

Gaelic-Medium Education and Language Revitalisation in Scotland:

Is there bilingual life “when school is over and done with”?

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Outline

- **Background:**
 - GME in Scotland and language policy
 - Research design and objectives
- **Linguistic practice:**
 - Reported Gaelic language use
 - Semi-structured interviews
 - Quantitative survey
- **Linguistic ideology:**
 - **Language use:** Opportunity/choice
 - **Language policy/Identity:** ‘Putadh’ na Gàidhlig?
- **Conclusions**

Revitalising minority languages through education?

Theoretical approaches

- Need for role “*before* school begins, outside of school, during the years of schooling and afterwards, **when formal schooling is over and done with**” (Fishman 2001: 471)
- Dearth of research on linguistic trajectories of minority-language educated adults? (but *cf.* Murtagh 2003; Woolard 2007; Hodges 2009)
- Language and ethnic identity – fostering an enduring identification with language? **Xians/Xish** (Fishman 1991, 2001, 2010, 2011, 2013; Edwards 2009, 2010)

GME in Scotland

cf. National Plan 2012-2017

“Two languages = Many opportunities”

“English + Gaelic = a Brighter Scotland”

“**FACT:** Children in Gaelic medium education don’t need to be from Gaelic speaking families”

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Dà Chànan = Iomadh Cothrom

English
+ Gaelic = a
Brighter
Scotland

1/5

TODAY'S TIGER, TOMORROW
KATIE (AGE 27)
INTERNATIONAL
TRANSLATOR
DEUTSCHE BANK AG, GERMANY
WWW.GAIDHLIG.ORG.UK

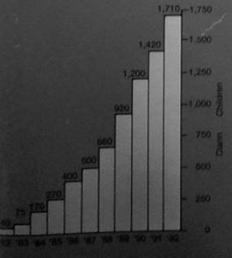
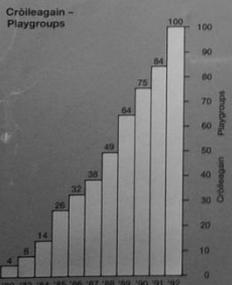
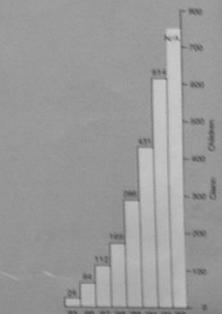
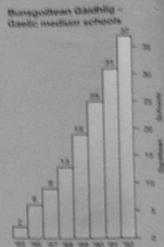
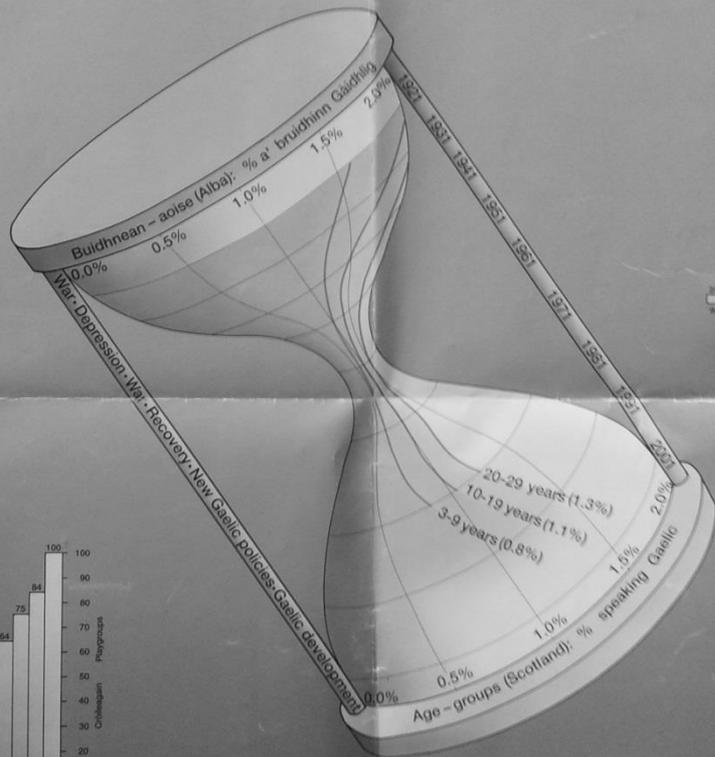
TODAY'S TIGER, TOMORROW
JAMES (AGE 31)
LINGUISTIC
THERAPIST
ROYAL HOSPITAL, GLASGOW
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 **FACT:** Children in Gaelic-medium education don't need to be from Gaelic speaking families.



