

A5.7 Community Sociolinguistic Survey: Eriskay

The following section discusses the disaggregated sociolinguistic survey findings for Eriskay.

A5.7.1 Background data

Figure A5.33 compares the percentage of respondents for the various age cohorts in the 2011 Census, the Speaker Typology Survey (STS) in Chapter 6), and the Community Sociolinguistic Survey (CSS) in Eriskay. In the Scottish Census, Eriskay is part of the South Uist reporting area for the Census.

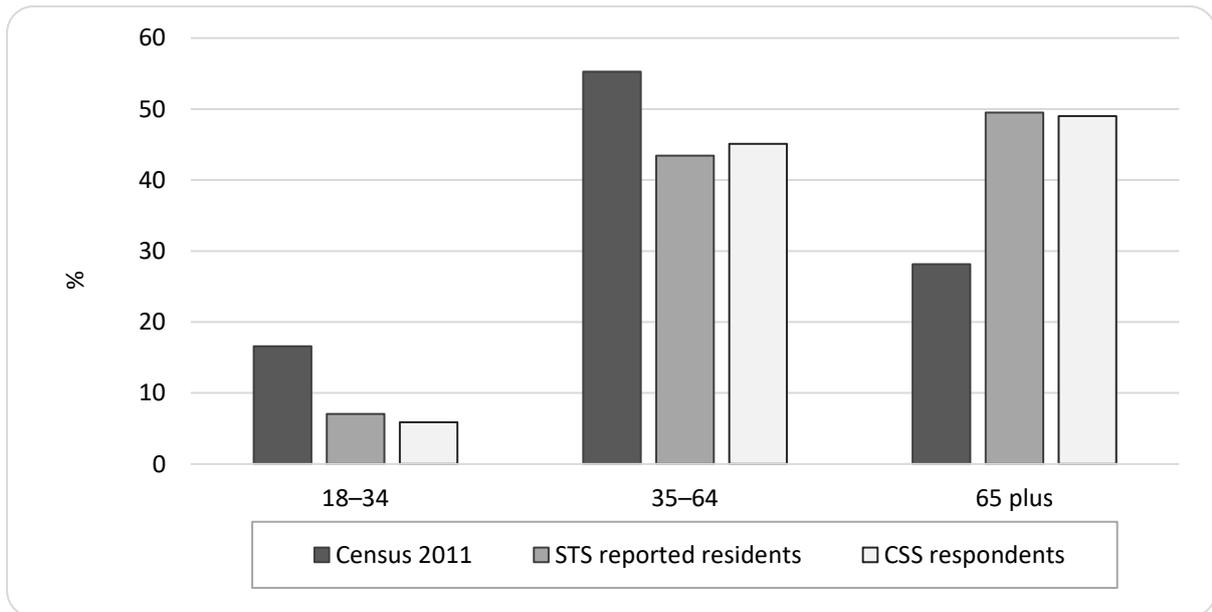


Figure A5.33 Percentage age profile of 2011 Census (South Uist), of reported residents in STS and CSS, Eriskay (Ns = 807, 99, 51)

There was a higher proportion of respondents in the two small-district surveys (STS and CSS) in the over-65 age cohort as compared to the same age cohort in the 2011 Census (49% in CSS as opposed to 28.1% in Census). And conversely, fewer in both the 18-34 (5.9% in CSS) and 35-64 age ranges (45.1% in CSS) in comparison to the Census which had 16.6% and 55.3% in the respective cohorts.

A5.7.1.1 Gaelic ability by age

Figure A5.34 displays a cross-reference for ability in spoken Gaelic by age group for respondents in Eriskay.

