Young Speakers’ Use of Gaelic in the Primary Classroom:
A multi-perspectival pilot study

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About the authors

The interdisciplinary nature of this research project has brought together a team of researchers from the University of Aberdeen with varied relevant skills.

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1 Background to the Study

This study is set within a changing educational policy and development landscape for Gaelic Medium Education (GME) in Scotland. GME was established in 1985 with 24 pupils and, in 2011-12, 2418 students were enrolled in GM primary schools or departments throughout Scotland (Bòrd na Gàidhlig, 2011). Currently 60 primary schools and 37 secondary schools across Scotland offer Gaelic medium (GM) provision. GME has been the subject of academic interest of various scholars since its inception (e.g. Johnstone et al 1999, O’Hanlon et al, 2010 and 2012a, Müller, 2006). This study complements previous research on young people’s Gaelic practice and attainment and responds to renewed interest in the linguistic competencies of pupils educated in GME. This study draws on new empirical data of primary pupils’ use of Gaelic in a GM classroom case-study to focus on the gap in our knowledge and understanding of Gaelic form and use by young people. The small-scale pilot project, which is situated at the interface of linguistic and pedagogical interest, will be the basis for a larger-scale project proposal to measure the language competencies of young Gaelic speakers in the context of the classroom.

The research questions are as follows:

1. What kind of language is used by pupils in a GM primary classroom during an active learning lesson?
2. How does the attitude of the learners towards GM education appear to impact on their own language use?
3. What are the pedagogic perceptions of the teachers concerning the impact of GME on the progression of pupil learning and language competency?

2 Literature Review

This research project can be located within various scholarly disciplines and with this in mind we have undertaken literature reviews in the following areas:

- Patterns of language change in situations of language revitalisation
- Gaelic language proficiency and attainment in the classroom
- Current descriptions of Scottish Gaelic.

2.1 Patterns of Language Change in RLS Situations

2.1.1 Introduction: The Role of the School in the (re)Production of Minority Language Speakers

Language education policy has a major impact on language status, language acquisition and the attitudes of children to language. In situations of minority language revival and revitalisation, the role of the school in language acquisition and language socialisation is highly significant because (a) it supports speakers’ linguistic achievements in a sociolinguistic context where the language’s use in other areas of public life is likely to be restricted and, (b) because the educational system produces new speakers, whose parents or care-givers may have no or only semi-fluency in the language. The education system plays, therefore, a vital role in ensuring the transmission from one generation to the next, and is a cornerstone of language revitalisation and reversal. Such is the power of the educational system that it is argued to be the most important mechanism of language shift to dominant, majority languages (Fishman, 2006).

It follows, therefore, that reversing language shift requires bilingual education programmes to reverse the otherwise inevitable minoritsation of a language. As Hinton argues:
“It is a...(...)...sweet irony to use schools for language revitalisation since they have played such a large role in language death. But language classes in otherwise English-medium schools are not sufficient to create fluent speakers. Only a serious bilingual education program can raise fluent speakers.” (Hinton, 2012: 312)

A ‘serious’ bilingual education programme is, Hinton argues, an immersion model, which can enable fluency to be developed not only in L1 speakers, but in children whose first language is another language (L2), and for whom inter-generational transfer in the family is not an option. The earliest appeal for such a model of bilingual education for Gaelic can be traced to the 1960s¹. However, it was only in the 1980s that a profound ideological shift in Gaelic in education policy occurred, and an additive bilingual model of education for L1 and L2 Gaelic speakers was implemented (see Section 2.2). Whilst the prevalent system of GM is bounded primary school ‘departments’ in English-medium schools, the designation of a school in Skye as a ‘Gaelic school’ with an ‘English-medium department’ in 2007 subverted the power geometry inherent in the ‘Gaelic department’ model. Moreover, a further development is the creation of dedicated ‘Gaelic schools’². Such bilingual immersion models, in their multiple forms, can and do lead to successful outcomes (Baker, 2006) but, as Thomas and Roberts (2012) stress, minority language education is often challenged by a range of contextual factors which include the quality of education and opportunities for interaction in the minority language in school and in other social contexts.

