135)



Graph 11: Gaelic Use Post-Migration (n=135)



These two charts illustrate respondents’ use of Gaelic pre- and post-migration. As seen from both graphs, respondents’ use of fluent Gaelic skills (i.e. the second column under in each language skill- understanding, speaking, reading, and writing) is considerably less than their use of basic Gaelic skills (which corresponds to the low acquisition of Gaelic noted in Graphs 8 and 9). In terms of the impact of migration on their Gaelic use, however, migration appears to account for the increase in Gaelic use from Graph 10 to Graph 11: the proportion of ‘Never’ responses decreases, and the other response categories (‘Very Often,’ ‘Often,’ ‘Sometimes,’ and ‘Rarely’) increase. This suggests that in-migrants are acquiring Gaelic to some extent, but as the graphs suggest, the acquisition tends to be centred at the basic level. The contrast between Gaelic use pre- and post-migration appears most marked at the *basic understanding level* and *basic reading level*, the latter of which possibly suggests the positive impact of the presence of Gaelic in the linguistic landscape.

The effect of living in a Gaelic-speaking area on passive acquisition also emerges in the qualitative data; Interviewee 19, for example, relates how because she sees and hears place names such as ‘Abhainn [Dubh],’ she has passively acquired certain Gaelic words. She is then able to transfer her passive learning experiences to her active learning experiences in her child’s Gaelic playgroup:

yes, small words just a few words- from hearing people say it from people- and the local river to us is the [Black] River which is Abhainn [Dubh] or something so I'm like [Dubh] oh that's black when I take [my child] to nursery they'll hold up something [Black] [Dubh] and I'll be like “oh

yeah” I’m probably pronouncing it wrong and yeah, words for things that people would use which are Gaelic words I suppose um what I would call the saltmarsh or the beach or the machair- I’m probably saying that wrong as well um or the house at the end of the drive is called taigh [Name] so I know that 'taigh' is house in Gaelic and that's probably about it

Thus, although the level of active Gaelic learning among in-migrants appears to be less 30%, it also evident that moving to a Gaelic-speaking area does appear to have a tangible effect on Gaelic acquisition, and that further opportunities to develop continuity between passive and active learning, as described in Interviewee 19’s quote, could potentially have a further positive impact in-migrants’ Gaelic acquisition.

Effect of Degree of Integration, Perceived Language Vitality, and Language Attitudes on Gaelic Acquisition

Although integration and language vitality do have some effect on Gaelic acquisition, language attitudes are found to have the greatest effect. It is posited that while higher passive learning can be attributed to integration and language vitality in the community, active learning requires a strong positive attitude toward the language.

The survey reveals that in general, in-migrants feel a high degree of integration; perceive their communities to have a high Gaelic linguistic vitality; and harbour favourable attitudes to Gaelic. To determine whether any or a combination of these three components (integration, perceived linguistic vitality, or language attitudes) have an effect on in-migrants' actual *acquisition* and *use* of Gaelic, a regression analysis was carried out using the statistical software 'R' with significance set at $p < .05$. Respondents' language use scores from each linguistic skill set (understanding, speaking, reading, and writing) at each level (beginning, fluent) from post-migration were used as dependent variables, as was the difference (Δ) between scores pre- and post-migration.¹ The following table details which factors (integration, perceived linguistic vitality, or language attitudes) were statistically significant in terms of their effects on in-migrants' Gaelic use and acquisition:

Table 1: Effect of Integration, Perceived Language Vitality, and Language Attitudes on Gaelic Acquisition and Use

Language Skill and Level		Integration	Language Vitality	Language Attitudes
Understanding	Beginning	.04	<.001	<.001
	Fluent	Not significant	Not significant	<.001
	Δ Beginning	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant
	Δ Fluent	Not significant	Not significant	.02
Speaking	Beginning	Not significant	.004	<.001
	Fluent	Not significant	Not significant	<.001
	Δ Beginning	Not significant	Not significant	.03

