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Public Attitudes to Gaelic in Scotland

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Introduction

Gaelic has become more prominent in Scotland in recent decades, especially since the Scottish Parliament passed the Gaelic Language Act in 2005. The language has been increasingly used in broadcasting, schools, and public affairs. But there is little research evidence about the attitudes of people in Scotland to Gaelic. A representative sample of adults in Scotland was thus asked their views as part of the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey in 2012. This Briefing summarises the results.

Sample

The Scottish Social Attitudes Survey (SSA) is run annually by ScotCen Social Research, with the aim of collecting objective data about public attitudes on issues relevant to Scotland. In 2012, 1,229 randomly selected people aged 18+ were interviewed. The sample was representative of Scotland in terms of region and socio-economic characteristics of the neighbourhood. The data were also weighted to make results match the population by sex and age.

Linguistic competence of the sample

Chart 1 shows the Gaelic linguistic competence of the achieved sample. 15% reported being able to speak at least the odd word of Gaelic, and 25% were able to understand at least the odd word. 0.5% of our sample were fluent speakers of Gaelic.

Beachdan a' Phobaill air a' Ghàidhlig ann an Alba

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Ro-ràdh

Tha a' Ghàidhlig air a bhith a' fàs nas follaisiche ann an Alba airson grunn bhliadhnaichean a-nis, gu h-àraidh bhon ghabh Pàrlamaid na h-Alba ri Achd na Gàidhlig ann an 2005. Tha cleachdadh a' chànain air sìor dhol am meud ann an craoladh, anns na sgoiltean agus ann an cùisean poblach. Ach chan eil ach glè bheag fianais bho rannsachadh air beachdan dhaoine a thaobh na Gàidhlig. Air an adhbhar sin, chaidh ceistean a chur air sampall riochdachail de dh'ìnbhich an Alba air na beachdan aca mu dheidhinn na Gàidhlig, mar phàirt den t-Suirbhidh Albannach air Beachdan Sòisealta 2012. Tha am Brath-ullachaidh seo a' toirt geàrr-chunntas air toraidhean an rannsachaidh.

Sampall

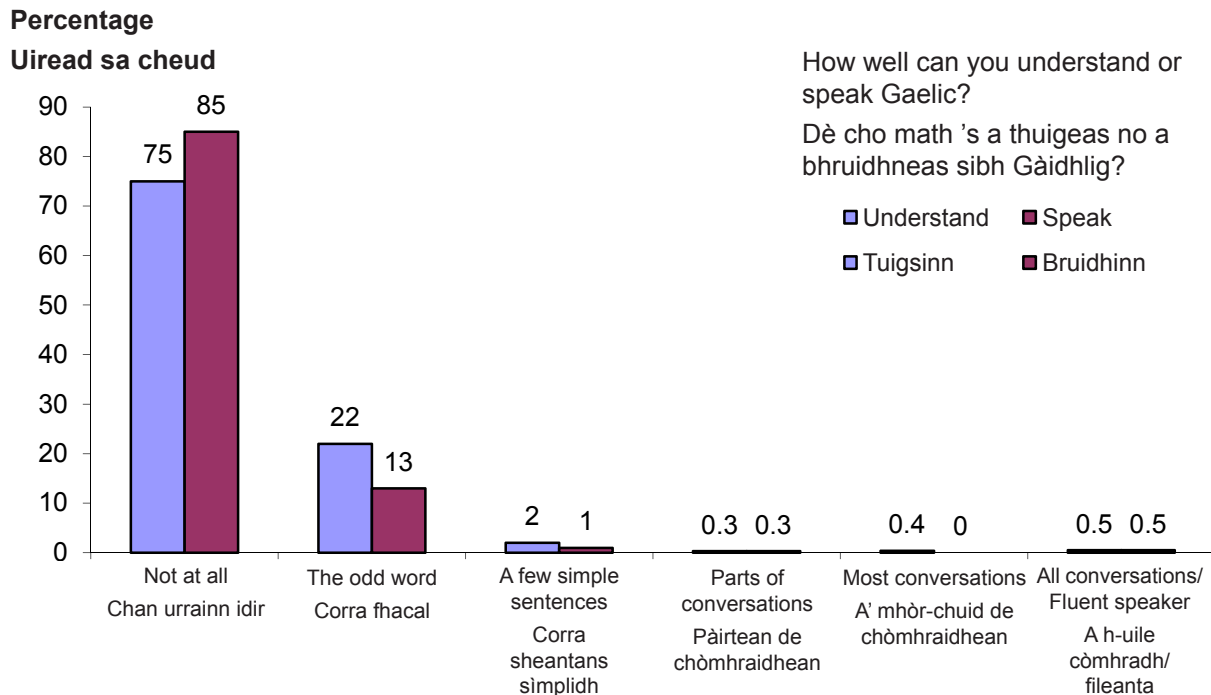
Tha an Suirbhidh Albannach air Beachdan Sòisealta air a ruith gach bliadhna le Rannsachadh Sòisealta ScotCen, airson fiosrachadh a chruinneachadh ann an dòigh neo-thaobhach mu bheachdan a' phobaill air cùisean a bhuineas ri Alba. Ann an 2012, chaidh agallamhan a dhèanamh le 1,229 neach aois 18+ a bha air an taghadh air thuaiream. Bha an sampall na riochdachadh air Alba a thaobh roinnean na dùthcha agus feartan sòisio-eaconamach sgìre. Chaidh an dàta a chothromachadh cuideachd gus am biodh e a rèir an t-sluaigh a thaobh gnè is aois.