2.1.2 Language Development and Attainment

The term ‘Gaelic medium education’ is used as an umbrella term for a range of educational experiences which have varying levels of instruction through the medium of Gaelic, varying use of Gaelic outside of the classroom, and varying levels of non-Gaelic speaking staff and children in the school. Perhaps ironically, the ‘strongest’ model of Gaelic education is found in urban areas in which Gaelic is the language of a small minority in the population. Whilst research by O’Hanlon et al (2012) found no relationship between Gaelic instructional time and attainment in Gaelic, studies elsewhere have found a positive relationship between the two variables. This divergence is perhaps explained by the methods used to measure attainment. O’Hanlon et al (ibid.) collected a national dataset which uses criterion referenced tests to measure attainment against curricular expectations. Such analyses are, therefore, unable to take into account the level of minority language input outside the formal classroom e.g. the home or in the wider school or community. Studies which have found a positive relationship between the levels of instruction in the minority language, as well as a positive relationship between the level of language input at home and language attainment, are derived from more direct observations of children’s language development, based on language elicitation and objective assessment tools and classroom case-studies.

One such study by Gathercole and Thomas (2009: 220-24), which used a language input perspective, found the strength of the school language model – as defined according to pupils attending a school which solely used Welsh (OWS) as a medium of instruction, or which uses both Welsh and English as languages as instruction (WES) - to be significant in the acquisition of Welsh morphology by pupils who have only English at home. The difference is attributed to children’s “knowledge of word order in English and to the strength of word order as a cue to subjecthood in English” (ibid. 224). They found that “Similarly, children from OWS schools typically outperform their WES peers”, and that children with English and Welsh at home also typically outperform children with only English at home, regardless of the school education model. The authors conclude that “students command of Welsh was found to be directly correlated with the level of input in the home and school” (ibid.), suggesting that a ‘critical mass’ of input was not always being achieved. They found children’s acquisition of Welsh, at least for vocabulary, to be

¹ EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) BILL HL Deb 01 July 1969 vol 303 cc481-545.
² The first Gaelic primary school opened in Glasgow in 1999 followed by the opening of Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu (Glasgow) in 2006, Sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis (Inverness) in 2007 and Bun Sgoil Taobh na Pairce (Edinburgh) in 2013.
dependent upon: the frequency of exposure to Welsh at school, home and in the community; children’s own engagement with using the language; and children’s motivation to learn.

Rednap (2006) and Lewis (2006) refer more specifically to variation in the proportion of L1 children to L2 children in any region, school or indeed class in Welsh medium education. The effect of teaching two types of cohort in the same classroom on children’s language development and proficiency is an emergent area of research in Wales and in Ireland, and is influenced by Canadian and Basque research. Thomas et al (2012) identify that the language behaviour of L1 and L2 speakers in Welsh immersion education differs. Extended speech, they argue, is essential for linguistic development, for it enables children to extend their expressive abilities. Their observation of teacher-pupil interactions in 10 primary schools in Wales found that, whilst all children had the opportunity to respond to the teacher’s verbal requests, the extent to which L2 speakers engaged in extended speech was limited. The research also found that there was a greater tendency for L2 children aged 7-11 to address the teacher and peers in English, particularly when the majority of children were from non-Welsh speaking families. It wasn’t the case in all schools, however (e.g. in Cardiff schools English was rarely observed, despite the majority living in non-Welsh speaking homes), which they infer reflects different institutional policies. This draws our attention to the role of the school, and its staff, in (re)producing language norms and practices (García et al 2010). Thomas et al (ibid.) found that, “When there are a few L1 speakers in these classrooms, the use of Welsh is common amongst L1 speakers if paired together in tasks; however, when those same children are involved in mixed language groups, English seems to prevail” (Thomas et al, 2012: 256). Interestingly, they observed that the presence of L1 speakers could trigger a switch back to Welsh by L2 speakers. However, that when set a task, L1 children typically found another L1 speaker to work with, and L2 speakers typically worked with other L2 speakers. This pattern reduces the potential for linguistic development of L2s, and for L1 speakers to facilitate and model the use of Welsh.

One outcome attributed to the mix of L1 and L2 speakers in classrooms, which has been commonly observed anecdotally, is the emergence of ‘innovations’ in the spoken language. Johnstone (2002 cited in Lewis, 2006: 29) comments:

“Welsh-medium schools in the predominantly English-speaking areas are serving to create new varieties of Welsh. The same has been observed in the case of Scottish Gaelic. In both cases ‘new-age’ Gaelic or Welsh provokes a range of reaction. Some view it as a sign of linguistic degradation….others prefer to consider the ‘errors’ that the new speakers produce to be a sign of sociolinguistic vitality as they create their own linguistic identity.”