Gàidhlig! Gaelic!

Bha ùine ga tràghadh
Eroded by time



ach, tha i nis a' tilleadh!
. . . . but, the tide is turning!



cf. GME in Scotland 1992

Comunn na Gàidhlig poster:

- Growth of cròileagan 1982-1992
- Growth of GME classes 1985-1992
- Percentages of young Gaelic-speakers levelling-off

War, Depression, War, Recovery,
New Gaelic policies,
Gaelic development

“tha i nis a' tilleadh!”



GME in current language policy

- 2001 Census: **58,652** “speakers” (>age 3)
- 2011 Census: **57,602** = 2.2% decline (~1.1% Scotland total)
 - *cf.* 0.1% growth among under-20 age-group
 - “the number of Gaelic speakers in Scotland has almost stabilised since the census of 2001. This is **mainly due to the rise in Gaelic-medium education...** [and] shows that within the next ten years the **long term decline of the language could be reversed**”

(Bòrd na Gàidhlig 2014; *cf.* National Gaelic Language Plan 2012-2017)

GME in current language policy

“The Scottish Government’s aim is to create a **secure future for Gaelic in Scotland**.

This will only be achieved by an increase in the numbers of those learning, speaking and using the language. **Gaelic medium [sic] education can make an important contribution** to this, both in terms of ***young people’s language learning*** but also in terms of the effects this can have on ***language use in home, community and work***”

(Scottish Government 2014: 3)

Gaelic-medium education (GME) outcomes:

- What role does Gaelic play in the *day-to-day lives* of Gaelic-medium educated adults?
- What sets of *beliefs* and *language ideologies* do former GME students profess in relation to Gaelic?
- How do these beliefs and ideologies impact upon their actual language practices, and future prospects for *maintenance and transmission of Gaelic to future generations*?
- **Sample: 130 adults** who started GME in first 10-15 years of availability

- 28x
overlap
- **46** semi-structured, 'ethnographic' interviews
 - **112** questionnaire responses
 - 73 female (65%), 39 male (35%)
 - 49 Gaelic (44%), 63 English (56%)

Interview Corpus

- 46 interviews with adults who started in GME in first decade (1985/6–1994/5)
 - 17 Urban Lowlands, 12 Highlands, 17 Islands
 - 31 Female, 15 Male
 - 25 English, 21 Gaelic
- >20 hours of semi-structured interviews recorded throughout Scotland (and beyond; telephone/Skype)
 - Dec 2011–Dec 2012
- Transcription conventions:
 - Ethnography of Communication (Hymes 1976; *cf.* Ochs 1979)
 - Form + content

Linguistic practice: Interviewees' Gaelic use?

- 'High' Gaelic use: **10/46**
- 'Intermediate to limited' Gaelic use: **12/46**
- 'Low' Gaelic use: **24/46**
- **High use:** daily use of Gaelic at work, Gaelic-oriented professions
 - Varied Gaelic language use outside of work setting
- **Intermediate use:** broadest range of linguistic practices
- **Low use:** relatively superficial linguistic engagement - largest numerically

Linguistic practice: 'High' use (10/46)

