

A5.5 Community Sociolinguistic Survey: Scalpay

Here, we consider the disaggregated data for the island of Scalpay.

A5.5.1 Background data

Figure A5.11 compares the percentages for the various age cohorts from three sources: the 2011 Census (for all of North Harris); the Speaker Typology Survey for Scalpay (STS, as reported in Chapter 6); and the Community Sociolinguistic Survey (CSS) for Scalpay.

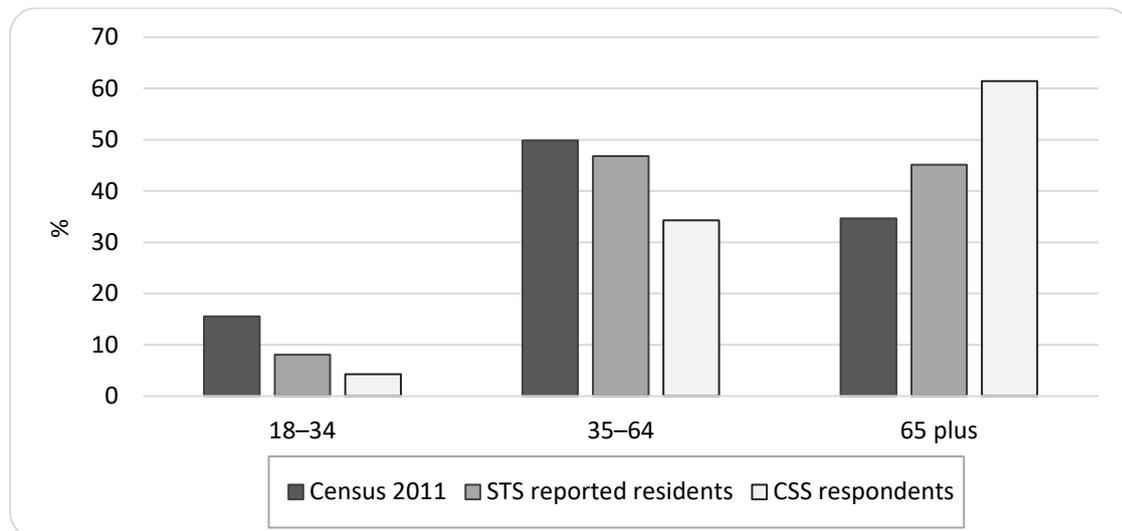


Figure A5.11 Percentage age profile of 2011 Census (North Harris), of reported residents in STS and CSS, Scalpay ($N_s = 831, 173, 70$)

As with the all districts comparison in Section 5.4, there were greater percentages of respondents (as a proportion of participants) in the 18–34 years and 35–64 years age cohorts in the 2011 Census for North Harris than for our two surveys in Scalpay.

The gap in the respondent level of over 20 percentage points between the Census data and the community survey cohort for the over-65 age group possibly indicates two features: the ageing profile of Scalpay and/or the stronger likelihood of finding a member of the older age cohort to participate as a respondent in the survey. Further details on the background to the Community Sociolinguistic Survey can be found in the Methodology in Section 5.3 (See Section 5.4.1, where we indicate that more elderly members of the community in Scalpay (and across the RA as a whole) completed the survey, thus slightly biasing the result here toward an older age profile).

A5.5.1.1 Gaelic ability by age

Figure A5.12 displays a cross-reference for ability in spoken Gaelic by age group for respondents in Scalpay.

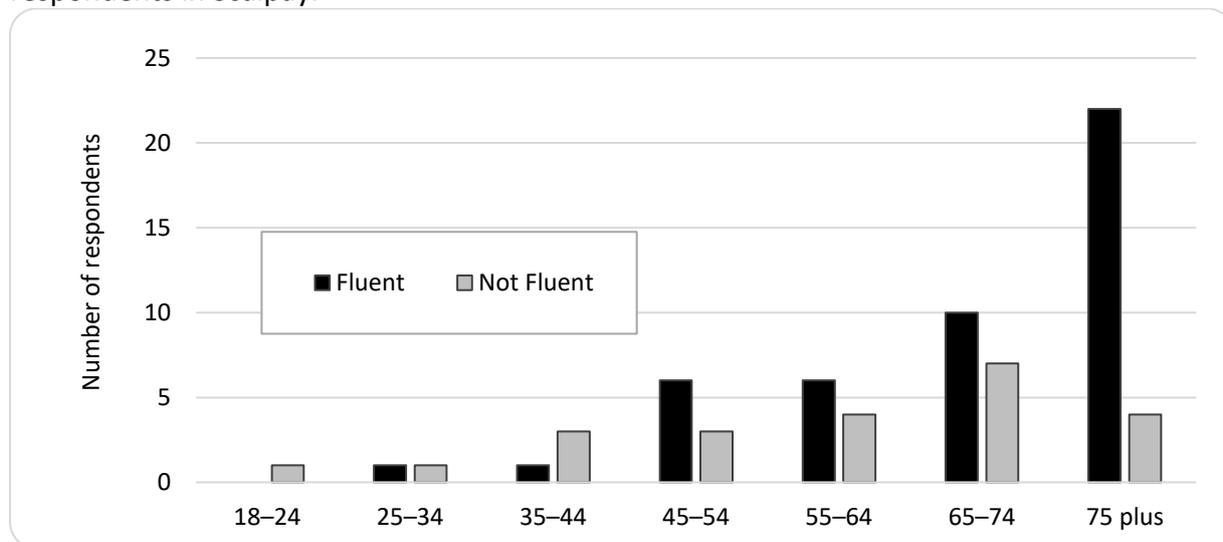


Figure A5.12 Gaelic ability by age group, Scalpay (N = 69)

Table A5.3 below pertains to the key data on Gaelic ability by age group in Scalpay.