	Δ Fluent	Not significant	Not significant	<.001
Reading	Beginning	Not significant	.004	<.001
	Fluent	Not significant	Not significant	<.001
	Δ Beginning	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant
	Δ Fileanta	Not significant	Not significant	.007
Writing	Beginning	Not significant	Not significant	<.001
	Fluent	Not significant	Not significant	<.001
	Δ Beginning	Not significant	Not significant	.006
	Δ Fluent	Not significant	Not significant	.002

The statistical tests reveal that in all cases, there is a positive correlation between the variables integration, language vitality, and language attitudes and the amount of Gaelic usage. That is, the higher the integration, perceived language vitality, and language attitudes for each respondent, the higher the Gaelic use and acquisition. From the table, it can be seen that attitudes have the greatest effect on Gaelic usage and acquisition. In other words, in all cases but ‘Δ Understanding- Beginning and Δ Reading- Beginning,’ ‘language attitudes’ was found to be a significant factor in the amount of Gaelic that respondents used, as well as their degree of acquisition. The fact that ‘attitudes’ was not found to be significant in terms of change at the beginning level for the two passive skills, understanding and reading, perhaps suggests that in-migrants’ are *passively* acquiring some linguistic skills in Gaelic regardless of their attitude toward the language. However, in order to see an increase in *active* skills, participants must harbor positive attitudes toward the language.

‘Language vitality’ was found to be significant at the beginning usage levels of understanding, speaking and reading. In terms of understanding and speaking, it follows that the stronger the language is in the community, the more opportunity that an in-migrant has to hear that language spoken and to interact with Gaelic speakers, thus positively affecting his or her ability to understand some spoken Gaelic and use a few Gaelic words and phrases. In terms of reading, this significance finding is congruent with the analysis of Graph 11, where it was postulated that the high rate of reading skills at the beginning level was a result of the efforts to increase Gaelic’s visibility in the linguistic landscape. Because writing is an

active skill, and unlike speaking is generally not a communal activity (as well as the fact that a number of native speakers are not able to write in Gaelic), it is perhaps not surprising that 'language vitality' does not have a significant effect on in-migrants' Gaelic language use in terms of writing. 'Integration' is only significant in terms of understanding at the beginning level. Like 'language vitality,' this could possibly mean that the more integrated a person is in the community, the more he or she has an opportunity to hear Gaelic spoken in the community, as presumably he or she has more friends and acquaintances in the community and takes part in more community activities.