- **SD** [A]m bi thu a' cleachdadh Gàidhlig gu math tric san latha a th' ann?
Do you use Gaelic quite often in the present day?
- **LM06** Uh huh
- **SD** An lùib d' obrach mar eisimpleir?
In the course of your work for example?
- **LM06** **Yeah** tha mise ga cleachdadh (.) cha mhòr a h-uile latha aig m' obair [...] is (.) 's ann anns a' Ghàidhlig a bhithinn bruidhinn ma 's e 's gu bheil Gàidhlig aig an duine no boireannach ris am bi mi a' bruidhinn
Yeah I use it (.) almost every day at my work [...] and (.) I'd speak Gaelic if the man or woman I'm speaking to can speak Gaelic

High use: **Role of GM employment**

Linguistic practice: 'High' use

- **HF03** Bidh mi a' cleachdadh [Gàidhlig] co-dhiù a h-uile latha em agus fiù 's Disathairne is Latha na Sàbaid - bidh mi ga cleachdadh gach latha obrach em co-dhiù (.) agus air an deireadh-sheachdain cuideachd
I use [Gaelic] at least every day em and even Saturday and Sunday- I use it every working day anyway (.) and at the weekend as well
[...]
- **SD** Agus a bheil Gàidhlig aig do charaidean as fhaisge?
And do your closest friends speak Gaelic?
- **HF03** Aig cuid dhiubh- cuid mhath dhiubh [...] tha mi a' smaointinn-feadhainn a tha ag obair tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig, tha sinn nas buailtiche a bhith a' bruidhinn na Gàidhlig
Some of them- a good few of them [...] I think- those that work through the medium of Gaelic, we're more likely to speak Gaelic

GM Employment >> Access to informal networks?

Linguistic practice: 'Intermediate' use (12/46)

- **SD** How often would you say that you use Gaelic?
- **LF01** Em: probably a few times a week, not daily em: and not weekly (.) so in between
- **SD** Yeah
- **LF01** So a few times a week cos I'll (.) um do my son's reading with him in Gaelic, and sort of very basic conversation- I wouldn't class that as sort of using Gaelic cos it's not a full conversation but it's still=
=Yeah but it's speaking it isn't it?
- **SD**
- **LF01** Yeah

Retained salience of Gaelic: Son's homework (GME)

'Intermediate' use, limited salience?

- **SD** [A]m bi thu eh a' cleachdadh mòran Gàidhlig? An lùib (.) [do bheatha làitheil?]
Do you use much Gaelic? In the course of (.) [your daily life?]
- **IF11** [Em uairean-] (.) cha bhi:: san fharsaingeachd ach tha Gàidhlig aig an duine agam cuideachd
[Em someti-] (.) no:: not generally but my husband can speak Gaelic too
- **SD** Uh huh
- **IF11** Em aidh 's ann à xxx ((W. Isles)) a tha esan cuideachd **so** (.) uaireannan bidh sinn a' bruidhinn Gàidhlig ri chèile [em]
Em aye he's from xxx as well so (.) sometimes we speak Gaelic together [em]
- **SD** [Uh huh] [...] ach a's an fharsaingeachd 's e Beurla a bhios (.) eadaraibh
but generally it's English between you
- **IF11** 'S e: ma tha mi (.) ma tha mi a' dol a xxx ((W. Isles)) bidh mi ga cleachdadh le (.) le- leis an teaghlach agam [...] tha Gàidhlig aig an duine agam mar a (1.4) chan eil- cha bhi sinne daonnan a' bruidhinn [Gàidhlig] ri chèile
Yes: if I'm (.) if I'm going to xxx I use it with (.) with my family [...] my husband can speak Gaelic as (1.4) we don't always speak [Gaelic] together

Family use, but **limited Gaelic with husband?**

Linguistic practice: 'Low' use (24/46)

- **SD** Your partner doesn't speak Gaelic does he?
- **LF07** Nope nope
- **SD** Okay (.) do you speak Gaelic to the baby at the moment or?
- **LF07** Baby- no I don't I don't=
- **SD** =Uh huh=
- **LF07** =My wee brother- he's at the Gaelic [school] so that's the only member of the family that I would speak to now
- **SD** Right okay [...] how would you describe your sort of relationship with Gaelic these days?
- **LF07** Oh [...] not too much now (.) it'd be more like (.) hobby-like