Number of respondents	Fluent	Not Fluent
18-24	0	1
25-34	1	1
35-44	1	3
45-54	6	3
55-64	6	4
65-74	10	7
75 plus	22	4
Total	46	23

Table A5.3 Gaelic ability by age group, Scalpay (N = 69)

This table indicates that Gaelic is relatively healthy in Scalpay, in that 66.7% of respondents possess fluent ability in Gaelic. This must be understood, however, in relation to the low numbers of respondents in younger age cohorts, fluent or otherwise, and the predominance of older, fluent respondents.

A5.5.2 Respondent background and Gaelic fluency, Scalpay

Figure A5.13 presents a comparison between the respondents' background and fluency in Gaelic.

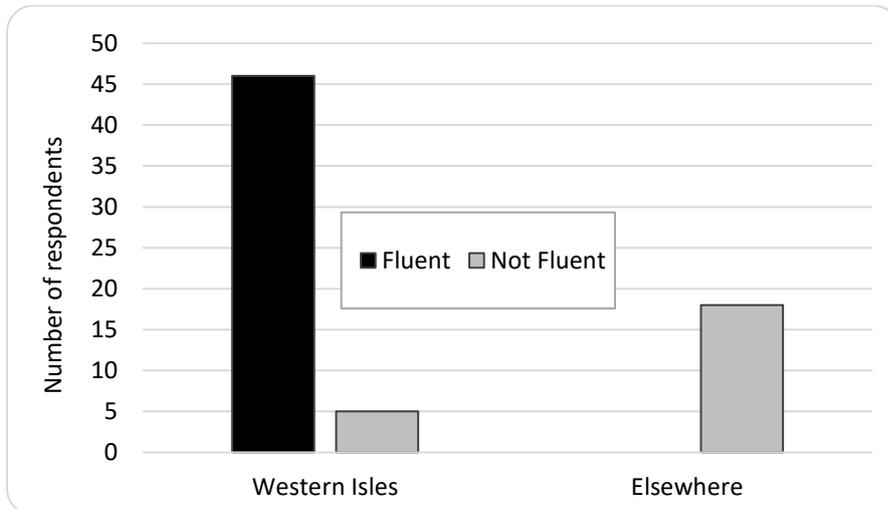


Figure A5.13 Respondents' background and Gaelic fluency, Scalpay (N = 69)

For Scalpay respondents, there is a very clear connection between a background in the Western Isles and fluency in Gaelic. 51 respondents were from the Western Isles (73.9%). Of those, 46 (90.2%) were fluent Gaelic speakers, meaning 9.8% of Scalpay respondents who were from the Western Isles were not fluent.

Overall, 23 respondents (33.3%) were not fluent. Of these 23 non-fluent respondents, 18 (or 78.3% of the non-fluent cohort) were from outside the Western Isles. No respondent from elsewhere reported acquiring fluency in Gaelic.

A5.5.3 Linguistic background and Gaelic use, Scalpay

The linguistic background of respondents with a local origin compared with Gaelic fluency and use data for Scalpay respondents, as illustrated in Figure A5.14, indicates that fluent speakers are not speaking to younger adults and children in accordance with fluency.

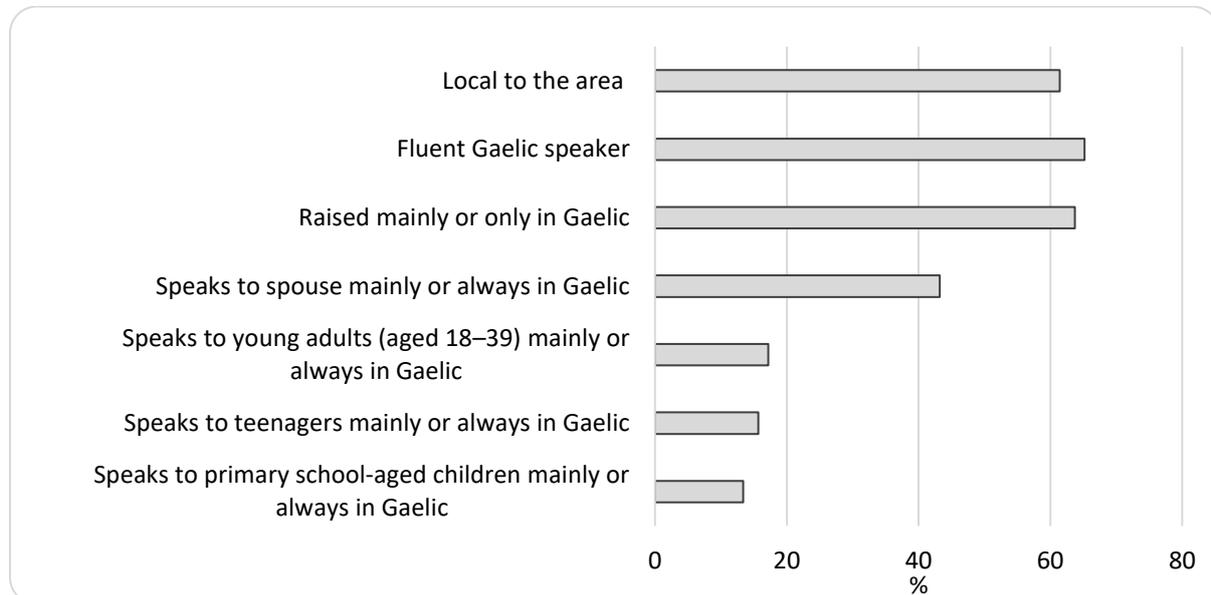


Figure A5.14 Respondents' linguistic background and their Gaelic use, Scalpay (N = 70)

Almost two-thirds of respondents (65.2%) are fluent speakers and local to the study district (61.4%), again showing a clear correspondence between origin and proficiency in Gaelic. Further, 63.7% of respondents were raised through Gaelic, indicating that familial transmission of Gaelic was very strong on Scalpay until recently.