Comasan cànan an t-sampall

Tha Cairt 1 a' sealltainn comasan Gàidhlig an t-sampall a fhuaras. Thuir 15% gum b' urrainn dhaibh co-dhiù corra fhacal Gàidhlig a bhruidhinn agus bha 25% a b' urrainn co-dhiù corra fhacal a thuigsinn. Bha 0.5% den t-sampall fileanta sa Ghàidhlig.

Chart 1: Gaelic competence

Cairt 1: Comas sa Ghàidhlig



Exposure to Gaelic in the sample

Respondents were asked about their exposure to Gaelic in their past and present, and their preferences about this in the future. 16% of people reported that they had heard Gaelic in the past as a child, either at home or amongst their wider family or community. Respondents were asked whether they currently heard Gaelic spoken in their home or community. Only 4% of the sample had heard Gaelic spoken in their home by family members or visitors in the last 12 months, compared to 70% who had heard Gaelic in their homes by means of the media – whether on television or on radio. A similar contrast existed for the community context, with 12% of the sample reporting having heard Gaelic spoken in a public place (for example the street or a shop) in the last 12 months, and 58% of the sample reporting having seen Gaelic on road signs or on other public signs. Such results show the impact of public sector interventions to support the Gaelic language, with the media providing exposure to Gaelic in the home, and road signs and other public signs doing so in the community.

Mar a tha a' Ghàidhlig a' buntainn ri daoine anns an t-sampall

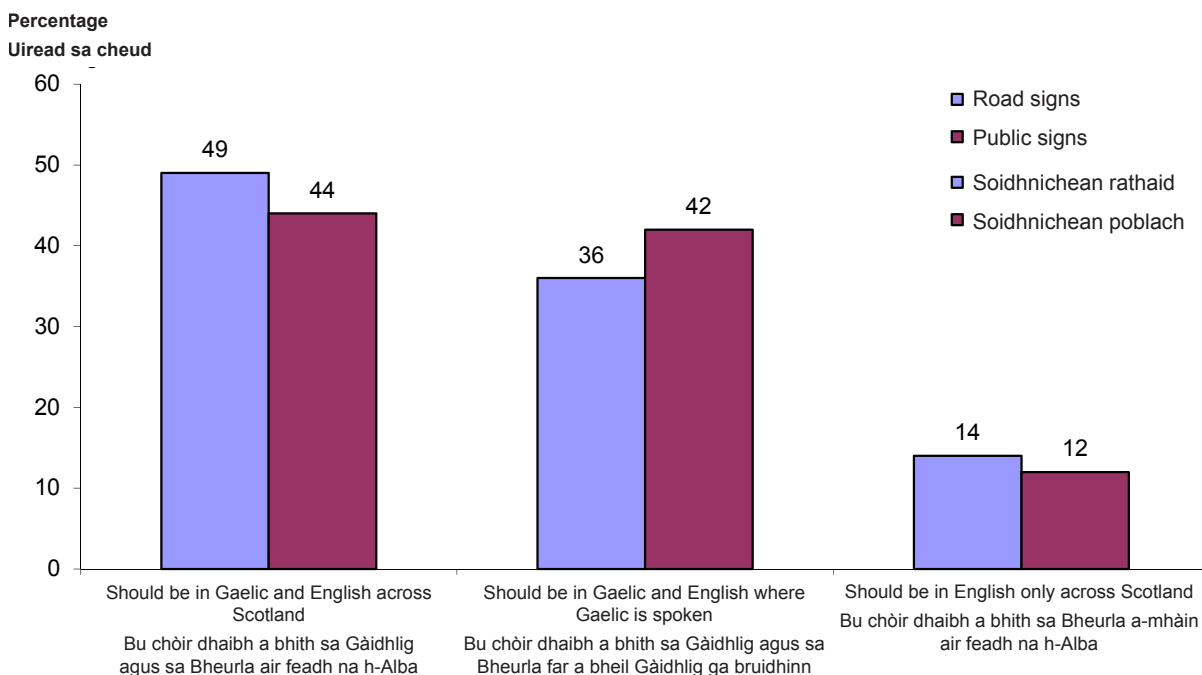
Chaidh faighneachd do luchd-freagairt mun uiread a tha 's a bha iad an lùib na Gàidhlig agus mun uiread a tha iad airson a bhith na lùib san àm ri teachd. Thuir 16% de dhaoine gu robh iad air Gàidhlig a chluinntinn nuair a bha iad nan leanabh, aig an taigh no san teaghlach nas fhaide a-muigh no sa choimhearsnachd. Chaidh faighneachd dhaibh an robh iad a' cluinntinn Gàidhlig ga bruidhinn san dachaigh no sa choimhearsnachd san latha a th' ann. Cha robh ach 4% den t-sampall a bha air Gàidhlig a chluinntinn san dachaigh aca le muinntir an teaghlach no aighean anns na 12 mìos a chaidh seachad, an taca ri 70% a chuala i anns na meadhanan – air telebhisean no rèidio. Bha an aon seòrsa eadar-dhealachaidh ri fhaicinn sa choimhearsnachd, le 12% den t-sampall a bha air Gàidhlig a chluinntinn ann an àite poblach (air an t-sràid no ann am bùth, mar eisimpleir) anns na 12 mìos a chaidh seachad, agus 58% den t-sampall a chunnaic Gàidhlig air sanasan rathaid no soidhnichean poblach eile. Tha na freagairtean seo a' sealltainn buaidh iomairtean san roinn phoblach gus taic a thoirt don Ghàidhlig, leis na meadhanan a' cur na Gàidhlig fa-near dhaoine san dachaigh agus le soidhnichean rathaid agus soidhnichean poblach eile a' dèanamh seo anns a' choimhearsnachd.