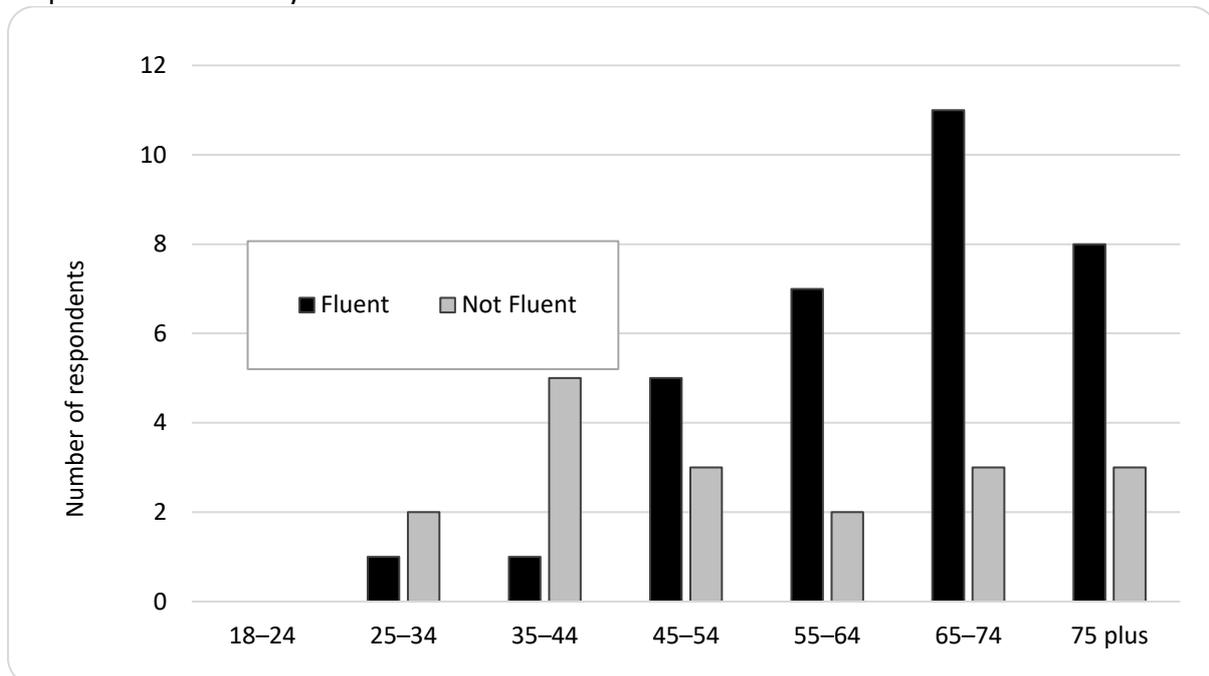


Figure A5.34 Gaelic ability by age group, Eriskay (N = 51)

Table A5.7 below pertains to the key data on Gaelic ability by age group in Eriskay.

Number of respondents	Fluent	Not Fluent
18-24	0	0
25-34	1	2
35-44	1	5
45-54	5	3
55-64	7	2
65-74	11	3
75 plus	8	3
Total	33	18

Table A5.7 Gaelic ability by age group, Eriskay (N = 51)

The data for Gaelic ability by age group for Eriskay respondents indicates a predominance of Gaelic fluency among older age cohorts. This switches to a majority of respondents in cohorts under 44 reporting as being fluent in English but not in Gaelic.

A5.7.2 Respondent background and Gaelic fluency, Eriskay

Figure A5.35 from the Eriskay survey compares the respondents' background and fluency in Gaelic.

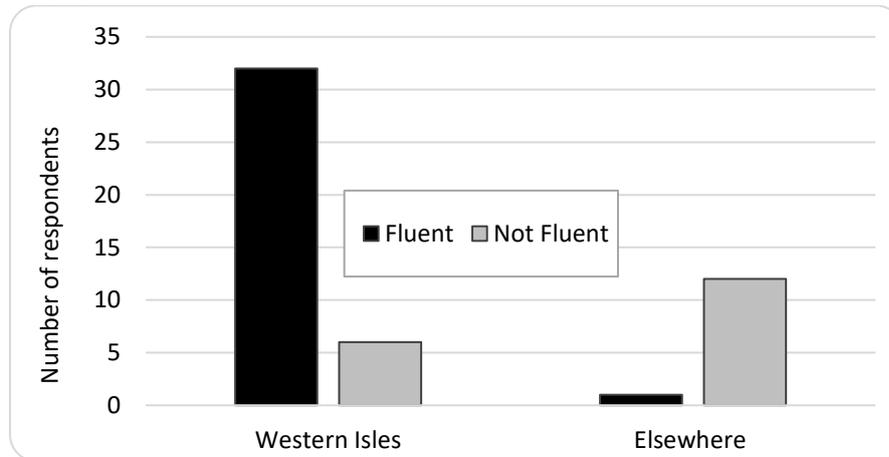


Figure A5.35 Respondents' background compared with Gaelic fluency, Eriskay (N = 51)

Overwhelmingly, the majority of those Eriskay respondents who were *From the Western Isles* were fluent Gaelic speakers (84.2%). Only 7.7% (1 person) of respondents from *Elsewhere* indicated that they were fluent Gaelic speakers. Overall, 64.7% of Eriskay respondents self-reported as fluent Gaelic speakers.

A5.7.3 Linguistic background and Gaelic use, Eriskay

The linguistic background of respondents and their Gaelic fluency and use is displayed in Figure A5.36.