However, percentage responses to questions about whether a respondent *Speaks mainly or always in Gaelic* to teenagers (15.7%) or the young adult cohort (17.2%) show that cross-generational practice of Gaelic has weakened considerably, given that over 60% of the respondents in Scalpay pertain to the 65 years+ age group.

The age profile of respondents was shown in Figure 5.1 depicted in Section 5.4.1 of the book. As depicted in section 5.4.2.2 of the book, we indicate that fluency responses are more positive for Gaelic than the actual population of Scalpay, due to the tendency of more older people to complete the Community Sociolinguistic Survey.

As discussed in Chapter 5.4.2, Gaelic ability is more pronounced in older age cohorts. The data in Figure A5.12 above illustrates the heavy representation of respondents in the over-75 age group.

A5.5.4 Language use in different social situations and with differing age cohorts, Scalpay
 Figure A5.15 displays respondents' language use in different social situations in Scalpay.

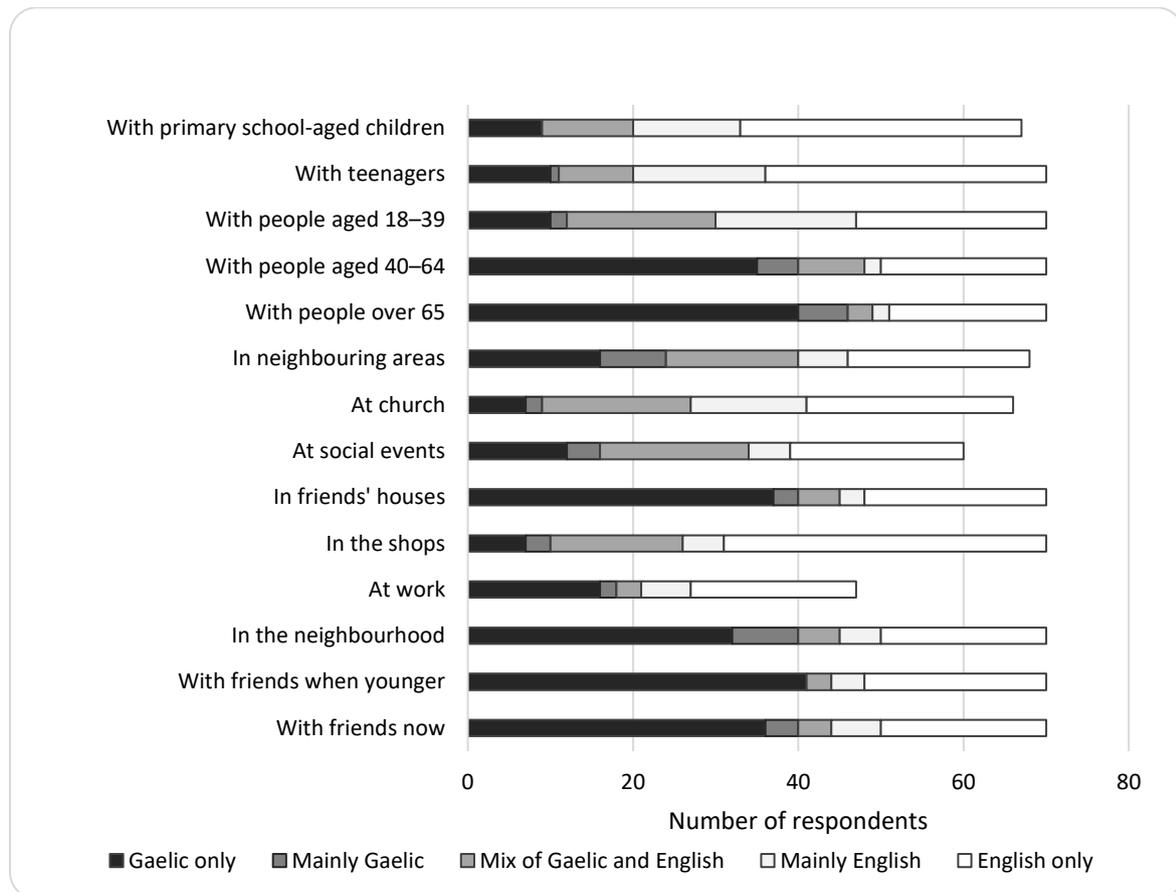


Figure A5.15 Language used by respondents in a variety of social situations, Scalpay (N = 70)

The responses show a trend towards decreasing levels of use of Gaelic with younger age cohorts, and in situations not directly involving friends and family in social settings. Given the age profile of the respondents, it is perhaps less surprising that over half of respondents reported the practice of Gaelic only *With friends now* (51.4%), *With people over 65 years* (57.1%), and *With friends when younger* (58.6%).

As regards to age cohorts, the salient point in Figure A5.15 is the contrasting practice of Gaelic with older age cohorts in comparison to the use of English with younger age cohorts in Scalpay. The respondents indicate that *Gaelic only* is more frequently used with those over 65 (57.1%), and with the 45–64 age group (50%). The practice of English is more prevalent with the other age cohorts: 32.9% of respondents use *English only* with the 18–39 age group, 48.6% being the corresponding use with teenagers (<18 years), and 50.7% use *English only* with school-aged children. When taking the responses *Mainly English* or *English only* together, the results were more striking: 70.1% of respondents speak predominantly English with primary school-aged children and 71.4% with the teenage cohort.

