Language Models in Gaelic-medium Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education
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This briefing describes patterns of Gaelic and English language use in Gaelic-medium pre-school, primary school and secondary school providers in Scotland. Evidence is given on language use in the classroom and in other areas of the school environment. The project was funded by Soillse and the Scottish Government.

Context and background
Gaelic-medium education has developed within a policy framework which grants the local authority and the school flexibility with regard to Gaelic and English language use in teaching the curriculum and in communication around the school. There is thus the potential for a great deal of variation in Gaelic language use between Gaelic-medium education providers.

The definition of Gaelic-medium education also varies between pre-school, primary school and secondary school:

- In pre-school, the curricular advice is that ‘teachers will ensure that Gàidhlig is the language of learning and communication, and that all areas of the curriculum are taught through the medium of Gàidhlig’ (Learning and Teaching Scotland 2010, 2).

- In primary school, the curricular advice is that ‘learning and teaching is wholly through Gàidhlig during the immersion phase from Primary 1 to Primary 3. English language is then gradually introduced through the medium of Gàidhlig, with Gàidhlig remaining the predominant language of the classroom in all areas of the curriculum [throughout the primary school stages]’ (Learning and Teaching Scotland 2010, 3).

Modailean Cànain ann am Foghlam Ro-sgoile, Bun-sgoile agus Àrd-sgoile Meadhain-Ghàidhlig
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Tha a’ bhileag fiosrachaidh seo a’ toirt tuairisgeul air pàtranan cleachdadh cànain Gàidhlig agus Beurla ann an solarachadh foghlan meadhain-Ghàidhlig aig ire ro-sgoile, bun-sgoile agus ârd-sgoile ann an Alba. Tha fianais ann air cleachdadh cànain san t-seòmar-sgoile agus ann an àiteachan eile an àrainn na sgoile. Chaidh am pròiseact a mhaoineachadh le Soillse agus Riaghaltas na h-Alba.

Co-theacsa agus cùl-fhiosrachadh
Tha foghlan meadhain-Ghàidhlig air tighinn gu ire ann am frèam poileasaidd a tha a’ toirt cead don ughdarras ionadail agus don sgoil co-dhùnadh ciuar a thèid Gàidhlig is Beurla a chleachdadh nuair a thathas a’ teagasg a’ churraicealaim agus a’ déanamh conaltradh air feadh na sgoile. Tha seo a’ ciallachadh gum faod tòrr eadar-dhealaichd a bhith ann a thaobh cleachdadh na Gàidhlig eadar diofar sholaraichean foghlan meadhain-Ghàidhlig.

Cuideachd, tha ciall eadar-dhealaichd eich aig an abairt foghlan meadhain-Ghàidhlig eadar ro-sgoile, bun-sgoil agus ârd-sgoil:

- Anns an ro-sgoil, is e comhairle a’ churraicealaim gum bi ‘luchd-teagaisg a’ déanamh cinnteach gur e Gàidhlig an cànan ionnsachaidh is conaltraidh, agus gum bi a h-uile roinn den churraicealaim ga teagasg tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig’ (Ionnsachadh agus Teagasg Alba 2010, 2).

- Anns a’ bhun-sgoil, is e comhairle a’ churraicealaim gum bi ‘ionnsachadh agus teagasg gu lèir tron Ghàidhlig anns an ire bogaiddh bho Prìomh 1 gu Prìomh 3. Thèid cànan na Beurla a thoir a-steach mean air mhean tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig, ach is e Gàidhlig an cànan as treasa san t-seòmar-sgoile anns gach roinn den churraicealaim [air feadh gach ire den bhun-sgoil]’ (Ionnsachadh agus Teagasg Alba 2010, 3).
In secondary school, the Scottish Government classification of Gaelic education for fluent speakers has two categories, distinguishing between ‘Gaelic-medium education’ and ‘Gaelic the only subject taught through Gaelic’ (Scottish Government 2011, Table 1.13). Therefore, any secondary school which provides at least one subject through the medium of Gaelic (in addition to Gàidhlig for fluent speakers) is classified as providing Gaelic-medium secondary education.