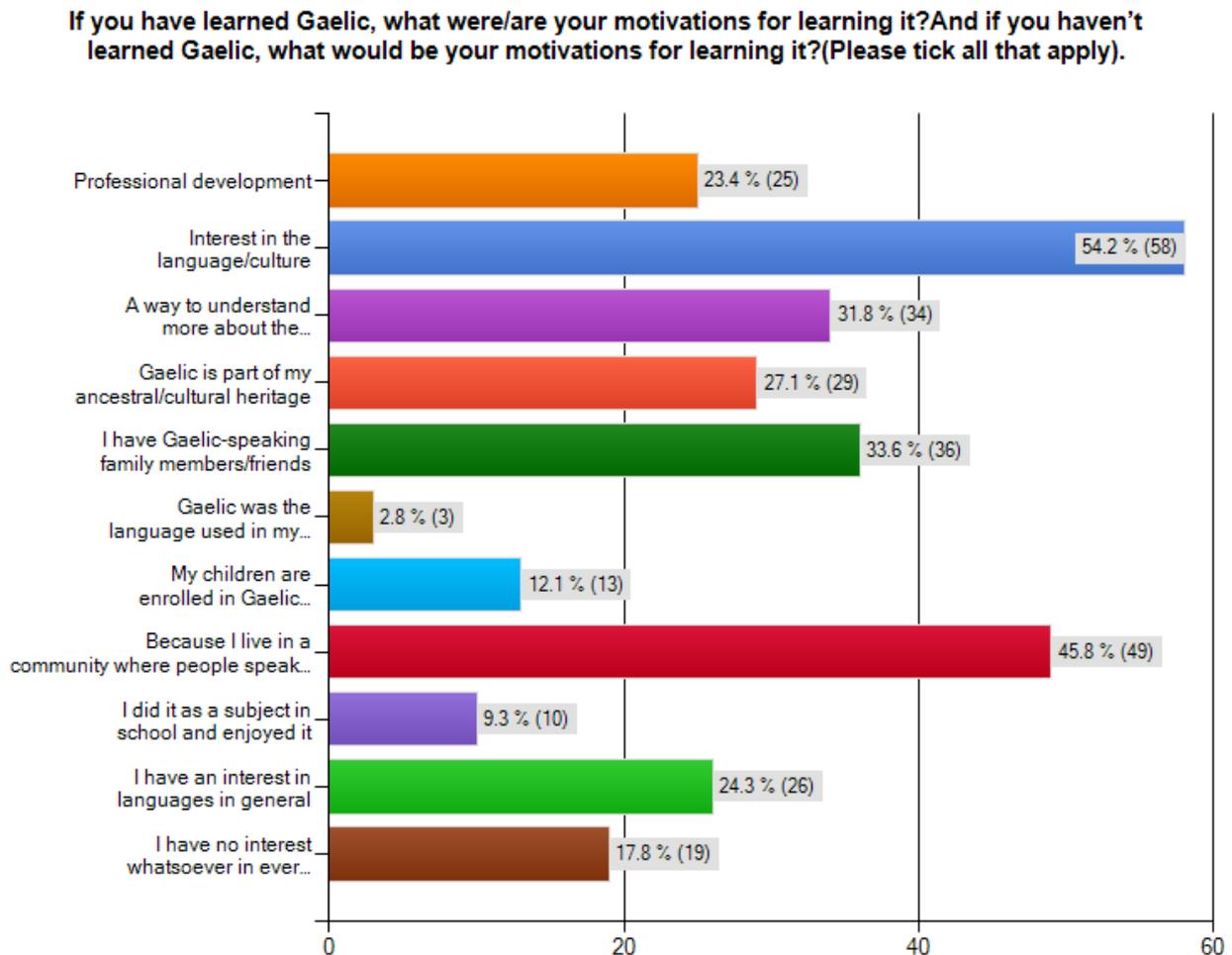
In summary, although 'integration' and 'language vitality' did have some effect on use of Gaelic language skills at the beginning level, attitudes were found to have the largest effect in nearly all aspects of Gaelic use and acquisition. In the two areas it was not found to be significant, it was postulated that although in-migrants could passively acquire some Gaelic skills, positive attitudes toward the language were required for more active learning.

Motivations for Gaelic Language Learning

Perception of the connection of the language to the community plays an important role in in-migrants' motivations (or potential motivations) for learning Gaelic. The role of GME in motivating parents to learn Gaelic is also discussed.

The following graph details in-migrants' motivations for learning Gaelic:

Graph 12: Motivations for Gaelic Language Learning (n= 107)



As seen from this graph, it appears that the most-chosen response is ‘Interest in the language/culture’ (58 respondents). The second most-frequently chosen response (49 respondents) is ‘Because I live in a community where people speak Gaelic, I should too.’ The association of the language to the community also plays a role in the third highest-ranking motivation for Gaelic-learning, with 34 respondents choosing ‘a way to understand more about the area in which I live’ as a motivation or potential motivation for Gaelic language learning. These types of motivations also emerge in the qualitative data; for example, Interviewee 14 relates:

I try to [use Gaelic in the community] a little bit but there's not much reason to because everybody speaks English [...] well, I feel that if you live in a place it's very important to learn the language

whether or not everybody else understands the other language that everybody speaks- if there's a local language you should try and learn it and learning a language is really good for your brain, good for your- it's excellent stimulus so it's a nice exercise but also it shows respect for the community and for the history (Interviewee 14)