The percentage of respondents who speak *Gaelic only* with teenagers (14.3%) is similar to the percentage with primary school-aged children (13.4%). Furthermore, the use of Gaelic with the youngest age-groups, particularly when the mixed use with English is considered as overall Gaelic use, does not correspond with the proportion of those age-groups reported as fluent in Gaelic, i.e. (mixed) use is not producing ability, for instance nine respondents (12.9%) use (mixed) Gaelic with teenagers and 11 respondents use (mixed) Gaelic with primary school-aged children (16.4%). We compare this to the ability levels depicted in the Census (see Chapter 2.4), the self-reported ability data and the percentage of reported use of Gaelic among teenagers (Chapter 4.5).

A5.5.5 Identity of Gael in Scalpay

A series of questions sought to elicit information in relation to identity ascription.

A5.5.5.1 Do you consider yourself to be a Gael? Scalpay

In relation to Gaelic self-ascription, the results were binary for the Scalpay participants with respondents either seeing themselves as Gaels, overwhelmingly at 81.4%, or not, at 18.6%. No respondent felt unable to make a decision on this answer, or that the question did not apply to them. In Figure A5.12, 66.7% of respondents categorise themselves as fluent Gaelic speakers. Therefore, if we can deduce that respondents who are non-fluent do not typically speak Gaelic, then 14.7% (i.e. 81.4% – 66.7%) of those self-ascribing as Gaels are non-Gaelic speaking Gaels.

A5.5.5.2 How would you describe your identity? Scalpay

Figure A5.16 illustrates responses to a question asking respondents to describe their identity, allowing for multiple responses.

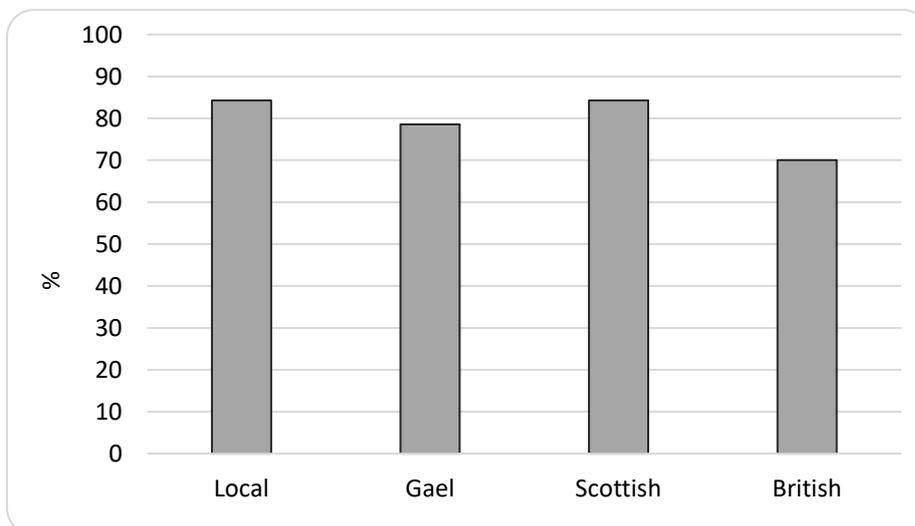


Figure A5.16 Respondents' multiple choice identities, Scalpay (N = 70)

For the Scalpay residents the nested nature of identity is striking, demonstrating low differentiation among these categories. The identity ascription options fall within similar percentage ranges, indicating affiliation by the respondents with multiple identities. For Scalpay, an equal percentage of respondents claimed *Local* and *Scottish* identity, both at 84.3%, with a slightly lower percentage return for identity as a *Gael* (78.6%). The British designation was selected by 70% of the respondents.

In Scalpay, 38 respondents chose to describe themselves as holding all four identities (*Local, Gael, Scottish, British*). One respondent is listed as being a *Gael* only while six self-reported as *British* only. No respondent chose a combination of *Gaelic* and *Local* together.

A5.5.5.3 People considered to be Gaels, Scalpay

Scalpay respondents were asked to consider whether they considered that the people were Gaels, according to various geo-cultural criteria. Results are shown in Figure A5.17.