People in Scotland were well-disposed to the greater public visibility of Gaelic in the future, as Chart 2 shows. More than 4 out of 5 people were in favour of bilingual road signs or other public signs in areas in which Gaelic is spoken, with around half of people wishing road and public signs to be bilingual throughout Scotland. One in 7 people believed that road signs and public signs should be in English only across Scotland.

Tha deagh ghean aig daoine ann an Alba ris a' Ghàidhlig a bhith a' nochdadh ann an àiteachan poblach san àm ri teachd, mar a chithear ann an Cairt 2. Bha còrr is 4 às gach 5 neach airson soidhnichean dà-chànanach no soidhnichean poblach eile a bhith ann an sgìrean far a bheil Gàidhlig ga bruidhinn, le mu dàrna leth de daoine airson soidhnichean rathaid no soidhnichean poblach eile dà-chànanach fhaicinn air feadh na h-Alba. Bha aon neach às gach seachdnar den bheachd gum bu chòir do soidhnichean rathaid is soidhnichean poblach a bhith sa Bheurla a-mhàin air feadh na h-Alba.

Chart 2: Views about the extent of bilingual signage

Cairt 2: Beachdan air soidhnichean dà-chànanach



Respondents' views of Gaelic and cultural heritage

Respondents were asked to assess the extent to which they believed Gaelic to be important to (i) the cultural heritage of Scotland, (ii) the cultural heritage of the Highlands and Islands and (iii) their own cultural heritage. Chart 3 shows the results. 86% of people regarded Gaelic as being important to the cultural heritage of the Highlands and Islands, and a large majority – 76% of people – also saw the Gaelic language as being an important part of Scottish heritage.

The proportion of people who felt that Gaelic is important to their own heritage was much lower – 24%. Over half (57%) of people who regarded Gaelic as very or fairly important to their own heritage did not understand Gaelic at all. Well over half (70%) of those who regarded Gaelic as very or fairly important to their identity recalled having no exposure to it as a child.

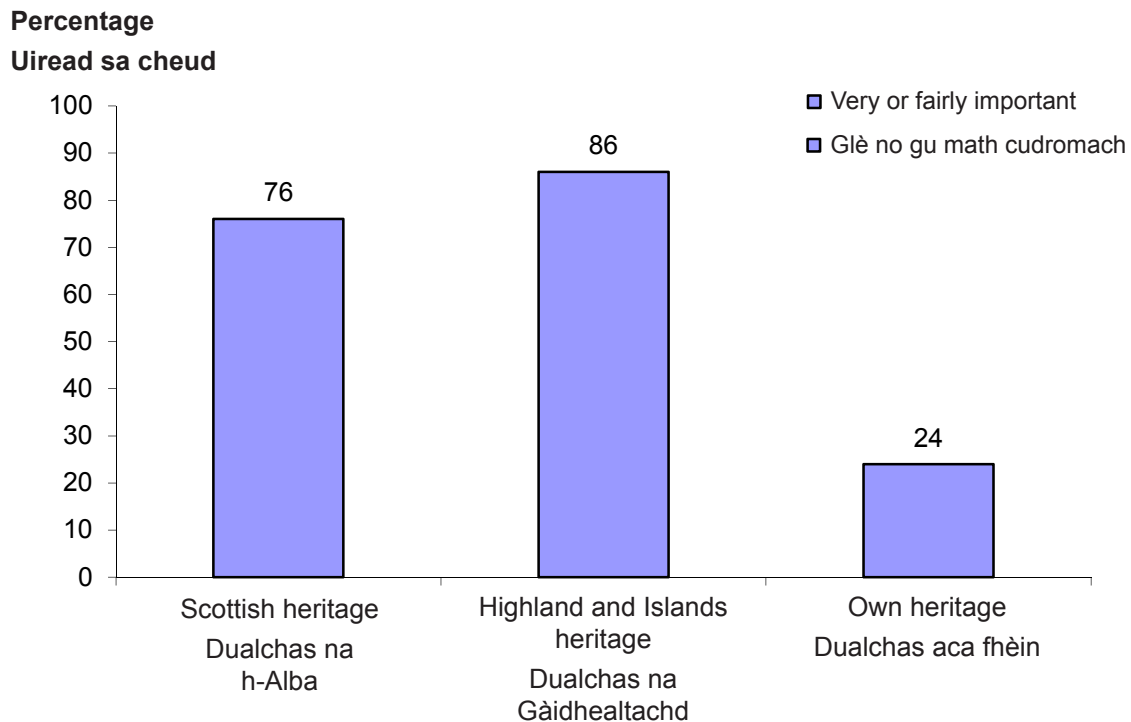
Beachdan luchd-fhreagairt air a' Ghàidhlig agus dualchas cultarach