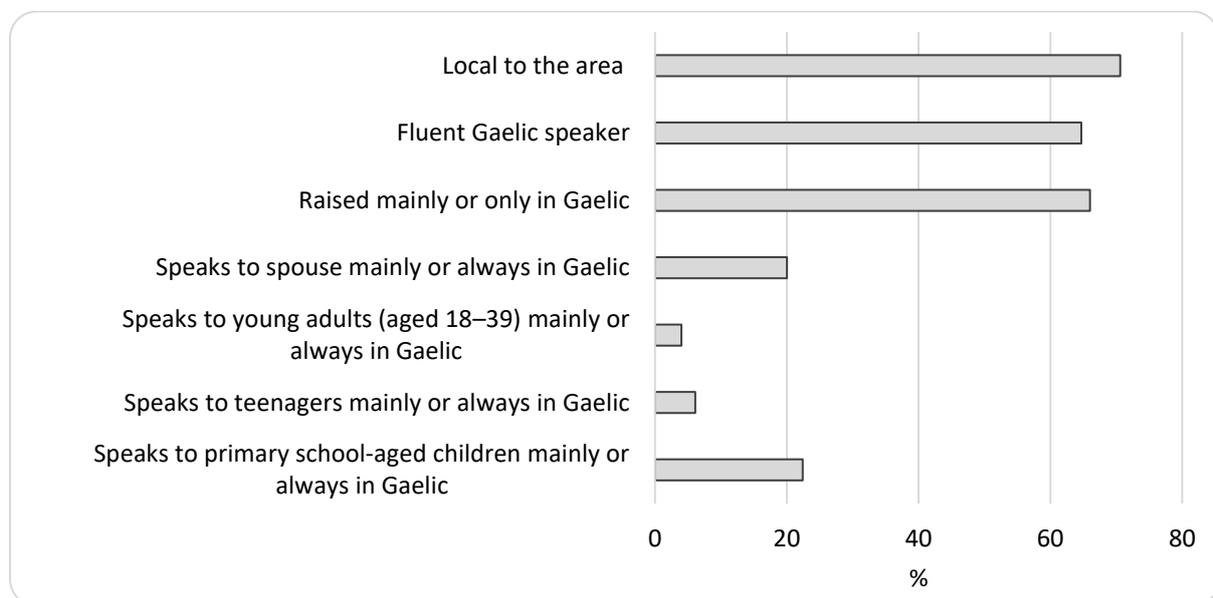


Figure A5.36 Respondents' linguistic background and Gaelic use, Eriskay (N = 51)

These comparisons in Eriskay more closely reflect the results from Scalpay than those from Grimsay. The majority of respondents (70.6%) in Eriskay were *Local to the area*, with almost two-thirds having been raised *Mainly or only in Gaelic*, and marginally fewer (64.7%) being a *Fluent Gaelic speaker*. These data reflect the 2011 Census analysis which indicated that 73% of Eriskay residents had an ability in Gaelic.

A5.7.4 Language use in different social situations, Eriskay

Figure A5.37 displays the respondents' language use in different social situations.

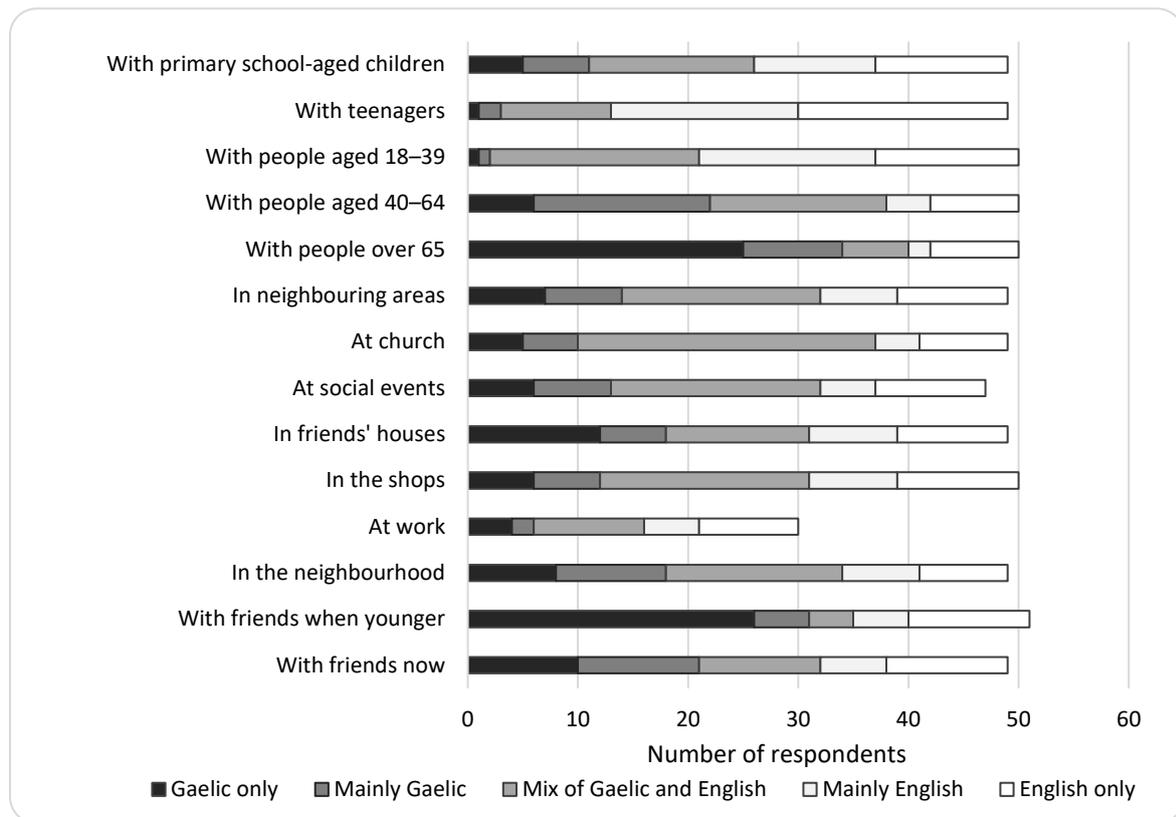


Figure A5.37 Language used by respondents in a variety of social situations, Eriskay (N = 51)