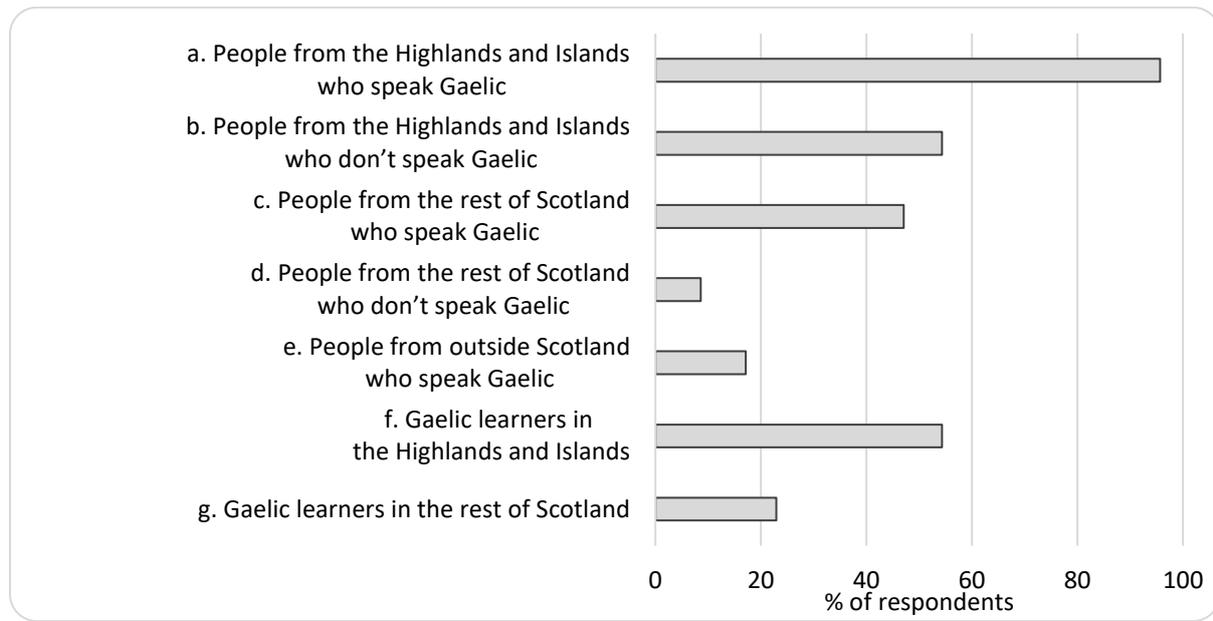


Figure A5.17 People considered as Gaels, various categorisations, Scalpay (N = 70)

As discussed in the book (see Chapter 5.5.1), we note that a lower ability in Gaelic corresponds with lower levels of self-ascription as a Gael. The strongest correspondence to Gaelic identity is found in an affiliation of speaking Gaelic with local origin.

The three statements which received the highest levels of agreement were related to people in or from the Highlands and Islands. 95.7% of Scalpay respondents considered that *People from the Highlands and Islands who speak Gaelic* are Gaels, while a small majority (54.3%) felt that non-Gaelic speakers from the Highlands and Islands were Gaels as well as Gaelic learners from the Highlands and Islands, also at 54.3%.

Levels of agreement with statements decreased as the statements became more remote from the local geography of the respondents. The Gaelic ascription was considered less applicable in the case of lower ability in Gaelic, except in the case of those with a Highlands and Islands origin. We compare this to the ability levels depicted in the Census (see Chapter 2.4) and the percentage of reported use of Gaelic among teenagers (see Chapter 4.5).

A5.5.6 In favour of Gaelic, Scalpay

Scalpay recorded a high rate of favourable responses when respondents were asked if they were in favour of Gaelic, or not. Scalpay recorded the highest favourability rate of all three survey districts, when we combine the responses *Strongly in favour of Gaelic* (81.4%) and *In favour of Gaelic* (11.4%) Scalpay recorded almost 93% favourability.

Across all three districts, 72% were *Strongly in favour of Gaelic*, and 23% were *In favour of Gaelic*. Strongly favourable ratings for the other two communities surveyed fall in the range of 55.9% (for Grimsay) to 78.4% (for Eriskay). In fact, a gap of 28% is evident between those respondents indicating Gaelic favourability in Scalpay (93%) and those reporting Gaelic fluency (65%) in the district.

Among the respondents who indicated that they were in favour of Gaelic, reactions were sought to attitudinal statements in a multiple-response format.

The results are given in Figure A5.18.

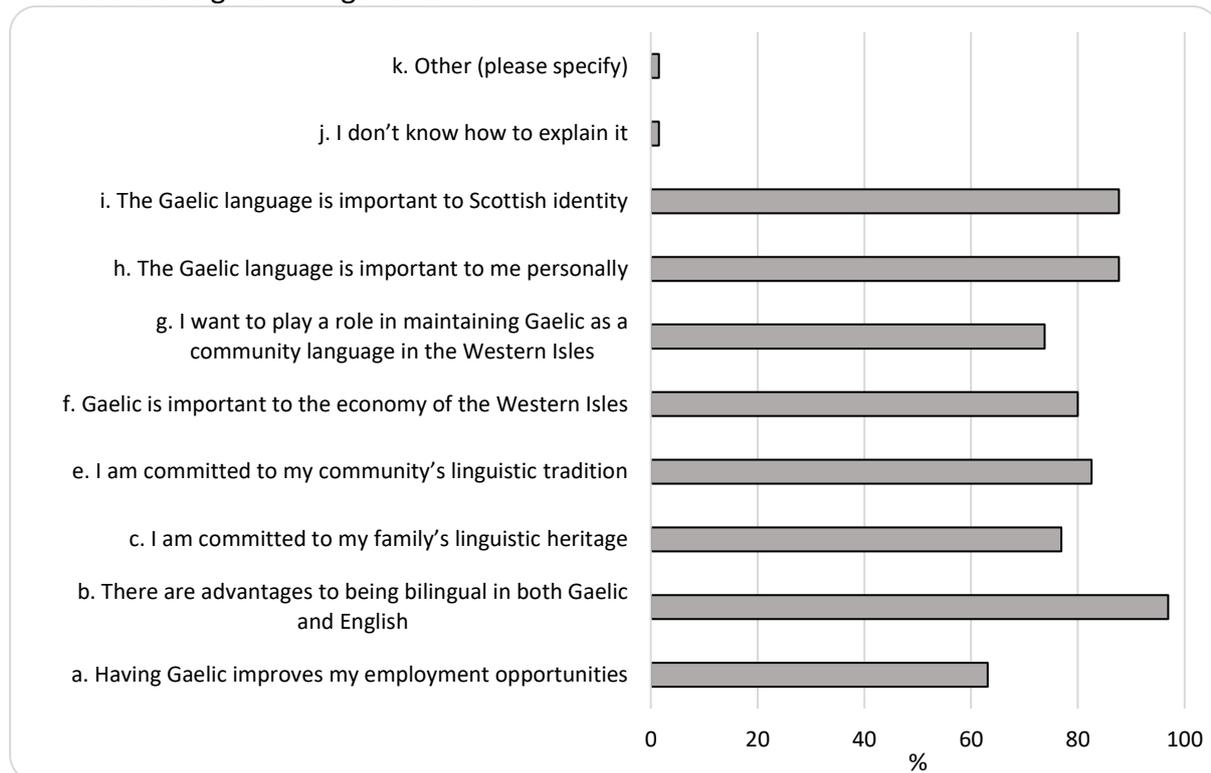


Figure A5.18 Responses to the multi-choice question 'If you are in favour of Gaelic, why is this?' Scalpay (N = 65)