Chaidh faighneachd don luchd-fhreagairt dè cho cudromach 's a shaoil iad a bha a' Ghàidhlig do (i) dhualchas cultarach na h-Alba, (ii) dualchas cultarach na Gàidhealtachd (iii) an dualchas cultarach aca fhèin. Tha na toraidhean ann an Cairt 3. Shaoil 86% de dhaoine gu robh a' Ghàidhlig cudromach do dhualchas cultarach na Gàidhealtachd, agus bha mòr-chuid mhòr – 76% de dhaoine – cuideachd sa bheachd gu robh i cudromach do dhualchas na h-Alba.

Bha a' cho-roinn de dhaoine a shaoil gu robh a' Ghàidhlig cudromach don dualchas aca fhèin mòran nas isle – 24%. Bha còrr is dàrna leth (57%) de dhaoine a shaoil gu robh a' Ghàidhlig glè chudromach no gu math cudromach don dualchas aca fhèin nach robh a' tuigsinn na Gàidhlig idir. Bha tòrr a bharrachd air dàrna leth (70%) de dhaoine a shaoil gu robh a' Ghàidhlig glè chudromach no gu math cudromach don fhèin-aithne aca nach tàinig an lùib na Gàidhlig idir nuair a bha iad nan leanabh.

Chart 3: Importance of Gaelic to culture heritage

Cairt 3: Cho cudromach 's a tha a' Ghàidhlig do dhualchas cultarach



Gaelic rights Language rights

Respondents were asked a series of questions relating to whether or not Gaelic speakers should have the right to use the language in various social settings. This was asked in relation to six domains:

- dealing with the local council;
- appearing as a witness in a court;
- speaking to a doctor or nurse in the National Health Service (NHS);
- speaking at a public meeting;
- a customer writing to their bank;
- school education.

Chart 4 shows that, for each of these contexts, between 30% and 40% wished Gaelic speakers to have such language rights anywhere in Scotland. Combining these figures with the proportion who were in favour of such language rights only in Gaelic speaking areas, we see that a very clear majority of people favoured such language rights for Gaelic speakers in at least some parts of Scotland. For example, 85% wished Gaelic speakers to have the right to use Gaelic in communication with their Local Council. However, substantial minorities would not grant such rights – as many as 27% in the case of being a witness and in speaking to a nurse or doctor in the NHS.

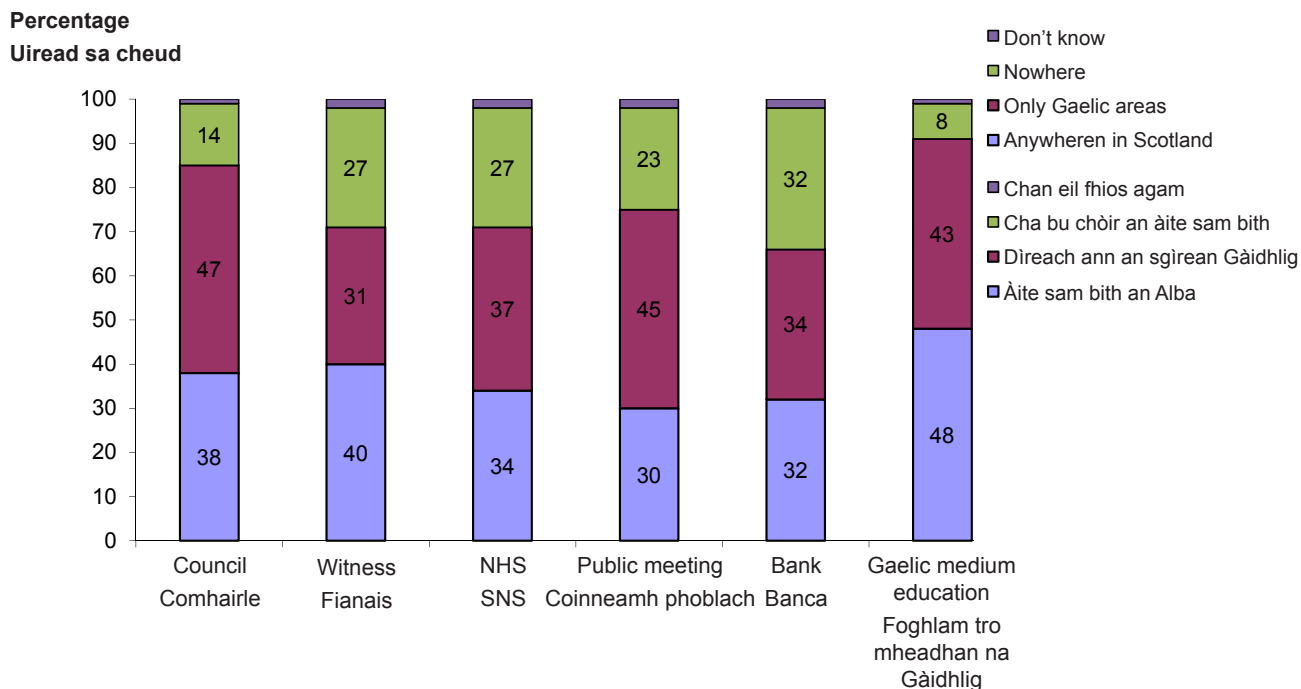
Còirichean sa Ghàidhlig Còirichean cànan