Interviewee 6 relates that because she feels that she and her husband have made a 'commitment' to a particular place, they should learn the language, as seen below:

Because we've moved there we've bought a house there, we feel we've made a real commitment and we are committed to what we're doing and it does feel appropriate to learn Gaelic, but in some ways I would say that um it's hard to find the right route (Interviewee 6)

These quotes as well as the survey results indicate that in-migrants appear to perceive a strong link between the language and the community; in turn, this perception appears to serve as a motivation or potential motivation for learning Gaelic. In terms of other motivations, 25 respondents chose 'professional development' as a motivation for language learning. This is possibly related to the findings of Graph 9, in which 44 respondents reported to use Gaelic with their work colleagues; presumably, as Gaelic is used more in the workplace, there is more incentive to learn the language. 19 respondents chose 'I have no interest whatsoever in ever learning Gaelic.' 28 people did not respond to this question, and it is postulated that either they considered themselves native speakers (as one wrote in the 'Other' section) or they read the question too quickly and therefore thought that it only applied to people who were actively learning Gaelic.

13 respondents chose 'My children are enrolled in Gaelic Medium Education' as a motivation or potential for learning Gaelic. This motivation was mentioned in the interviews as well, with parents describing learning Gaelic alongside their children through initiatives such as Homework Help, Pàrant is Pàiste, and Bookbug sessions as helpful ways to learn the language. What also emerged through the interviews was that for some parents, the opportunity for their child(ren) to become bilingual, and the parents' desire to aid the child in this goal through learning the language themselves, was as great or an even greater motivation for the parent to learn the language as the perceived relationship of the language to the community. For example, Interviewee 14, who views learning Gaelic as an important way to 'show respect for the community' as evidenced in the previous quote, describes her other main motivation for learning Gaelic:

uh also just for the selfish reason that I want my little girl to be-uh- to succeed I want her to do very well and I feel that Gaelic Medium Education is the best option for her you know, if there was a different language on offer that they could learn uh through say French then maybe I would have chosen French but here we're offered Gaelic as a medium that children can learn through and it's such a brilliant opportunity so- yes- it's [learning Gaelic] to encourage my little girl but also because it's a good thing to do (Interviewee 14)

It is evident that Interviewee 14's choice to put her child through GME is motivated mainly by the benefits of bilingualism, not necessarily an affinity with the language itself. Another parent, Interviewee 15, also describes how she sees GME as a good opportunity for her child and how she is learning Gaelic through going to various activities with her son in preparation for his entrance to GME primary school:

got one son [son's name] who is three and we're very keen for him to do Gaelic Medium, we're very aware of the benefits of- being bilingual and and I think being here, having that opportunity to learn Gaelic is a good one that you that you might not get you know, if you had that, you know, we wouldn't get that if we were living in [town in England], you wouldn't really have had the opportunity in that way to become bilingual, em so we go to a parent and toddler group [...] a weekly group- we've been going to that since- a couple of years now, just that so through that we've been learning- or picking up songs and some basic words- colours and there's animals yeah little bits like that and we also go to the book bug sessions at the library fortnightly they're in Gaelic the person that does that is really good and [son's name] responds really well to her and so we've learnt through that (Interviewee 15)