As in the other Study Districts, the *Gaelic only* response to various contexts relates most commonly to the over-65 age range (50%), and to language use with *Friends when younger* (51%). However, *Gaelic only* is not much used with either *Primary school-aged children* (10.2%) or with *Teenagers* (2%), and only marginally increases when the data from the *Mainly Gaelic* response is added. This shows that Gaelic is no longer spoken across generations in Eriskay to any considerable degree.

The results indicate that of the three Study Districts, Eriskay has the greatest loss when comparing *Gaelic only* use *With friends now* against *With friends when younger*, indicating the shift from Gaelic to English is being more actively or rapidly applied intragenerationally than in other two Study Districts.

There is a clear discrepancy recorded for Eriskay between the level of Gaelic fluency and Gaelic use.

A5.7.5 Identity of Gael in Eriskay

The responses in Eriskay related to issues of identity are presented in this section.

A5.7.5.1 Do you consider yourself to be a Gael?, Eriskay

A significant majority of Eriskay respondents see themselves as *Gaels*: 87.8% identified as *Gaels*, with 8.2% indicating that they would not describe themselves with this identity marker and another 4.1% of the Eriskay respondents feeling the question did not apply to them.

A5.7.5.2 How would you describe your identity?, Eriskay

Eriskay respondents stated which identity, or identities, applied to them among the four options as shown in percentages in Figure A5.38.

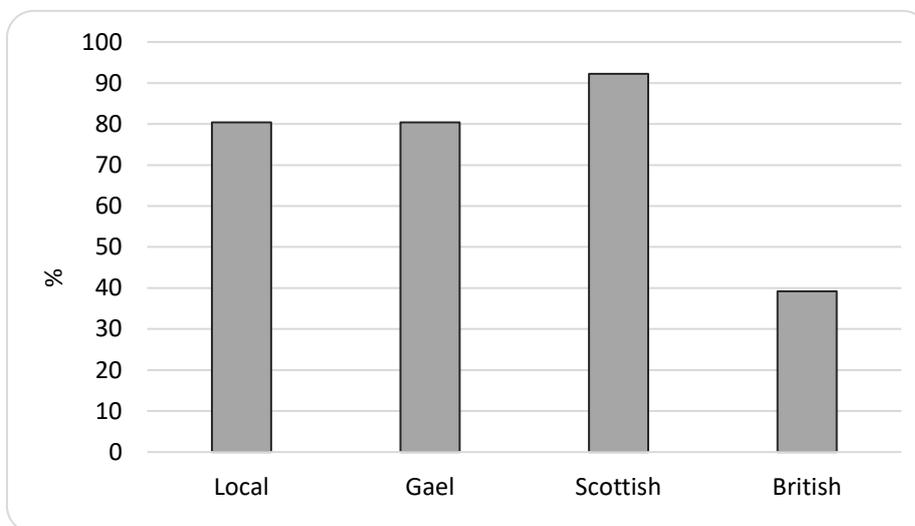


Figure A5.38 Respondents' multiple choice identity, Eriskay (N = 50)

The most commonly selected identity ascription is *Scottish* (92.2%), followed by *Gael* and *Local* (both 80.4%). A considerably smaller proportion (39.2%) select *British* identity in comparison to the other choices than in Scalpay or Grimsay. The high range of percentages expressed for *Scottish*, *Gael* and *Local* identities indicates adherence with multiple identities in these ascriptions. Only one respondent self-identifies as *Gael* only; two respondents identify as *Local* only; three respondents identify as *Scottish* only. *British* as a single identity is not selected by any respondent. 14 respondents are recorded as choosing all four identities together but no-one, as in Scalpay, claims to be both a *Gael* and a *Local*.

A5.7.5.3 People considered to be Gaels, Eriskay

As in the other two islands, respondents in Eriskay were asked to agree or disagree as to whether they considered certain categories of people to be Gaels. The percentage results are shown in Figure A5.39.