**Aims of the Research**

The intention of the research was:

- to provide policy makers with a more detailed understanding of Gaelic-medium education in practice;

- to inform parents about the language models employed in Gaelic-medium education, in order to help them decide whether to choose Gaelic-medium education;

- to inform teachers and headteachers of the language use practices in Gaelic-medium education nationally.

**Data and methods**

The evidence was gathered by means of a survey of all providers of Gaelic-medium pre-school and primary education, and of all providers of Gàidhlig as a secondary school subject, in the 2011-12 school year.

The survey indicated that, in the 2011-12 school year, there were 56 providers of Gaelic-medium pre-school education, 59 providers of Gaelic-medium primary education, and 33 providers of Gàidhlig as a subject for fluent speakers at secondary school level.

Of these, 82% of pre-schools, 80% of primary schools and 97% of secondary schools responded to the questionnaire.

The questionnaires asked respondents about language use in four main contexts associated with the school:

- in the classroom;
- in the school outside the classroom;
- in extra-curricular activities;
- in communication with parents.

The results are thus based on questionnaire respondents’ reports of Gaelic language use in their educational setting.

- Anns an àrd-sgoil, tha Riaghaltas na h-Alba air foghlam Gàidhlig do dh’fhileantaich a sgaradh ann an dá earrann, a’ déanamh diofar eadar ‘foghlam meadhain-Ghàidhlig’ agus ‘Gàidhlig an aon chuspair a tha ga theagasg tron Gàidhlig’ (Riaghaltas na h-Alba 2011, Clár 1.13). Air an adhbharr sin, tha àrd-sgoil sam bith a tha a’ libhrigeadh co-dhìu aon chuspair tron Gàidhlig (a thuilleadh air Gàidhlig do dh’fhileantaich) air ainmeanachadh mar solaraiche àrd-sgoile foghlam meadhain-Ghàidhlig.

**Amasan an Rannsachaidh**

B’ e adhbharr an rannsachaidh:

- tuigse nas mionaidiche a thoirt do luchd-cruthachaidh poileasaidh air na modaillean cáoine a thathas a’ cleachdadh ann am foghlam meadhain-Ghàidhlig, gus an cuideachadh a’ co-dhùnadh an tagh iad foghlam meadhain-Ghàidhlig.

- fiosrachadh a thoirt do lucht-teagaisg agus ceannardan sgoile air cleachdaithean cáoine ann am foghlam meadhain-Ghàidhlig air feadh na dùthcha.

**Dàta agus dòighean-obrach**

Chaidh an fhianais a thional ann an suirbhidh den h-uile solaraiche ann am foghlam meadhain-Ghàidhlig ro-sgoile is bun-sgoile, agus don h-uile solaraiche Gàidhlig mar chuspair àrd-sgoile anns a’ bhliadhna sgoile 2011-12.

Sheall an suirbhidh gu robh ann an Alba, anns a’ bhliadhna sgoile 2011-12, 56 solaraiche ro-sgoile foghlam meadhain-Ghàidhlig, 59 solaraiche bun-sgoile foghlam meadhain-Ghàidhlig, agus 33 solaraiche Gàidhlig mar chuspair do dh’fhileantaich aig ire na h-àrd-sgoile.

A-mach às na bha seo, fhreagair 82% de ro-sgoiltean, 80% de bhun-sgoiltean agus 97% de dh’àrd-sgoiltean an ceisteachan.

Dh’fhguighnic na ceisteachan mu chleachadh cànan ann an ceithir prìomh cho-theacsaichean co-cheangailte ris an sgoil:

- san t-seòmar-sgoile;
- san sgoil taobh a-muigh an t-seòmair-sgoile;
- ann an gnothaichean taobh a-muigh na sgoile;
- ann an conaltradh ri pàrantan.

Tha na toraidhean, ma-thà, stèidhichte air tuairisgeul an luchd-freagairt a’ cheisteachain air cleachdadh na Gàidhlig anns ann an àite far a bheil iad fhèin ag obair.
Analysis

Cluster analysis was used to identify groups of primary schools which had similar patterns of Gaelic language use in the curriculum. The characteristics of the primary school groups were then investigated in terms of the wider use of Gaelic in the schools, in extra-curricular activities and in communication with parents.