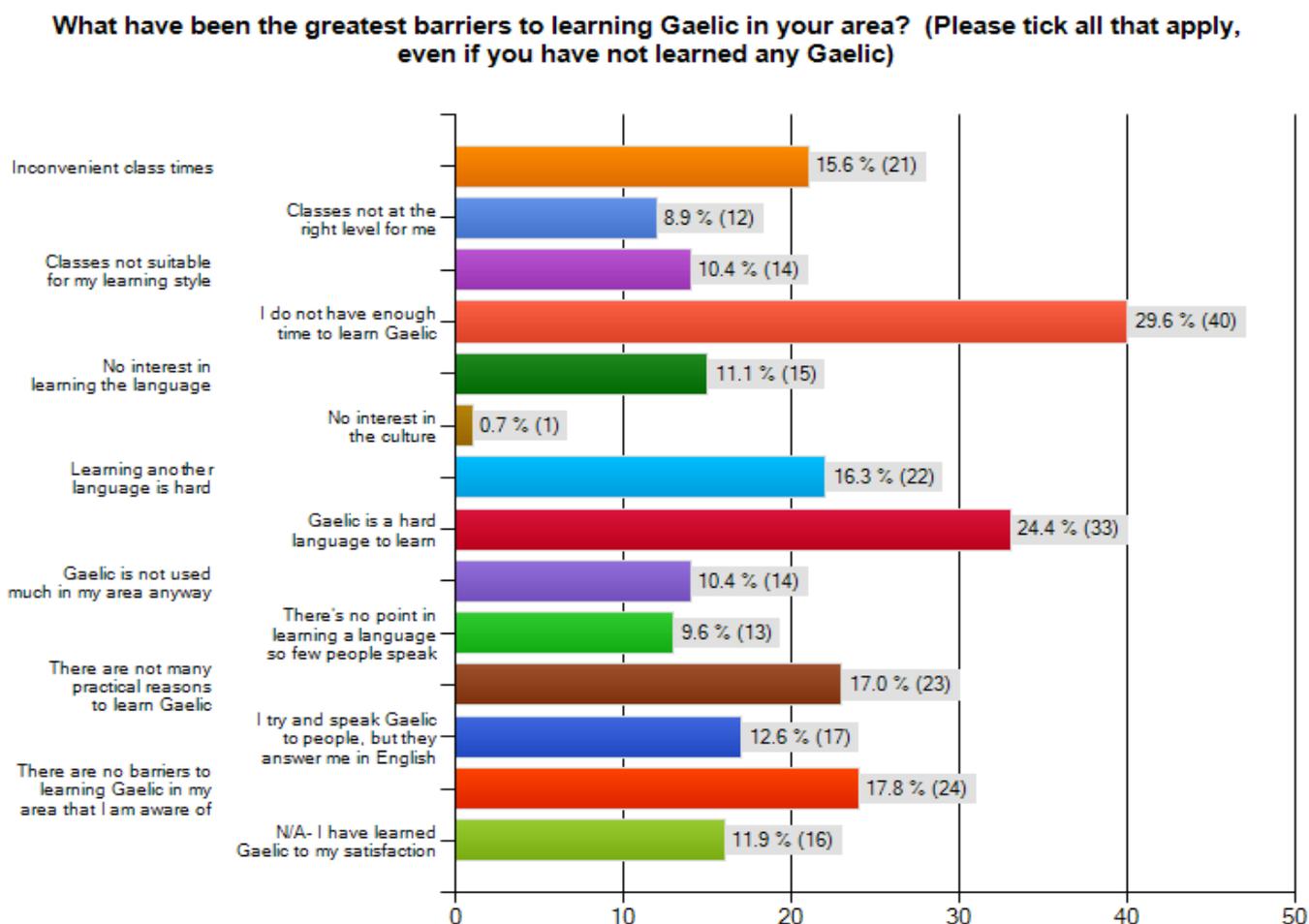
Although it cannot be assessed from this particular survey whether in-migrants are any more likely than locals to send their children to GME, it is worth mentioning that one survey respondent (Respondent 111) wrote in the comments section that “My group of friends fairly evenly split between island born and bred and incomers, so it is interesting to note that only my incomer friends have placed their children in Gaelic [Medium],” which coincides with Stockdale et al.'s (2003) observation that migrant parents appear more likely to send their children to GME than local parents. Although the reality of this perception cannot be assessed from this particular survey, the desire of in-migrants for their children to become bilingual, and the role of this on parents' own language learning, will be discussed further in looking at the language planning implications of this project.

Perceived Barriers to Gaelic Learning

'Not having enough time' is chosen by the greatest number of respondents (40) as a barrier to learning Gaelic. The perception that Gaelic is a hard language to learn is chosen by the second- greatest number (33) of respondents.