– 'Hobby-like' relationship? No **use with child**

Linguistic practice: 'Low' use

- **SD** [S]o have you spoken Gaelic much in the last month would you have said?
- **LM03** E:m a little (.) just as I say sorta sometimes on Skype to my parents
- **SD** Yeah on the phone to your parents
- **LM03** But that's about it [...] I think in all honesty if I had friends who spoke Gaelic I possibly would do to some extent, em: (.) but it's just a fact of em (.) in terms of back home I don't really have any friends who speak Gaelic e:m these days (.) so
- **SD** Yeah exactly
- **LM03** So it's a function of that- it's not something that I use

– 'Not something I use'

Linguistic practice: ‘Low’ use

- **IF13** Are we gonna do it in English?
- **SD** Uh **uill 's ann sa Ghàidhlig ma tha thu ag iarraidh?**
well in Gaelic if you like?
- **IF13** Eh no- to be honest [I’ve]
- **SD** [Okay] that’s fine yeah
- **IF13** ((laughs)) barely spoken it in the last few years [which you might want to]
- **SD** [That’s absolut-]
- **IF13** include in your research
- **SD** Yeah that’s absolutely fine
- **IF13** I’m quite **lapach** (*‘rusty’*) [...] I ca- I do speak in Gaelic but (1.1) I think I’m quite **lapach** because (.) I don’t really have anybody that I can speak it to regularly

– ‘**Lapach**’: Language Use and Ideology

Gaelic use: work and home (N=112)

Fig. 1: Language use at work/university (n)

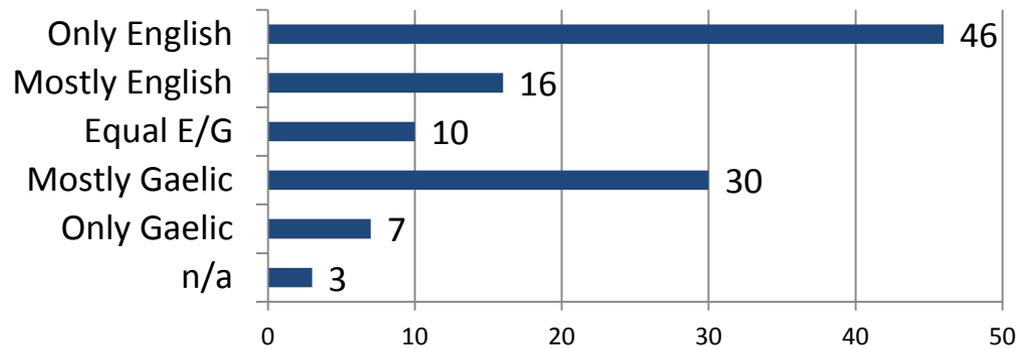
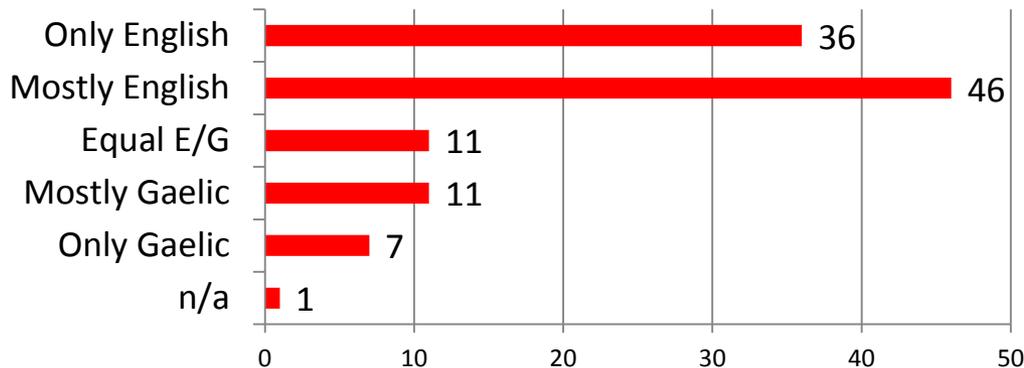