Of the options provided, the advantages of bilingualism are cited as the most prominent reason for a positive attitude towards Gaelic at 97%. Each clearly-defined option received at least 74% agreement, other than Gaelic having the potential to improve employment opportunities (63%), but this may be related to the age profile in the Scalpay survey, with a very high proportion of older respondents who may not be interested in the job market. The other high-scoring options were those linked to Gaelic having personal importance to the respondent (88%), commitment to the linguistic tradition of the respondents' community (83%), and Gaelic's perceived importance to Scottish identity (88%).

A5.5.7 Feelings about possible negative outcomes for Gaelic, Scalpay

Respondents were asked to express their feelings about possible negative outcomes or eventualities for Gaelic. The negative outcomes, together with respondents' claimed happiness or otherwise with them, are shown in Figure A5.19.

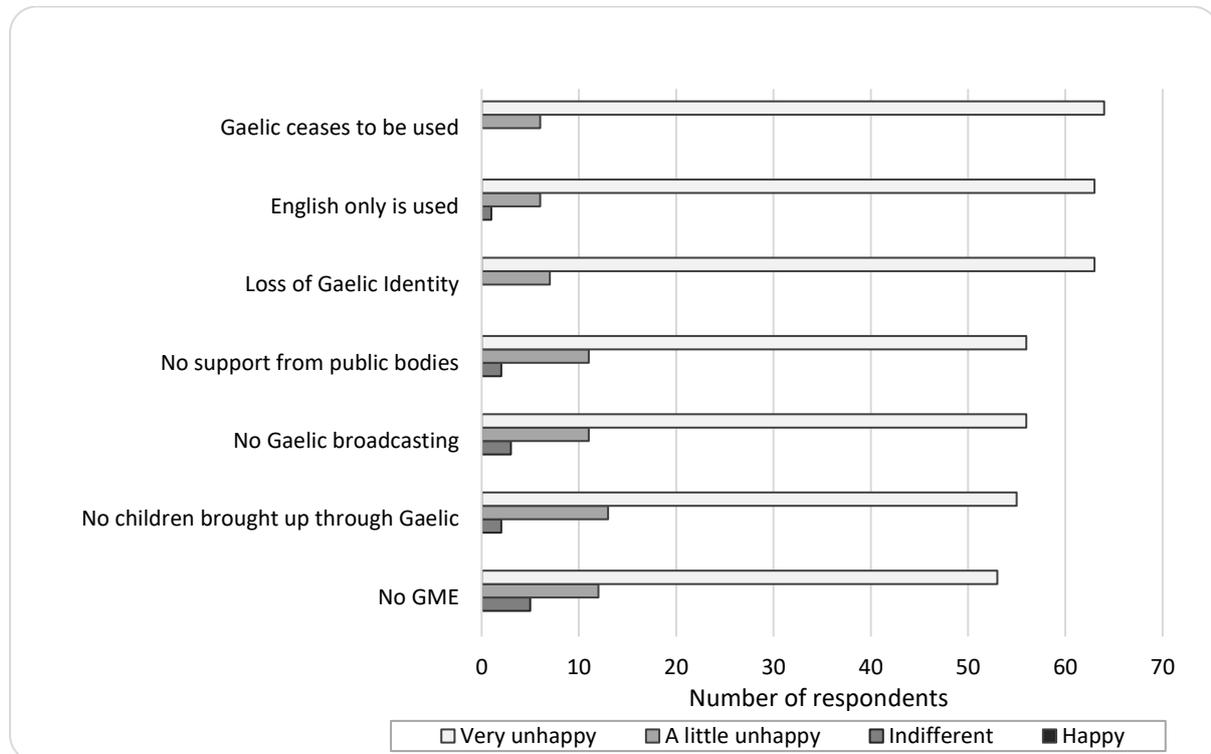


Figure A5.19 Happiness or otherwise concerning negative outcomes which could affect the future of Gaelic, Scalpay (N = 70)

It is clear that the respondents would be very unhappy if Gaelic was to decline or disappear from island life and a further variety of social and institutional contexts. These results may demonstrate greater dissatisfaction with general indications of future demise than with the specific future and current demise of Gaelic in certain social or institutional contexts.

For example, more people felt, on the one hand, that they would be *Very unhappy* if the use of Gaelic in the area would cease (91.4%), or if only English was spoken in Scalpay in the future (90%) or that the area lost its Gaelic identity (90%), than the percentage of respondents who indicated, on the other hand, that they would be *Very unhappy* if no children were to be brought up in Gaelic in the future (78.6%). This latter statement attracted the second-lowest number of unhappy responses.

The least number of unhappy responses was given in relation to the statement indicating the discontinuation of GME provision. The results from this survey and the other modules of the IGRP in fact indicate that many negative circumstances are already in train. Nevertheless, the least unhappiness with loss of Gaelic among children does reflect the current reality of low Gaelic use with and among children.

This might imply a pragmatic acceptance of a blatant current reality. In contrast with an acceptance of current reality, the greater unhappiness with the potential complete erasure of Gaelic may indicate an aversion to the pending outcome of a current process in the future, i.e. a current acceptance (regarding children) in contrast with an anticipatory anxiety about the future. It is common in language shift situations that the adults think that the children will acquire and practice the minority language as they mature.