The analysis of the pre-school and secondary school Gaelic-medium provision showed the range and frequency of Gaelic language use in the various domains (in the classroom, in the school, in extra-curricular activities and in communication with parents).

Results

Pre-school (3-5 years)

1. Overall levels of Gaelic use when teaching the curriculum in pre-school settings are high (about 80%), though not as high as in the immersion phase in the first three stages of primary school.

2. In the less formal school domains of the playground, the corridors, etc, pupils in pre-school are reported to use less Gaelic than pupils at primary school, but adults in pre-school settings are reported to use more Gaelic than adults in primary schools.

The graph below shows reported language use between Gaelic-medium pupils and staff in pre-school settings when outside of the classroom:

Cleachdadh Gàidhlig taobh a-staigh na ro-sgoile nuair nach eil ach spoilearan meadhain-Ghàidhlig an láthair

Gaelic use inside the pre-school where only Gaelic-medium pupils are involved

Toraidhean

Ro-sgoil (3-5 bliadhna)

1. Mar as trice tha iaran cleachdadh na Gàidhlig nuair a thagasg a’ churraicealam san ro-sgoil àrd (mu 80%), ged nach eil iad cho ard ris an ire bogaidh anns a’ chliadh den bhun-sgoil.

2. An t-seòmar-sgoile san sgoil leòidh ann raoin-chluiche, nan trannsaichean msa, thagh ag rádh nach bi clann ro-sgoil a’ cleachdadh Gàidhlig uiread ‘s a thà clann sa bhun-sgoil, a’ thuig be ith na bhun-sgoil a’cleachdadh barrachd Gàidhlig na inbhich sa bhun-sgoil.

Tha an graf gu h-ìosal a’ sealltainn cleachdadh cânain, a réir aithris, eadar spoilearan meadhain-Ghàidhlig agus luchd-obrach anns an ro-sgoil taobh a-muigh an t-seòmar-sgoile:

Anailis

Chaidh anailis ‘cluster’ uisneachadh airson buidhean bhun-sgoilean aithneachadh aig an robh pàtranan co-ìonnan de chleachdadh Gàidhlig anns a’ churraicealam. An uair sin chaidh feartan nam buidhean bun-sgoile a sgòrdadh a rèir cleachdadh na Gàidhlig san fharsaingeachd anns na spoilean, ann an gniomhan taobh a-muigh nan spoilean agus an conaltradh ris na pàtranan.

Sheall an anailis air solar meadhain-Ghàidhlig ro-sgoile agus árd-sgoile mar a bha meud agus bìtheantas cleachdadh na Gàidhlig ann an grunn shuidheachaidhean (san t-seòmar-sgoile, san sgoil, ann an gnothaichean taobh a-muigh na sgoile agus ann an conaltradh ri pàtranan).
Number of pre-schools represented in graph: Pupil to pupil: 33, Pupil to adult: 33, Adult to pupil: 33, Adult to adult: 34.

3. Pre-school settings use more Gaelic on signs and on notices for Gaelic-medium pupils than do primary schools.

4. Gaelic use in extra-curricular activities is on average higher in the pre-school Gaelic-medium settings than in primary schools which provide Gaelic-medium education.

5. There is little difference between pre-school and primary school contexts in relation to language use in communication with parents: this is predominantly in English in both contexts.

**Primary school (5-12 years)**

6. The cluster analysis identified four main categories of Gaelic-medium primary providers:

- One large group (about 30% of all Gaelic-medium providers) in which Gaelic is the medium of instruction of nearly all teaching time throughout the primary school stages. [Cluster 1]

- A second large group (about 30% of all Gaelic-medium providers) in which Gaelic is the medium of instruction of nearly all teaching time in the early primary school stages, but the amount of Gaelic used decreases steadily from Primary 4, reaching about two-thirds of teaching time in Primary 7. [Cluster 2]

- A third cluster (about 20% of all Gaelic-medium providers) in which Gaelic is used for about four-fifths of teaching time in the first three primary-school stages, for just above two-thirds of teaching time in Primary 4 and for two-thirds of teaching time by Primary 7. [Cluster 3]