Fig. 2: Language use at home (n)



Work use:

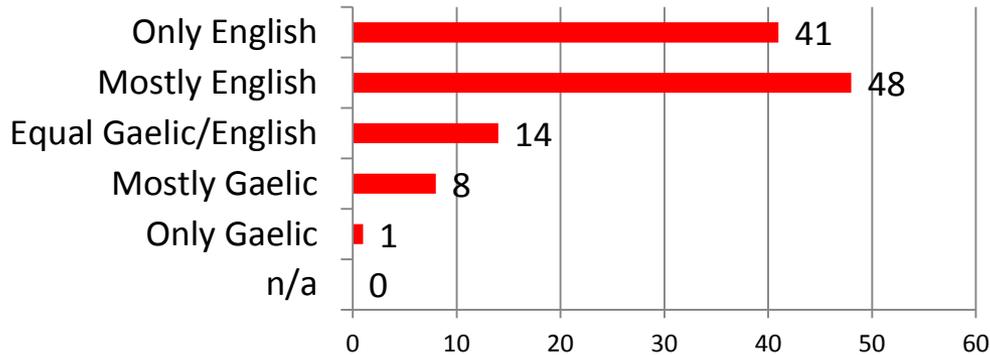
- **Key context** among ‘High’ users of Gaelic in interviews
- Questionnaire respondents: **younger** cohort (university/college attendance = **21%**)
- **53%** “only/mostly” English
- **42%** at least “equal” Gaelic

Home use:

- Fishman (1991, 2001...)
- Substantially **less Gaelic use**
- **73%** “only/mostly” English
- **26%** at least “equal” Gaelic

Social use: Key contexts? (N=112)

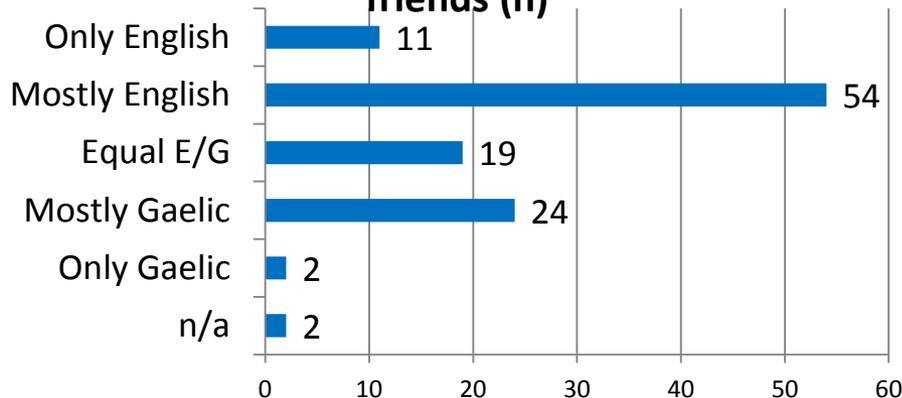
Fig. 3: Conversation – All friends (n)



All friends:

- 80% “only/mostly” English
- 20% at least “equal” Gaelic

Fig. 4: Conversation – Gaelic-Speaking friends (n)