Chaidh ceistean a chur air luchd-freagairt am bu chòir còir a bhith aig luchd-labhairt na Gàidhlig an cànan a chleachdadh ann an grunn shuidheachaidhean sòisealta. Chaidh faighneachd dhaibh mu shia suidheachaidhean:

- dèiligeadh ris a' chomhairle ionadail;
- nochdadh mar neach-fianais ann an cùirt-lagha;
- bruidhinn ri dotair no nurs ann an Seirbheis na Slàinte (SNS);
- bruidhinn aig coinneamh phoblach;
- neach-caitheimh a' sgrìobhadh chun a' bhanca aca;
- foghlam sgoile.

Tha Cairt 4 a' sealltainn gu robh, anns gach suidheachadh, eadar 30% agus 40% airson gum biodh còir aig luchd-labhairt na Gàidhlig air na còirichean cànan sin ann an àite sam bith an Alba. A' cur nan àireamhan sin còmhla ris a' cho-roinn a bha airson na còirichean cànan sin dìreach ann an sgìrean far a bheil Gàidhlig ga bruidhinn, chì sinn gu bheil fìor mhòr-chuid de dhaoine airson gum bi còirichean cànan den leithid aig luchd-labhairt na Gàidhlig co-dhiù ann am pàirt air choireigin de dh'Alba. Mar eisimpleir, bha 85% airson gum biodh còir aig luchd-labhairt na Gàidhlig air Gàidhlig a chleachdadh leis a' chomhairle ionadail aca. Ach, bha beag-chuid shusbainteach ann nach biodh ag iarraidh na còirichean sin a thoirt dhaibh – uiread ri 27% airson daoine a' bruidhinn mar fianais cùirte no a' bruidhinn ri dotair no nurs ann an SNS.

Chart 4: Right to use Gaelic
Cairt 4: Còir air Gàidhlig a chleachdadh



Gaelic education

In relation to Gaelic-medium education, respondents were asked whether they felt that parents should have the right to choose this for their child. In the survey, Gaelic-medium education was explained as children receiving most of the lessons in Gaelic. 48% of respondents said that parents anywhere in Scotland should have the right to send their child to a Gaelic-medium school, and a further 43% said parents should have this right in areas where Gaelic is spoken. Only 8% said that they should not have that right anywhere in Scotland.

Asked if they would send their own child to a Gaelic-medium school, one quarter said they would be 'very likely' (10%) or 'fairly likely' (15%) to do so, compared to 73% of respondents who said they would be 'not very likely' or 'not at all likely' to do so. The 25% who would be likely to choose Gaelic-medium education is very much higher than the proportion of parents who currently choose Gaelic-medium education for their child (about 1%).

It is unlikely that the wish to grant a parental right to Gaelic-medium education was based on any agreement with the view (based on international research) that children benefit from bilingual education: only 9% of the sample agreed that children in Gaelic-medium education do better at school than other children.

Foghlam Gàidhlig

A thaobh foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig, chaidh faighneachd do luchd-freagairt am bu chòir còir a bhith aig pàrantan seo a thaghadh don chloinn aca. Anns an t-suirbhidh, chaidh a mhìneachadh gu robh foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig a' ciallachadh gu robh clann a' faighinn a' mhòr-chuid den teagasg tron Ghàidhlig. Bha 48% de luchd-freagairt airson gum biodh còir aig pàrantan ann an àite sam bith an Alba an leanabh a chur gu sgoil Ghàidhlig, agus bha 43% eile a thuir gum bu chòir a' chòir seo a bhith aig pàrantan ann an sgìrean far a bheil Gàidhlig ga bruidhinn. Cha robh ach 8% a thuir nach bu chòir a' chòir seo a bhith aca ann an àite sam bith an Alba.