Respondents were asked about the barriers they perceived to learning Gaelic in their area, as detailed below:

Graph 13: Perceived Barriers to Gaelic Language Learning (n=135)



As evident from the graph, the greatest number of respondents (40) chose 'I do not have enough time to learn Gaelic' as a barrier to language learning. On the survey, two respondents also chose to underscore the point by writing "No time at the moment" (Respondent 113) "I just don't have time at the moment, unfortunately" (Respondent 92) in addition to choosing 'I do not have enough time to learn Gaelic' on the survey itself. This barrier was also discussed in the interviews, as seen from the following quotes from Interviewee 6 and Interviewee 16:

it's just the time constraint- I think it's the time and the way and the method (Interviewee 6)

I haven't actually embarked on a course yet myself I suppose time-wise it's difficult to do it em and I'm also I'm also not sure that I'm really that good at learning languages so perhaps I'm a little bit kind of wary (Interviewee 15)

These two quotes highlight how time commitments are perceived to be a barrier in learning Gaelic. The interviewees' comments also touch on other perceived barriers as evidenced by the survey, namely, the suitability of teaching methods and the perception that learning another language and/or learning Gaelic is hard. One interviewee who mentioned the time constraint as a barrier, offered a possible solution to this problem:

I've got a two year old so I can't get to classes. My husband works shifts so I can't commit to something on a regular basis. Unless I could take him [my son] with me. So the only thing I've been able to do is go to the Pàrant is Pàiste groups obviously with my kids um- and learn Gaelic with them so it's a kind of family activity really [...] there's an awful lot of focus on going to classes um you know and doing sort of the formal Gaelic teaching and I'm sure that has its place but from where I've come from as a mother of small children that's just not accessible to me. The Pàrant is Pàiste thing has really helped me because I can only go to something with my children so somewhere where I can learn Gaelic has to be somewhere where my children can be there too and it's not about me learning Gaelic as an individual, it's about our family learning Gaelic and becoming a Gaelic-speaking household [...] I suppose it's a bit like going to Weightwatchers- if you go to Weightwatchers with somebody you're more likely to keep up the diet because you've got somebody to talk to about it. If it's a family you learn Gaelic as a family- you're more likely to practice what you've learned in that family lesson activity together because you've all been doing it together anyway. So you'll practice it out on each other whereas if one person goes to some classes, it's very difficult to then come back into the family and then start using the Gaelic that they've learnt that nobody else has learnt (Interviewee 13)

Interviewee 13 has underscored several key points that could be considered when looking at future language planning initiatives. First, family duties, such as looking after small children mean that attending adult-only classes may be impractical for many parents. However, if Gaelic were offered as a 'family class,' not only would this help mitigate this problem, but as the interviewee points out, it would further facilitate language learning for adults as well as the children, as it gives them the opportunity to use what they learn in class in the home environment. The idea for family-oriented Gaelic activities was also mentioned by Interviewee 14:

I think it would be great if there was sort of more social groups that you could join- for me in particular it would be nice if there was some sort of family children-orientated social group maybe like a play club where you can go play in Gaelic, whether it's with your kids with you and there's loads of games even like Snakes and Ladders, or any kind of game and if we're encouraged to use Gaelic then I think that that would be really good. And it would encourage other people to use Gaelic in the home cause I think even a lot of people who put their children into Gaelic Medium Education and speak Gaelic themselves already I think they don't actually use the Gaelic in the home. But if they had these play clubs then- then they'd find out how happy and fun it is to play in Gaelic- with their children (Interviewee 14)

Here, Interviewee 14 mentions that the availability of Gaelic-centred activities would possibly encourage other people to use Gaelic in the home, as well serve as an important learning opportunity for parents and children alike. This will be discussed further in the section detailing the implications for language planning.