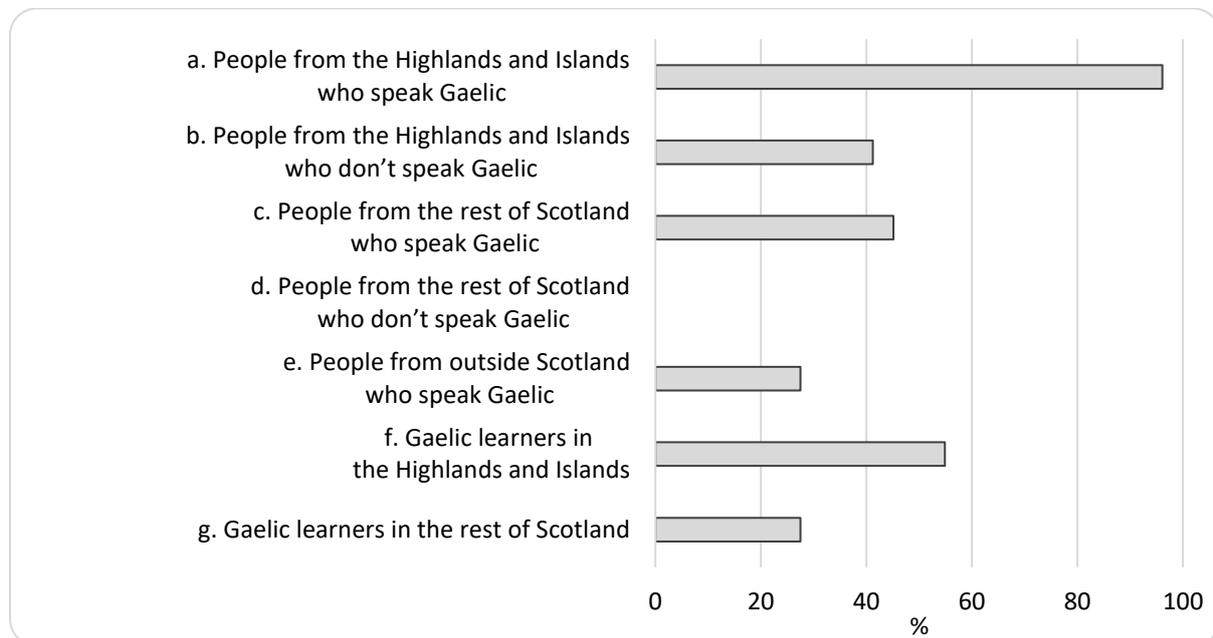


Figure A5.39 Perceptions of Gaels, various categorisations, Eriskay (N = 51)

As in the other two Study Districts, over 90% of responses were in agreement that *People from the Highlands and Islands who speak Gaelic* are Gaels, with *Gaelic learners in the Highlands and Islands* also viewed as Gaels by a small majority of respondents in Eriskay. The remaining statements all met with an agreement rate of lower than 50%.

No respondent agrees with the statement that *People from the rest of Scotland who don't speak Gaelic* are Gaels. In other words, there is a strong perceived link between Gaelic speaking and geographic origin.

A5.7.6 Reasons for being in favour of Gaelic, Eriskay

All 51 of the respondents to the CSS for Eriskay were asked to indicate whether they were in favour of Gaelic or not. Respondents record either *Strongly in favour* of Gaelic (40 respondents, 78.4%) or *In favour* of Gaelic (11 respondents, 21.6%). No respondent is unfavourable to the language, nor does any respondent adopt a neutral or indifferent position.

Eriskay respondents were then also asked to indicate agreement or not with a list of multiple-response statements, designed to gauge the reason for their positive feeling towards Gaelic.

Figure A5.40 shows the results.