Nuair a chaidh faighneachd dhaibh an cuireadh iad an leanabh fhèin do sgoil Ghàidhlig, thuir cairteal gum biodh iad 'glè choltach' (10%) no 'gu math coltach' (15%) seo a dhèanamh, an taca ri 73% den luchd-fhreagairt a thuir 'nach biodh iad coltach' no 'nach biodh iad coltach idir'. Tha an 25% a bhiodh coltach foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig a thaghadh mòran nas àirde na a' cho-roinn a tha a' cur an cuid cloinne tro fhoghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig an-dràsta (mu 1%).

Chan eil e coltach gu bheil deòin dhaoine còir a thoirt do phàrantan an cuid cloinne a chur tro fhoghlam Gàidhlig stèidhichte air a' bheachd gu bheil (a rèir rannsachadh eadar-nàiseanta) foghlam dà-chananach na leas do chlann: cha robh ach 9% den t-sampall ag aontachadh gum bi clann ann am foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig a' dèanamh nas fheàrr san sgoil na clann eile.

Respondents were also asked for their views on teaching Gaelic to all pupils (aged 5-16) in English-medium schools in Scotland for one or two hours a week. 37% agreed that children should be taught Gaelic, 36% disagreed and 26% neither agreed nor disagreed. Such varied views reflected respondents' views of learning Gaelic more generally. For example, when asked whether 'learning Gaelic is pointless in the 21st Century', 44% of respondents disagreed, 22% agreed and 34% neither agreed nor disagreed, or else could not choose.

Thus, there was much more acceptance of an extension of Gaelic in education by means of Gaelic-medium education than by means of incorporating it into English-medium education as a core subject nationally.

The Future of Gaelic

Respondents were asked for their predictions regarding the future of Gaelic in 50 years time – whether it would be spoken by more, fewer, or the same number of people as in 2012 – and were then asked the same question about what they would like to happen in relation to Gaelic. Chart 5 shows the results. The graph shows the majority of respondents – 81% – wished there to be at least as many Gaelic speakers in 50 years time as there were in 2012, but that only 45% of respondents expected that this would be the case.

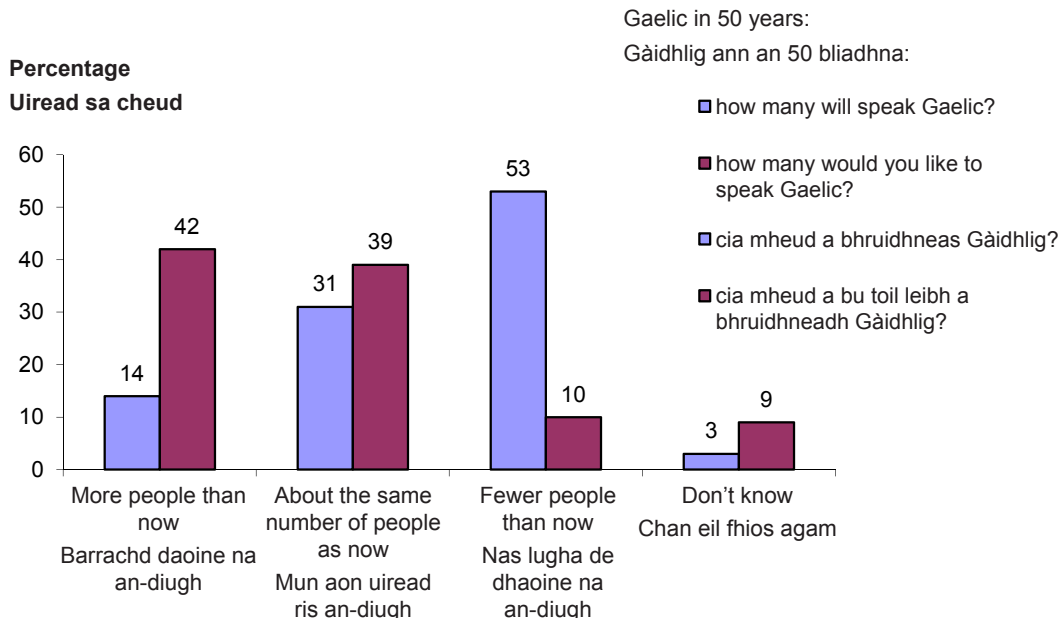
Chaidh beachdan an luchd-fhreagairt a shireadh cuideachd air Gàidhlig a theagasg don h-uile sgoilear (aois 5-16) ann an sgoiltean foghlam tro mheadhan na Beurla ann an Alba airson uair a thìde no dhà san t-seachdain. Dh'aontaich 37% gum bu chòir Gàidhlig a theagasg do chlann, bha 36% nach robh ag aontachadh gum bu chòir Gàidhlig a theagasg do chlann agus bha 26% nach robh air a shon no na aghaidh. Tha an sgaoileadh bheachd seo a' taisbeanadh beachdan an luchd-fhreagairt air Gàidhlig ionnsachadh san fharsaingeachd. Mar eisimpleir, nuair a chaidh faighneachd dhaibh an aontaicheadh iad ris a' bheachd nach robh 'adhbhar sam bith Gàidhlig ionnsachadh anns an 21mh linn', bha 44% nach robh ag aontachadh, bha 22% ag aontachadh agus bha 34% nach robh ag aontachadh no a' dol an aghaidh a' bheachd seo, no cha b' urrainn dhaibh taghadh.