- A fourth, small cluster (about 10% of all Gaelic-medium providers) in which Gaelic is the medium of instruction for nearly all teaching time in the first two primary-school stages, and then falls steadily to reach about one half of teaching time in Primary 6 and 7. [Cluster 4]
The levels of Gaelic use in the clusters are illustrated in the graph below:

### Uiread sa cheud ùine teagaisg sa Ghàidhlig, a rèir ire bun-sgoile
Percentage teaching time in Gaelic, by primary school stage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School stage</th>
<th>Percentage teaching time in Gaelic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BS1 BS2 BS3 BS4 BS5 BS6 BS7</td>
<td>P1 P2 P3 P4 P5 P6 P7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS1 BS2 BS3 BS4 BS5 BS6 BS7</td>
<td>Cluster 1: P1 nearly all; P7 nearly all (c. 30% of schools)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS1 BS2 BS3 BS4 BS5 BS6 BS7</td>
<td>Cluster 2: P1 nearly all; P7 two thirds (c. 30% of schools)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS1 BS2 BS3 BS4 BS5 BS6 BS7</td>
<td>Cluster 3: P1 four fifths; P7 two thirds (c. 20% of schools)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS1 BS2 BS3 BS4 BS5 BS6 BS7</td>
<td>Cluster 4: P1 nearly all; P7 half (c. 10% of schools)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS1 BS2 BS3 BS4 BS5 BS6 BS7</td>
<td>Buidheann 1: P1 faisg air gu lèir; P7 dà thrian (c. 30% de sgoiltean).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS1 BS2 BS3 BS4 BS5 BS6 BS7</td>
<td>Buidheann 2: P1 faisg air gu lèir; P7 dà thrian (c. 30% de sgoiltean).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS1 BS2 BS3 BS4 BS5 BS6 BS7</td>
<td>Buidheann 3: P1 ceithir cóigeamhan; P7 dà thrian (c. 20% de sgoiltean).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS1 BS2 BS3 BS4 BS5 BS6 BS7</td>
<td>Buidheann 4: P1 faisg air gu lèir; P7 darna leth (c. 10% de sgoiltean).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of primary schools represented in the graph: 40.

The cluster analysis was able to classify 90% of the Gaelic-medium primary providers who responded to the questionnaire into these four groups. The four clusters thus provide a fairly comprehensive summary of provision. The cluster analysis also identified two very small outlying clusters which are not included in this classification.

7. In each category of Gaelic-medium primary provider, patterns of language use in non-classroom domains (for example in assemblies, in the school corridors and playground, and in musical and drama activities) reflect these classroom patterns: that is to say, Category 1 schools typically have the highest level of Gaelic language use, and Category 4 the lowest. However, the correlation between curricular language model and non-classroom Gaelic language use is weaker in relation to sporting activities and school trips.

8. Many of the uses of Gaelic in areas outwith the classroom involve English-medium as well as Gaelic-medium pupils, and thus the presence of two language streams in the same school often gives English-medium pupils exposure to Gaelic. This use of Gaelic in contexts in which there are both Gaelic-medium and English-

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Tha irean cleachdadh na Gàidhlig anns na buidhnean rim faicinn gu h-iosal:

**Uireadh bhun-sgoiltean air an riodhachadh sa ghraf: 40.**

Chaidh 90% de na solaraiche bun-sgoile meadhain-Gàidhlig a fhreagair an ceisteachan a roinn eadar na ceithir buidhnean seo. Tha na ceithir buidhnean, ma-tha, a’ toirt seachad tuairisgeul gu math lán air solarachadh. Chomharrach an anailis dà bhuidheann bheag eile air an iomall nach eil a’ nochdadh anns an rangachadh.

7. Anns gach buidheann solaraiche bun-sgoile meadhain-Gàidhlig, tha pàtranan cleachdadh cànain taobh a-muigh an t-seòmar-sgoile (mar eisimpleir ann am mòr-choinnseamhan sgoile, tranna’sachean sgoile agus san raon-chluiche, agus ann an ceòl agus dràma) a’ leantainn nam pàtranan san t-seòmar-sgoile fhèin: sin, ann an sgòilean ann am Buidheann 1 mar a trice tha an uiread as motha de Ghàidhlig ga cleachdadh agus tha an uiread as lugha ann am Buidheann 4. Ach cha robh an ceangal cho làidir eadar cleachdadh na Gàidhlig anns a’ churraisealam agus cleachdadh cânain taobh a-muigh an t-seòmar-sgoile a thaobh tachartasain spòrs agus turasan.