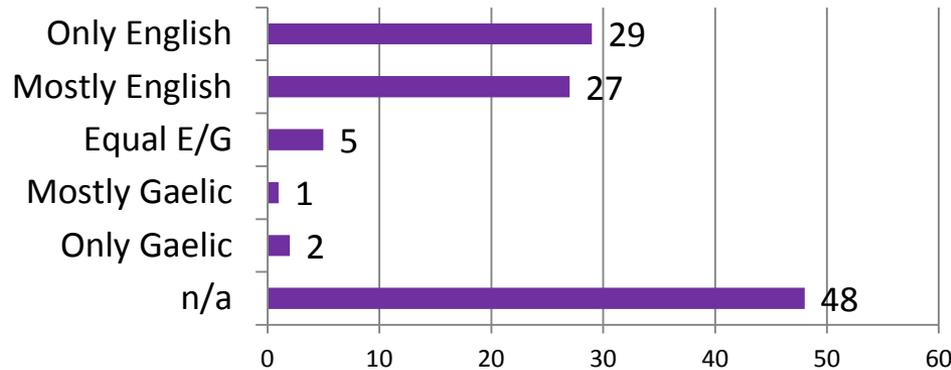
Gaelic-speaking friends:

- 58% “only”/“mostly” English
- 40% at least “equal” Gaelic
- <2% “only Gaelic” (n=2)

Social use of Gaelic?

Social use: Key contexts? (N=112)

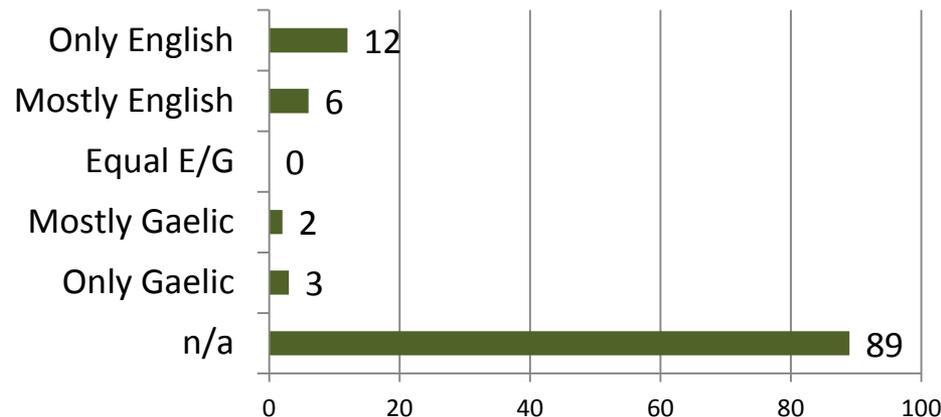
Fig. 5: With Partner/Spouse



Language use with **partner**

- Total **57%** in relationship
- Of these:
 - **45%** “only” English
 - **87%** “only/mostly” English
 - **13%** >“equal” Gaelic

Fig. 6: With Son/Daughter



Language use with **child**

- Total **21%** parents
- Of these:
 - **52%** “only” English
 - **78%** “only/mostly” English
 - **22%** “only/mostly” Gaelic

Preliminary finding re intergenerational transmission?

Language use and ideologies

- Inter-relationship of **language use** and **linguistic ideologies**?
 - **Theoretical orientations:**
 - “[S]ets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure or use”
(Silverstein 1979: 193)
 - >> **Language ideologies:**
 - “[C]ultural sensitivities [...] about language, its use, and its users”
(Makihara 2010: 41)
 - Attempted “**rationalisations**” for language practices, which are “embodied in communicative practice”
(Kroskrity 2004: 496)
- *IF13* “I do speak in Gaelic but (1.1) I think I’m quite **lapach** because (.) I don’t really have anybody that I can speak it to regularly”

Language use and ideologies:

Opportunity/choice



Language ideologies:

Opportunity/choice

- IF13 [...] I don't really have anybody that I speak it [*i.e.* Gaelic] to regularly
- SD Uh huh
- IF13 Like you know if you're not using it it does kind of like (.) it's probably- it would be fine if I started speaking- speaking it right now but I wouldn't feel very confident [kind of thing]
- SD [Yeah that's the thing-] just a question of confidence I suppose
- IF13 I think (.) I probably- I probably sh:ould go along to stuff ((laughs)) [...] I know if I don't use it then (.) I'll lose it kind of thing