Mar sin, bhathas mòran nas deònaiche Gàidhlig a chur air adhart ann am foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig na airson gum biodh i na pàirt den ionnsachadh ann am foghlam tro mheadhan na Beurla air feadh na dùthcha.

A' Ghàidhlig san àm ri teachd

Chaidh beachdan an luchd-fhreagairt a shireadh air na tha an dàn don Ghàidhlig ann an 50 bliadhna – am biodh i ga bruidhinn le barrachd, nas lugha no an aon uiread daoine 's a tha ga bruidhinn ann an 2012 – agus chaidh faighneachd dhaibh an uair sin dè bu toil leotha tachairt a thaobh na Gàidhlig. Chithear na toraidhean ann an Cairt 5. Tha an graf a' sealltainn gu bheil a' mhòr-chuid den luchd-fhreagairt – 81% – ag iarraidh gum bi co-dhiù uiread daoine a' bruidhinn na Gàidhlig ann an 50 bliadhna 's a bha ga bruidhinn ann an 2012, ach cha robh ach 45% den luchd-fhreagairt an dùil gur ann mar seo a bhitheadh cùisean.

Chart 5: Future of Gaelic
Cairt 5: Gàidhlig san àm ri teachd



In relation to respondents' views of whether the use of Gaelic should be encouraged, 32% believed that it should be encouraged throughout Scotland, and a further 55% believed that it should be encouraged, but only in Gaelic-speaking areas.

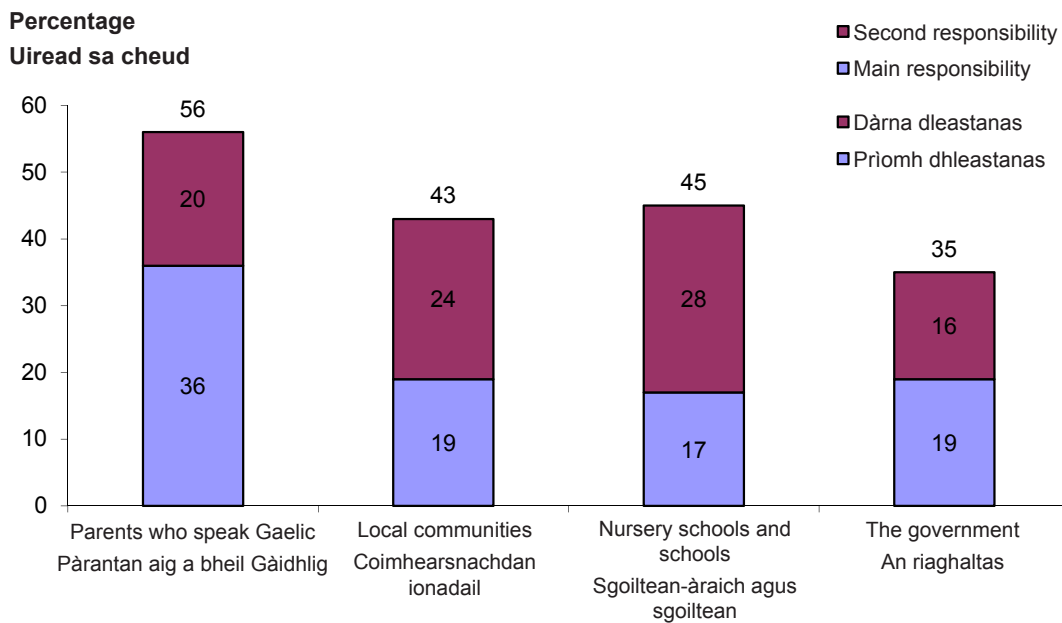
Respondents were also asked to identify who, if anyone, they believed to be most responsible for whether Gaelic is used in Scotland, and were given a list of options: 'parents who speak Gaelic', 'local communities', 'nursery schools and schools', 'the Government', 'churches', 'the media' and options for 'other' and 'none of these'. Respondents were subsequently asked if they wished to select anyone whom they perceived to have secondary responsibility for whether Gaelic is used in Scotland. Chart 6 shows the results, with 'parents who speak Gaelic', 'local communities', 'schools' and 'the government' most commonly believed to have the main or secondary responsibility for the maintenance of the Gaelic language.

A thaobh beachdan an luchd-fhreagairt am bu chòir cleachdadh na Gàidhlig a bhrosnachadh, bha 32% den bheachd gum bu chòir a brosnachadh air feadh na h-Alba, agus bha 55% den bheachd gum bu chòir a brosnachadh ach dìreach ann an sgìrean far a bheil Gàidhlig ga bruidhinn.