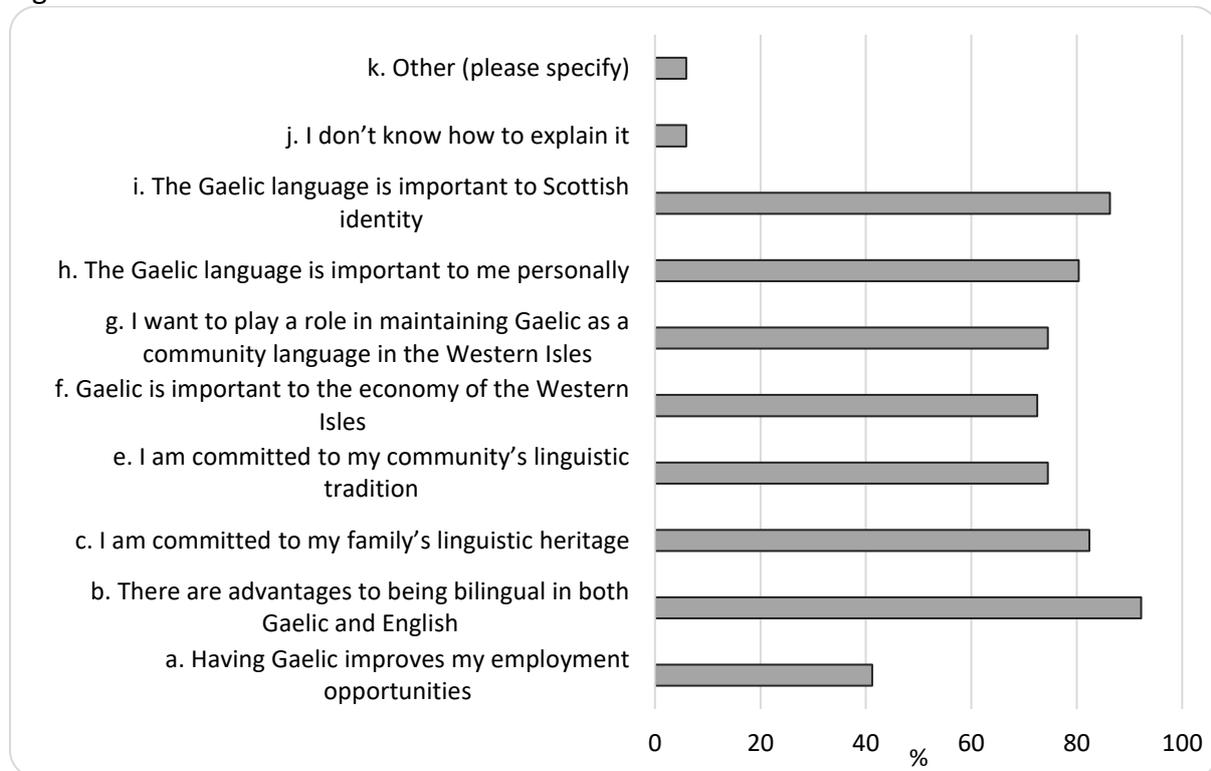


Figure A5.40 Responses to the multi-choice question 'If you are in favour of Gaelic, why is this?' Eriskay (N = 51)

Similar to the other two islands, the response concerning the advantages of bilingualism (92%) was the reason selected by most respondents for being in favour of Gaelic, attracting slightly more agreement than statements regarding identity (national, local and familial at 86%, 75% and 82% respectively). The two least-commonly chosen statements refer to instrumental reasons of economic benefit (73%) and employment opportunities (41%).

A5.7.7 Feelings about future events related to Gaelic, Eriskay

Figure A5.41 indicates the respondents' feelings in Eriskay about possible negative outcomes or eventualities for Gaelic.

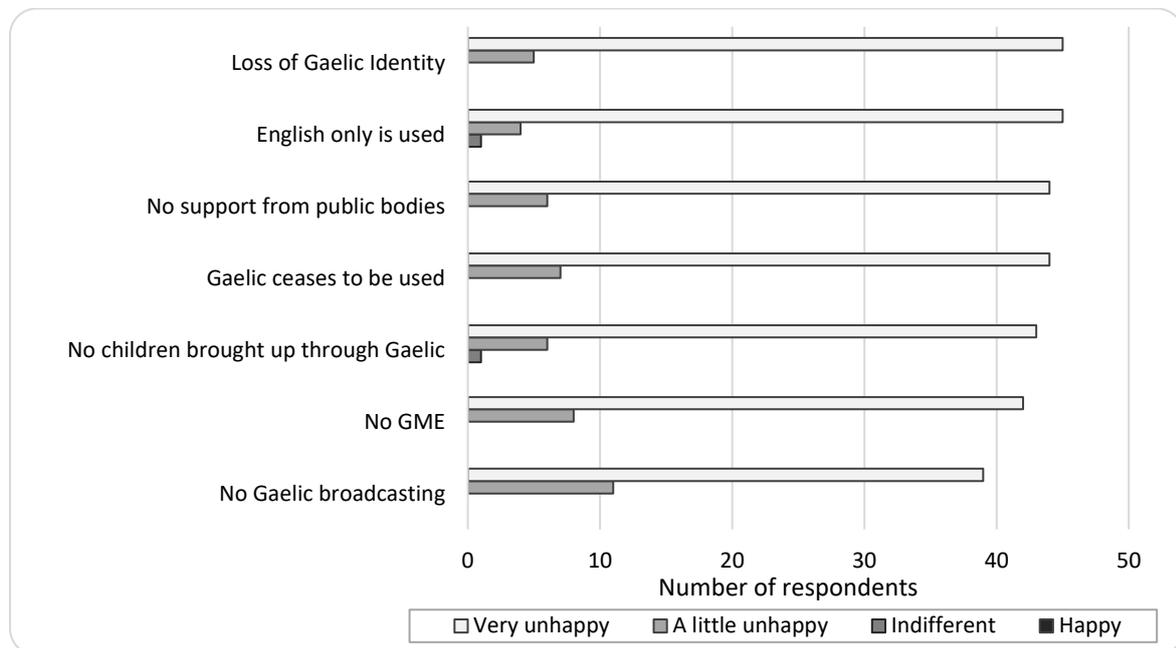


Figure A5.41 Responses to questions about possible outcomes which could affect future of the Gaelic language, Eriskay (N = 51)

Results in various options clearly indicate strong dissatisfaction with potential negative outcomes for Gaelic. *Loss of Gaelic identity* and *English only* being spoken in future would result in 90% of respondents claiming as being *Very unhappy* if that occurred. 88% would be *Very unhappy* if there were to be *No support from public bodies*, and 84% would be *Very unhappy* if there would be *No GME* in future, and 86% would be similarly dissatisfied if *No children were brought up in Gaelic*.