- LF08 I've no:t got the opportunity if you like to speak it as much
- SD Yeah [uh huh]
- LF08 [Em] (.) which is a shame because (1.7) you know I do kinda miss (1.1) miss em (1.8) being able to do- to speak it to outside people in different environments [...] it's a shame that I don't get to (.) to use it as often as I would like

Language ideologies: Opportunity/**choice**

- IF07 Tha mi smaoinichadh ma tha thu ag iarraidh Gàidhlig=
I think if you want Gaelic=
- SD =Hmm=
- IF07 =Tha mi smaoinichadh (.) ma tha cuideigin (.) gu fìrinneach ag iarraidh a bhith beò ann an dòigh Ghàidhlig=
=I think (.) if someone (.) truly wants to live in a Gaelic way=
- SD =Seadh
=Yeah
- IF07 gum faigh iad e- fiù 's gun /a/ smaoinichadh mu dheidhinn [...] tha mi a' cleachdadh /a'/ Ghàidhlig em (.) ann an dòigh (3.0) ((sighs)) tha e faireachdainn rudeigin àraid- tha mi ceangal Gàidhlig gu mòr ri bhith beag- ri bhith òg [...] 's e dìreach a bhith dol air ais
that they'll get it- even without thinking about it [...] I use Gaelic em (.) in a way (3.0) ((sighs)) it feels a bit strange- I associate Gaelic with being small- with being young [...] it's just going backwards

Language ideologies: Opportunity/**choice**

- **LM02** [P]riorities have come- have come into my life in terms ay (.) like at the moment my work's kind of (.) full [...] I don't think we'll ever get to the level which would make it easy for an individual to leave Gaelic-medium education (.) and to maintain (.) eh the need to- to need to have the language [...] But I mean to be honest it needs people like me to decide against all the priorities I've got to do it (.) and it doesn't sound like I'm going to be doing that any time soon
- **IF04** I personally have no qualms in saying I: I want to do with my life what I want to do and I'm not gonna stay within the Gaelic world just for the sake of Gaelic [...] at the moment I'm doing Gaelic primary teaching (.) and (2.5) I won't hide the fact that I don't necessarily want to be a Gaelic primary school teacher- I'm not doing it because I feel so passionately about working in Gaelic and keeping Gaelic alive although it's very important to me [...] I'm not gonna stay in something just for the sake of Gaelic

Language ideologies II: Forcing/‘Putadh’ na Gàidhlig?

- Relevance of Gaelic to all of Scotland?
- Sensitivity to opposition? Language **policy + identity**
- **IF01** [T]ha mi a' smaointinn gu bheil e (.) er (.) gu bheil e gu math cudromach anns na: (.) sgìrean (.) far a bheil- far an robh Gàidhlig anns an eachdraidh aca [...] ach chan eil mi a' smaointinn gum bu chòir dhaibh Gàidhlig a phuta' air na h-àiteachan (.) nach eil er (.) a' faireachdainn gu bheil iad ceangailte ris a' chànan [...] chan eil sinn ag iarraidh a bhith a' putadh Gàidhlig **you know** ?

*I think that it's (.) er (.) that it's quite important in the: (.) areas (.) where it's- where Gaelic was in their history (.) and I think that it would be good in all of Scotland but I don't think that they should force Gaelic on the places (.) that don't er (.) feel that they're connected to the language [...] we don't want to be forcing Gaelic **you know?***

Language ideologies II: 'Putadh na Gàidhlig'

- IF11 Tha mi ag obair air a' Ghàidhealtachd [...] tha Gàidhlig gu math (.) cudromach ann an shin- a's na h-àiteachan sin **so** tha e [gu math]
*I work in the Highlands [...] Gaelic is quite important there- in those places **so** it's [quite]*
- SD [Tha]
[Yes]
- IF11 furasta dhòmhsa a ràdh “**oh yeah** tha Gàidhlig uabhasach cudromach” ach nuair a tha mise air a dhol sìos dhan a' Ghalltachd [...] chan eil (.) inbhe cho mòr aig a- aig a' chànan [...] ma tha sinne a' putadh a' chànan (.) air a' mhòr-chuid de dh'Alba chan eil iad dol a thuigs'
*easy for me to say “**oh yeah** Gaelic is very important” but when I've gone down to the Lowlands [...] the language doesn't have as much status [...] if we force the language (.) on the majority of Scotland they're not going to understand*