Conclusions and Implications for Language Planning

This small exploratory study has revealed several very positive aspects of migration to Gaelic-speaking communities. First and foremost, in-migrants generally feel very well integrated into their new communities. From the survey and the interviewees' comments emerged a general sense of well-being and contentment in their host communities, despite apparent awareness that being a 'local' entailed much more than simply being resident in the Highlands and Islands area for a significant period of time. Respondents also generally classified the areas in which they lived as having a high Gaelic linguistic vitality. Contrary to popular perceptions about 'incomers,' in-migrants on the whole did not appear to harbour unfavourable attitudes toward Gaelic; rather, aside from a few extremely negative comments on the surveys, in-migrants appeared to have very positive attitudes toward the language. They also perceived a strong link between the language and the community and this link played an important role in their reported motivations or potential motivations for learning the language. Further, the results suggest that Gaelic plays a greater role in the workplace in Highland and Island communities than previously before, and this perception of Gaelic's importance in the workplace also serves as a motivation for learning Gaelic.

However, despite these positive aspects, active Gaelic learning was low and generally centred at the beginning level. A number of barriers to Gaelic learning emerged from the surveys. Rather than detail each one and list possible suggestions, I would like to focus on the barrier that was chosen by the most number of respondents: 'I do not have enough time to learn Gaelic.' At first glance, this may seem like a rather difficult barrier to overcome. However, it emerged from the interviews that one possible solution would be to offer 'Gaelic as a Family' classes, as this type of learning environment would solve several practical problems associated with attending an adult-only class (e.g. finding childcare). Further, it would potentially further facilitate greater Gaelic learning, as both parents and children would have the opportunity to practice their Gaelic with each other in the home environment. (In Wales, there is a similar initiative, with 'Welsh for the Family' classes being offered for adult learners; see Smith-Christmas and Armstrong, forthcoming, for a further discussion of this and its potential benefit to Gaelic language planning initiatives). From the interviews, it emerged that in-migrant parents were very committed to their children's bilingual development and had very positive comments about the child-adult learning avenues, such as *Pàrant is Pàiste* and Gaelic book bug sessions, that were currently available to them. It would be advantageous for Gaelic development to capitalise on this commitment as well as further facilitate it by offering more opportunities for parents to learn and use Gaelic with their children, not only as a strategy to increase in-migrants' acquisition of the language, but as a general strategy for encouraging Gaelic use in the home. As noted in the qualitative data, this might even further encourage parents who speak Gaelic but who do not frequently use the language with their children to use it more in the home. Therefore, a pilot scheme of family-centred Gaelic activities is recommended. This could take a variety of approaches and may develop further; for example, it could start as a monthly or bi-monthly activity group centred in an area where has a relatively high linguistic vitality, such as the Western Isles, then further develop to a more learning-centred approach for parents.

Secondly, one of the key aspects that emerged from this small study is that Gaelic is perceived to play a substantial role in the workplace in the Highlands and Islands and that 'Professional Development' serves as an important potential motivation for learning Gaelic. Wider availability of Gaelic as part of employees' CPDs may also contribute to alleviating the 'time pressure' barrier to Gaelic learning, as learning could take place during normal working hours. Further development of Gaelic in Highlands and

Islands places of employment, such as increased Gaelic signage, etc. might also further facilitate and encourage the learning and use of Gaelic in the workplace.

In terms of future research, one of the limitations of this study is that by casting the net far and wide (i.e. soliciting responses from migrants to any area where Gaelic is traditionally spoken), this study perhaps glosses over some of the finer-detailed realities of migration to specific areas in the Highlands and Islands, as well as may fail to give the whole picture of migrants' Gaelic acquisition and use in *all* 'Gaelic-speaking areas.' A number of case studies of particular Gaelic 'heartland' communities, such as Joanie Buchanan's current PhD research on the community of Uig, Lewis, would be very fruitful understanding more about the nature of relationship between in-migrants and Gaelic language learning. Further, this small study has focused on migration from the *migrants'* perspectives of Gaelic language use and acquisition; therefore, further perspectives from 'locals' on the impact of migration in their communities would be very fruitful in investigating the reflexive relationship between Gaelic acquisition, use, and community change.

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