The gap between statements that could be said to be emotional (indications of general demise) and those that can be read as instrumental (indications of demise in specific contexts) is less pronounced than in the other two survey districts. For example, across the seven statements offered those who indicate *Very unhappy* range between 78% and 90% of respondents for Eriskay, while in Scalpay the *Very unhappy* spread is between 75.7% and 91.4%, and in Grimsay between 63.2% and 86.2%.

For Eriskay, the gap between expressed future unhappiness and actual active participation in demise appears striking.

A5.7.8 Individuals and groups felt to strengthen or weaken Gaelic, Eriskay

Eriskay respondents were then asked to assess to what extent different groups or individuals impacted positively or negatively on the situation of Gaelic in the community, as shown in Figure A5.42.

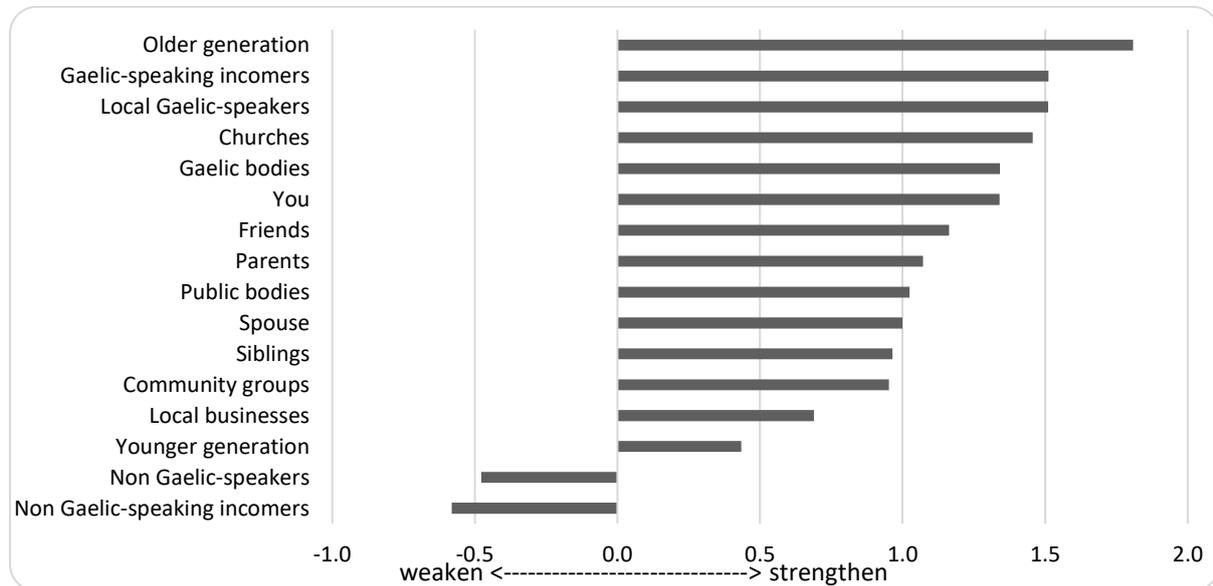


Figure A5.42 Average score values relating to whether respondents felt that the individuals or groups strengthened or weakened Gaelic, Eriskay (N = 50)

Non-Gaelic speakers and *Non-Gaelic speaking incomers* to the Study District were the only groups ranked negatively, while the *Younger generation*, although scoring positively, were the next lowest-ranked group. The *Older generation* were overwhelmingly seen in the most positive light, just ahead of *Gaelic-speaking incomers* and *Local Gaelic speakers*.

A5.7.9 Social initiatives for Gaelic, Eriskay

Respondents in Eriskay were asked to rank their levels of agreement with a range of possible initiatives or commitments in support of Gaelic, with percentage results displayed in Table A5.8.

Response to statements, Grimsay CSS	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)
Fluent Gaelic-speaking parents should raise their children in Gaelic	72.5	19.6	7.8		
Gaelic classes should be provided for anyone living in the Gaelic areas of the Western Isles	68.0	28.0	4.0		
Economic development that would support the Gaelic language in the Western Isles should be encouraged	58.0	36.0	6.0		
Everyone living in the Gaelic communities of the Western Isles should have good Gaelic	48.0	24.0	8.0	18.0	2.0
Community groups should be enabled to conduct their activities through Gaelic	40.0	34.0	18.0	8.0	
Every public servant working in the Gaelic communities of the Western Isles should speak Gaelic	36.0	30.0	22.0	8.0	4.0
All school teachers in the area should teach through Gaelic-medium	32.7	22.4	32.7	12.2	
Youth clubs, etc., should be run through Gaelic only	20.0	14.0	42.0	22.0	2.0

Table A5.8 Respondents' level of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements about Gaelic, Eriskay (Ns = 51, 50, 50, 50, 50, 50, 49, 50)

As in the other two islands, the statement that *Youth clubs, etc., should be run through Gaelic only* was the least palatable idea. Relatively strong disagreement with Gaelic-only options in youth provision across all three islands may reflect the potential for conflict in specific targeted policies in support of Gaelic in the social domains where its use is weak, i.e. where interventions are most urgent. However, in Eriskay the level of active disagreement among respondents with this statement was 24%, with 42% of respondents adopting a neutral stance.