Language ideologies II

- LM05 [T]he history with Gaelic and its place in Scotland is quite mixed (.) and its place (.) I don't know (.) I see it as- yeah it definitely goes into the- the big pot of Scottishness [...] It's not a prerequisite to being Scottish- I think there's- there are various factors that go in there
- SD Sure
- LM05 But it's- yeah it counts for quite a lot [...] it's not as straightforward as just a comparison with Welsh
- LM04 [Y]ou know it would probably be good to keep Gaelic to where it was- well- where it was traditionally spoken I would say [...] I mean there's parts of the country- I mean I'm not 100% sure about Gaelic history but there's probably parts of the country where Gaelic was never spoken [...] I don't think of Gaelic as being a (.) you know a kind of (.) eh you know like the Scottish national language [...] there's other kinda- there's Scots and things as well

Language ideologies II: ‘Sparradh na Gàidhlig’

- **HF03** [T]ha mi smaointinn g' eil sgìrean ann far a bheil Albais ga bruidhinn agus far nach eil 's dòcha Gàidhlig cho cudromach [...] cha chreid mi g' eil e ciallach a bhith eh a' sparradh (.) eh a' Ghàidhlig a's na h-àiteachan sin

I think there are areas where Scots is spoken and where Gaelic is perhaps not as important [...] I don't think it's sensible to be eh forcing [...] eh Gaelic in those places

- **SD** [...] An e cànan nàiseanta a th' anns a' Ghàidhlig sa chiad àite? No an e cànan roinneil- a tha a' buntainn ris a' Ghàidhealtachd is dha na h-Eileanan?

[...] Is Gaelic a national language principally? Or is it a regional language- that belongs in the Highlands and Islands?

- **HF03** Tha mi smaointinn (.) gu bheil sin aig cridhe trioblaidean na Gàidhlig [agus] mas e cànan nàiseanta a bh' ann nach biodh sinn anns an t-suidheachadh a's a bheil sinn an-diugh [...] thathar a' faireachdainn gum bu chòir cànan nàiseanta a bhith ann ach cha chreid mi gu bheil e fìor

I think (.) that that's at the heart of the difficulties facing Gaelic [and that] if it were a national language that we wouldn't be in the situation we're in today [...] it is felt that there should be a national language but I don't think it's true

Quantitative perspective

Table 1: Attitudes to Gaelic in Scotland and the Highlands (N=112)

Attitudinal statement:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	%	%	%	%	%
1. "Gaelic is important for the Highlands & Islands."	0	1	1	13	85
2. "Gaelic is important for the whole of Scotland."	3	6	6	28	57
3. "No real Scot can oppose the promotion of Gaelic."	17	17	21	24	21

- | | | |
|-----------|-------------|----------------|
| 1. Total: | Agree – 98% | Disagree – 1% |
| 2. Total: | Agree – 85% | Disagree – 9% |
| 3. Total: | Agree – 45% | Disagree – 34% |

Conclusions

- Linguistic practice: **Social** use of Gaelic?
 - Relatively weak among majority of informants
 - Friends, partners, children?
 - Impact of Gaelic employment on language practices
 - Access to informal networks of Gaelic speakers?
- **Linguistic ideologies**—language use:
 - Opportunity—choice: **spectrum**?
 - ‘Putadh’ na Gàidhlig: place of language in Scotland?
- Perceptions of Gaelic: Promoting **usage**? Bolstering **intergenerational transmission** of Gaelic?
 - **Language policy implications?**



Taing mhòr!
Thank you!
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