8. Tha mòran de na sudheachaidhean taobh a-muigh na sgoile far a bheil Gàidhlig ga cleachdadh a’ gabhal a-steach sgoilearan meadhain-Bhurla cho math ri sgoilearan meadhain-Gàidhlig, a’ ciallachadh nuair a tha an dà chànan san aon sgoil gu bheil sgoilearan meadhain-Bhurla a’ faighinn blasad den
medium pupils also reflects the classroom language patterns of Gaelic-medium pupils. That is to say, English-medium pupils in schools which have a Category 1 Gaelic-medium stream typically experience more Gaelic than do English-medium pupils in schools with Category 2, 3 or 4 Gaelic-medium streams.

9. There was not a close correlation between curricular language model and language of communication to parents of Gaelic-medium pupils.

Secondary schools (12-18 years)

10. In secondary school, there is a sharp fall in Gaelic-medium pupils’ exposure to Gaelic in the curriculum as compared to primary school. Only 14 secondary schools provide at least four subjects (including Gàidhlig as a subject for fluent speakers of the language) through the medium of Gaelic in the first and second years of secondary school.

This reduction in teaching time through the medium of Gaelic between the primary and secondary school stages is illustrated in the graph below:

![Graph showing reduction in teaching time through the medium of Gaelic between primary and secondary school stages](image-url)

8. Cha robh ceangal làidir eadar modail cànain a chleachdadh anns a’ churraicealam agus an cànan a chleachdadh ann an conaltradh ri pàrantan meadhain-Ghàidhlig.

Àrd-sgoiltean (12-18 bliadhna)

10. Anns an àrd-sgoil, tha tuiteam luath anns an uiread Gàidhlig a ghieibh sgolaigh meadhain-Ghàidhlig sa churraicealam an coimeas ris a’ bhun-sgoil. Chan eil ach 14 àrd-sgoil a’ tabhann co-dhiù ceithir cuspairean (a’ gabhail a-steach Gàidhlig mar chuspair do dh’hileantaich) tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig anns a’ chiaid agus an dàrna bliadhna den àrd-sgoil.

Tha an lùghdachadh ann an ùine teagaisg tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig eadar a’ bhun-sgoil agus an àrd-sgoil ri fhaicinn sa ghrach gu h-íosal:

### Uiread sa cheud ùine teagaisg sa Ghàidhlig, sa chuibheasachd, a rèir ire sgoile ann an irean àrd na bun-sgoil agus irean isol na h-àrd-sgoile

Average percentage teaching time in Gaelic, by school stage in upper primary school and early secondary school

![Graph showing reduction in teaching time through the medium of Gaelic between primary and secondary school stages](image-url)

11. The reduction between primary school and secondary school in Gaelic curricular use is also reflected in a reduction in Gaelic language use in most kinds of extra-curricular activity, and in pupil communication around the school and in the playground, despite the efforts reported by many adults to use Gaelic most of the time when speaking to each other and to Gaelic-medium pupils.

12. The pattern for school assemblies in secondary school varies: some use a lot of Gaelic, but others use very little Gaelic.

13. English remains the predominant language of communication with parents of Gaelic-medium pupils at the secondary school stages.

Conclusions

Considering the findings as a whole from pre-school to secondary, we can conclude that there is on average more Gaelic language use in the classroom than in the corridors, more in the corridors than in the playground and more where a Gaelic-speaking adult is involved than when adults are not involved. There is always more Gaelic language use in domains involving only Gaelic-medium pupils than in domains involving both Gaelic-medium and English-medium pupils. Nevertheless, adults typically make strong efforts to use Gaelic, even when English-medium pupils are present.

References

Learning and Teaching Scotland (2010), Curriculum for Excellence, Literacy and Gàidhlig: Principles and Practice, Dundee: Learning and Teaching Scotland.


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Further information

The full research report may be obtained from Soillse at:
www.soillse.ac.uk

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