In fact, as we see in Chapter 4 (4.6.3, Figure 4.26 and Figure 4.27) and Chapter 5 (5.4.10, Figure 5.19), the opposite is actually the case in that the practice of Gaelic reduces as children grow older.

A5.5.8 Individuals and groups felt to strengthen or weaken Gaelic, Scalpay

Respondents were asked to rate how local individuals and groups are perceived (on a positive–negative scale from +2 to -2) as having a positive or negative impact on Gaelic. The results are illustrated in Figure A5.20 as average score values for each category or group.

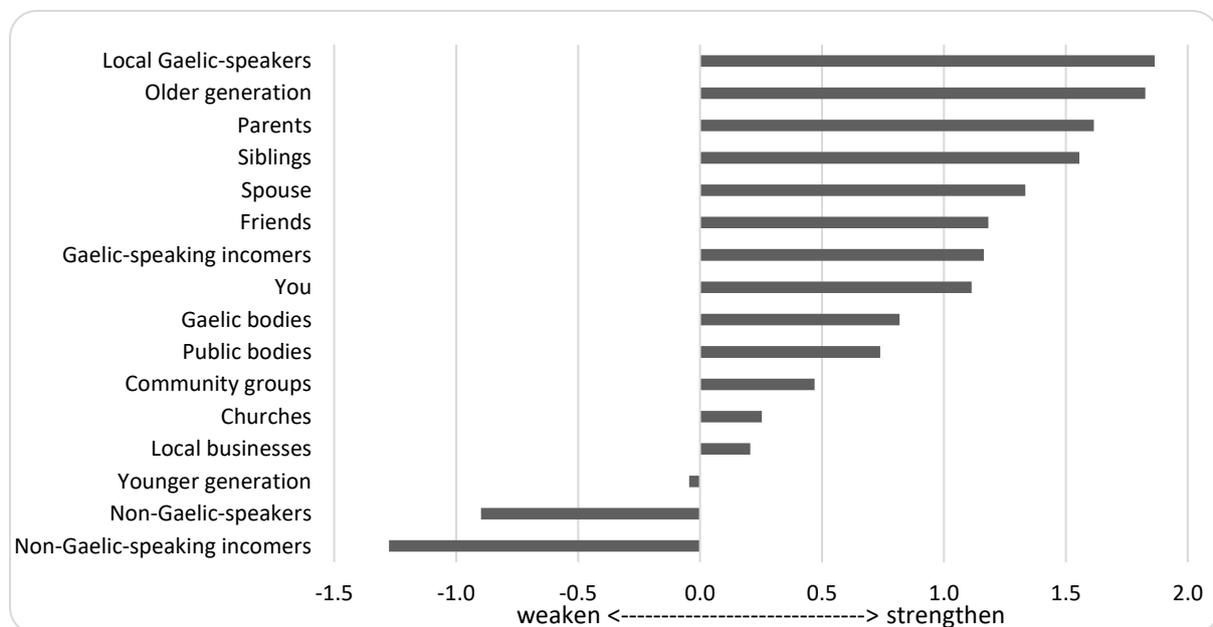


Figure A5.20 Average score values relating to whether respondents felt that the individuals or groups strengthened or weakened Gaelic, Scalpay (N = 70)

Most of the items queried were felt to strengthen Gaelic to some degree. *Local Gaelic speakers* (1.86) and the *Older generation* (1.83) were viewed as greatly strengthening Gaelic, slightly ahead of family members and friends. The individual respondent ('You') was self-assessed as positively contributing but less than other groups. While also viewed as contributing positively, *Gaelic bodies*, *Public bodies*, *Community groups*, *Churches* and *Local businesses* were ranked lower. Indeed, this lower ranking for *Churches* and *Local businesses* corresponds to the lower Gaelic use attributed by respondents to church, social events, shops and workplace and displayed in Figure A5.15.

Interestingly, the *Younger generation* were, marginally, viewed negatively (-0.04): this must be read against the age profile of Scalpay which includes a high proportion of the older generation.

The *Younger Generation* are overwhelmingly non-Gaelic speakers in practice. Yet they are viewed to weaken Gaelic far less than the queried group of *Non-Gaelic speakers*. This is another instance of reality in practice diverging from ethnolinguistic perception. The people viewed most negatively were those who did not speak Gaelic, whether from a local or non-local background.

There are three clear implications from these results:

- a) non-Gaelic speakers are regarded as impacting negatively on Gaelic
- b) the younger generation is perceived as not contributing positively to Gaelic
- c) communal groups and formal bodies, including local businesses are viewed as strengthening Gaelic less than less formal groups and individuals. This is perhaps related to the tendency among the public to criticise formal entities rather than people's own social group.

A5.5.9 Social initiatives for Gaelic, Scalpay

Scalpay respondents were also asked to specify their level of agreement or disagreement with a number of statements about possible initiatives or commitments which could benefit Gaelic. The percentage results are displayed in Table A5.4 in descending order of those who strongly agree.