Chaidh faighneachd don luchd-fhreagairt cò, ma bha duine idir, air an robh an dleastanas a bu mhotha a thaobh cleachdadh na Gàidhlig ann an Alba a bhrosnachadh, agus thugadh grunn thaghadh dhaibh: 'pàrantan aig a bheil Gàidhlig', 'coimhearsnachdan ionadail', 'sgoiltean-àraich agus sgoiltean', 'an riaghaltas', 'eaglaisean', 'na meadhanan' agus bha cothrom aca 'eile' agus 'chan ann air gin' a thaghadh cuideachd. Chaidh faighneachd do luchd-fhreagairt an uair sin an robh iad airson duine sam bith a thaghadh air an robh an dàrna dleastanas a bu mhotha airson gum biodh Gàidhlig ga cleachdadh ann an Alba. Tha Cairt 6 a' sealltainn nan toraidhean, agus b' ann air 'pàrantan aig a bheil Gàidhlig' 'coimhearsnachdan ionadail', 'sgoiltean' agus 'an riaghaltas' a bu mhotha a bha daoine a' saolsinn a bha am prìomh no an dàrna dleastanas a' laighe airson seasmhachd na Gàidhlig.

Chart 6: Responsibility for maintenance of Gaelic

Cairt 6: Dleastanas airson seasmhachd na Gàidhlig



Far fewer people chose the other institutions mentioned in the question – churches (1%) and the media (4%) (not shown on the graph). Nevertheless, there was a widely held belief that Gaelic television did have a crucial role in ensuring the future of Gaelic. 68% of respondents either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that having Gaelic programmes on TV is essential to ensuring that some people use the Gaelic language in the future. The proportion who agreed that teaching some children in Gaelic is essential to the future of Gaelic language use was similar, at 67%.

Thagh mòran na bu lugha de dhaoine na buidhnean eile a chaidh a luaidh sa cheist – eaglaisean (1%) agus na meadhanan (4%) (chan eil seo ga shealltainn air a' ghraf). A dh'aindeoin sin, bha beachd aig mòran gu robh àite anabarrach cudromach aig telebhisean na Gàidhlig ann an seasmhachd na Gàidhlig a dhaingneachadh. Bha 68% den luchd-fhreagairt 'ag aontachadh' no 'ag aontachadh gu làidir' gu bheil prògraman Gàidhlig air an telebhisean deatamach do sheasmhachd cleachdadh na Gàidhlig san àm ri teachd. Bha a' cho-roinn de dhaoine a dh'aontaich gu bheil teagasg cuid de chlann tron Ghàidhlig deatamach do sheasmhachd na Gàidhlig san àm ri teachd mun aon ìre, 67%.

Attitudes to public spending on Gaelic

Respondents were asked whether the £24m (or £4.80 per person) spent every year by the Scottish Government 'on promoting the use of Gaelic, for example in TV, education and publishing' was 'too much', 'about right' or 'too little'. Nearly one half (45%) of respondents thought this amount was about right, 33% thought it too much and 16% thought it was too little; the remainder said they did not know. People who understand some Gaelic, or who view Gaelic as important to heritage, were less likely to think that Government spending on Gaelic is excessive.

Further Information

Information about the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey is at www.scotcen.org.uk/series/scottish-social-attitudes

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Beachdan air airgead poblach ga chaitheamh air a' Ghàidhlig

Chaidh faighneachd don luchd-fhreagairt an robh an £24m (no £4.80 an duine) a bha ga chaitheamh gach bliadhna le Riaghaltas na h-Alba air 'brosnachadh cleachdadh na Gàidhlig, mar eisimpleir air TBh, ann am foghlam agus foillseachadh' 'cus', 'ceart' no 'ro ìosal'. Thuir faisg air dàrna leth (45%) den luchd-fhreagairt gu robh an t-suim seo ceart, shaoil 33% gu robh e cus agus shaoil 16% gu robh e ro ìosal; thuir an còrr nach robh fhios aca. Cha robh na daoine a tha a' tuigsinn co-dhiù beagan Gàidhlig, no a tha den bheachd gu bheil a' Ghàidhlig cudromach do dhualchas, cho buailteach smaoinichadh gu robh cosgais an Riaghaltais air a' Ghàidhlig ro àrd.

Tuilleadh fiosrachaidh

Gheibhear fiosrachadh mun t-Suirbhidh Albannach air Beachdan Sòisealta aig www.scotcen.org.uk/series/scottish-social-attitudes

Chaidh an rannsachadh a mhaoinichadh leis a' Chomhairle air Rannsachadh Eaconamach agus Sòisealta (àireamh tabhartais Es/J003352/1), Riaghaltas na h-Alba, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, agus Soillse. Is e beachdan nan ùghdaran a-mhàin a gheibhear an seo agus chan urrainnear gabhail ris gur iad beachdan an luchd-mhaoine.