In general, the Eriskay respondents were in majority agreement with all statements except for the youth club statement. Three statements received no disagreement: *Fluent Gaelic-speaking parents should raise their children in Gaelic*; *Gaelic classes should be provided for anyone living in the Gaelic areas of the Western Isles*; *Economic development that would support the Gaelic language in the Western Isles should be encouraged*.

A high level of agreement was expressed for the parental statement: 72.5% of respondents *Strongly agree*, and 92.1% at least *Agree*, that *Fluent Gaelic-speaking parents should raise their children in Gaelic*. However, it is noteworthy that such responses here do not tally with indications of current practice.

A5.7.10 What would you personally be willing to do to ensure that the Western Isles remains a Gaelic-speaking area?, Eriskay

Eriskay respondents were asked to state their level of agreement in relation to a list of envisaged personal commitments to support Gaelic. Figure A5.43 displays the percentage results.

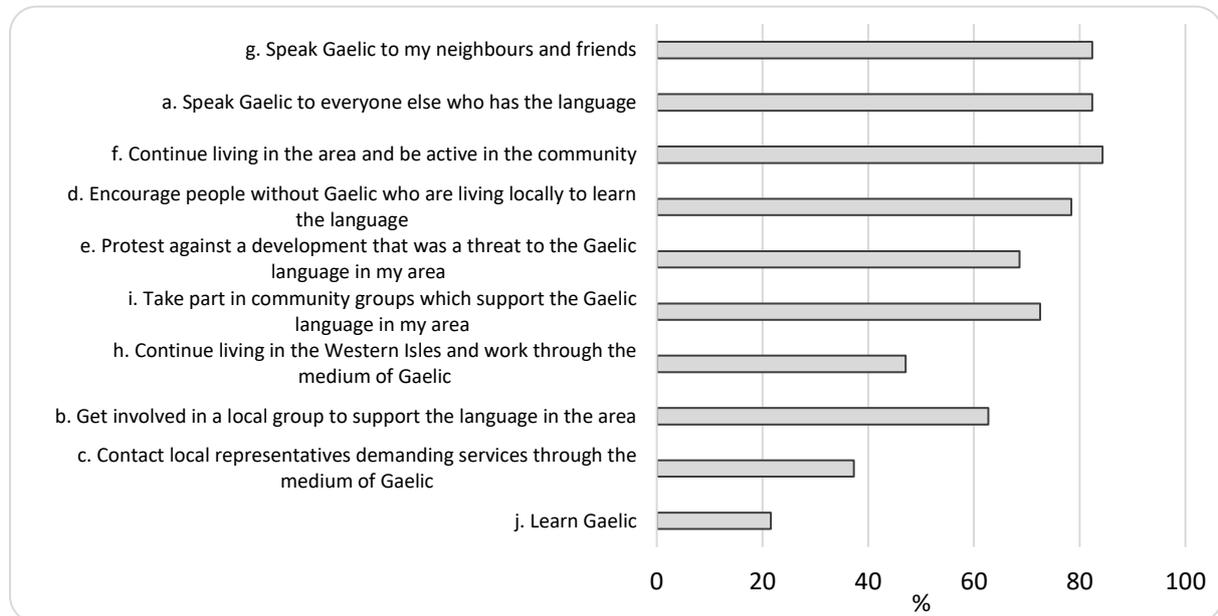


Figure A5.43 Percentage responses to the multi-choice question ‘What would you personally be willing to do to ensure that the Western Isles remains a Gaelic-speaking area?’, Eriskay (N = 51)

Broadly following patterns seen in Scalpay (A5.5.10) and Grimsay (A5.6.10), the most-commonly chosen options were those which required possibly lower levels of personal engagement, or options which may fit with existing behaviours (*Continue living in the area and be active in the community* (84.3%), *Speak Gaelic to neighbours and friends* (82.4%) or *Speak Gaelic to everyone else who has the language* (82.4%)) rather than taking a visible, proactive stance towards campaigning. 37.3% of respondents would *Contact local representatives demanding services through the medium of Gaelic*.

Figure A5.33 (2011 Census data for South Uist and Eriskay), however, indicates that agreement with the statements above and current practice are not on an even footing.

Less than a quarter of respondents said that they would *Learn Gaelic* which may relate to high levels of extant Gaelic ability in the older population – 64.7% of all Eriskay respondents indicate fluency, with 76.5% of those aged 55 and older stating that they are fluent. In theory, the possible learner cohort could be just over a third of all respondents, but if fewer than a quarter indicate a willingness to learn, then there is a cohort for whom learning Gaelic is not a priority.