Response to statements, Scalpay CSS	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)
Fluent Gaelic-speaking parents should raise their children in Gaelic	75.7	14.3	8.6	1.4	
Gaelic classes should be provided for anyone living in the Gaelic areas of the Western Isles	67.1	30.0	2.9		
Economic development that would support the Gaelic language in the Western Isles should be encouraged	57.1	34.3	5.7	2.9	
Everyone living in the Gaelic communities of the Western Isles should have good Gaelic	41.4	28.6	14.3	10.0	5.7
Every public servant working in the Gaelic communities of the Western Isles should speak Gaelic	38.6	28.6	10.0	20.0	2.9
Community groups should be enabled to conduct their activities through Gaelic	38.6	41.4	14.3	5.7	
All school teachers in the area should teach through Gaelic-medium	35.7	22.9	17.1	20.0	4.3
Youth clubs, etc., should be run through Gaelic only	21.4	17.1	22.9	28.6	10.0

Table A5.4 Percentage level of agreement or disagreement with statements about Gaelic, Scalpay (N = 70)

Over three-quarters of respondents *Strongly agree* that Gaelic-speaking parents should raise their own children through the medium of Gaelic, with 90% stating they either *Agree* or *Strongly agree* with this statement. The *Strongly agree* option was the most commonly-chosen statement apart from two instances: a slightly higher percentage only *Agree* with the statement that community groups should be enabled to carry out their activities in Gaelic.

Further, in only one situation did a greater percentage of people *Disagree* with a statement than *Agree*. 28.6% of people *Disagree*, comprising 38.6% of respondents when combined with *Strongly disagree*, that youth clubs and similar organisations should be run through Gaelic only, compared to 38.5% who *Strongly Agree*. The weaker accordance with this statement could possibly reflect both the level of divergence from existing language practice in this social domain and a natural reticence to consent to an undertaking which could be considered as an imposition on the young. Either way, the reticence or resistance to such a suggestion demonstrates the restraints involved in proposing initiatives that would promote the socialisation of Gaelic in social domains pertinent to the young.

In contrast to the aspiration for Gaelic-speaking parents (i.e. adults) to speak Gaelic to their children, local Gaelic-medium teaching provision and Gaelic in youth clubs attracts much less support.

There is a considerable gap between aspiration and practice: 75.7% indicate that fluent parents should raise children in Gaelic, but 13.4% (Figure A5.15) of respondents actually speak *Mainly or always in Gaelic* to primary school-age children.

A5.5.10 What would you personally be willing to do to ensure that the Western Isles remains a Gaelic-speaking area?, Scalpay

The survey asked what participants would be willing to do personally to help Gaelic in their region in the future. Figure A5.21 displays the percentage results from the list of ten options queried.

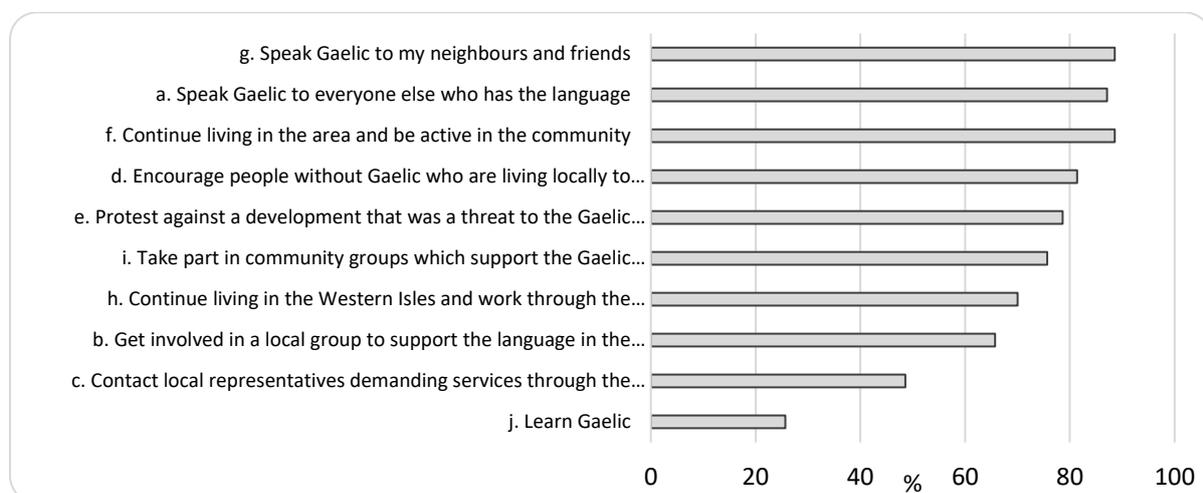


Figure A5.21 Percentage responses to the multi-choice question 'What would you personally be willing to do to ensure that the Western Isles remains a Gaelic-speaking area?', Scalpay (N = 70)

Again, as with the all districts aggregation (Section A5.4), the greater numbers of positive responses were made to statements involving a willingness to speak Gaelic to various individuals in the community, while the fewest positive responses concern being willing to *Learn Gaelic* (25.7%), which is not surprising given the high levels of Gaelic fluency on Scalpay.

The actual percentage values for corresponding items are:

- 88.6% *Continue living in the area and be active in the community*
- 88.6% *Speak Gaelic to neighbours and friends*
- 87.1% *Speak Gaelic to everyone else who has the language*
- 81.4% *Encourage people without Gaelic who are living locally to learn the language*
- 70% *Continue living in the Western Isles and work through the medium of Gaelic*

Nevertheless, although the differences in percentages and numbers of responses were not considerable (eight of the 10 statements attracted favourability ratings of between 65% and 89% among respondents), the least supported statements were those which involved activism or campaigning:

- 78.6% *Protest against development that was a threat to the Gaelic language*
- 75.7% *would Take part in community groups which support the Gaelic language*
- 65.7% *Get involved in a local group to support the language in the area*
- 48.6% *Contact local representatives demanding services through the medium of Gaelic*

These responses indicate a greater affinity with language identity as a 'natural' aspect of social interaction within the community, prioritising its intimate domains of practice and being less enthusiastic about promoting innovative minority-language identity politics (see discussion in 5.8.1.1).