More recently, Vila i Moreno (2008:43) attributes contact with written and non-local varieties of Catalan to changes in the language variety of new speakers. This, he argues, is because the school provides the linguistic models and because of the social contact speakers have at school. Citing the work of Carerra (2002) in Western Catalonia, Vila i Moreno comments that the direction of change is away from local varieties: “children’s phonology is closer to spelling and different from the most widely used spoken standard” (2008:42). Research by Baldaquei (2006, cited in Vila i Moreno 2008) found that schools cannot counteract the pressure of the dominant language in terms of phonology or morphology, but that lexicon is protected by the immersion education system, as compared to Catalan taught as a subject.

Harris and Murtagh (1988b) administered criterion referenced tests of spoken Irish based on the curriculum in primary schools on four occasions between 1978 and 1985. Their evidence suggests that pupils from immersion schools (all Irish) generally have much higher levels of achievement in spoken Irish than those in ‘mainstream’ (English-medium) primary schools, who only receive part of their instruction through the medium of Irish. This longitudinal dataset is based on national assessments which use tests to elicit objective data on students’ listening and speaking skills. The studies revealed a declining level of children were reaching the objectives of the national curriculum over time. In 2002, a national survey of spoken achievement enabled a comparison in achievement with
1985 (Harris, 2008). Standards in listening skills had declined significantly in ordinary schools, and the author cites a lack of support for Irish in the wider school curriculum, home and community as the main cause.

The above studies do not distinguish between individual factors, including whether or not Irish is a home language. However, Johnstone’s review of the international literature (2002:3), notes that “despite their impressive progress and attainments, immersion pupils [referring to L2 pupils] do not reach native speaker levels in their immersion language”. Drawing on her case-study of a Gaelic-medium class in a Gaelic-speaking community concluded, Will (2012) concluded that, “children who acquire their Gaelic language skills exclusively or predominantly in the context of Gaelic-medium education become unintelligible to older speakers of the language who do not subscribe to the same schemata” (Will, 2012:3). That older speakers do not accept, or understand, new varieties and norms of such children’s Gaelic speech, Will argues, means the system is failing to develop children’s communicative competence.

In language jurisdictions where the model of education is spatially or regionally determined, language proficiency is found to be higher in regions where the minority language is the main means of instruction in all schools simply because the education system is creating a universal capacity to communicate in a new generation (Vila i Moreno, 2008). In respect of Catalan, ‘non-native’ speakers in Catalonia achieve high levels of fluency whereas a ‘weaker’ system (e.g. Catalan taught as a school subject) applied in other territories is “not enough to turn majority speakers into bilinguals” (ibid: 42).

The tension between strengthening L2 speakers’ acquisition through exposure to L1 input whilst at the same time ‘short-changing’ L1 speakers has been studied by Hickey (2001) in the Irish context, but there is little understanding of the interaction of English with Welsh or Irish in children’s language development, or of how such interaction might affect the language attainment of L1 or L2 speakers. The interaction of English with Welsh or with Irish is assumed, however, to be greater in schools where a significant proportion of children are L2 speakers. Lenoach et al (2012) argue that the frequent use of English interjections in Irish speech, but the absence of Irish syntax, lexicon or grammar in English speech, represents a dilution of Irish vocabulary and weaker language acquisition.

The use of the dominant language in the minority classroom is not, however, necessarily detrimental to language development or even undesirable. Whilst bilingual education has traditionally argued that languages should be kept separate in learning and teaching, bilingual theorists challenge the type of ‘parallel’ (Heller, 1999), ‘separate’ (Creese and Blackledge, 2008) or ‘diglossic’ (Baker, 2003) bilingualism typical of minority language education. They argue that an alternative ‘bilingual’ model that treats multiple codes as one language repertoire is most effective for language acquisition (Creese and Blackledge, 2010; García, 2009). Developing ‘translanguaging’ (García and Wei, 2013; Lewis et al., 2012) skills in education is increasingly viewed as an effective method for advancing cognitive functioning and a greater depth of content knowledge by bilingual students. The term was first used by Cen Williams “to refer to a pedagogical practice where students alternate languages for the purposes of reading and writing or for receptive or productive use” (cited in García, 2012). In practice, translanguaging involves the teacher using the dominant language as ‘bridge’ and in using children’s children code-switching practices as a teaching tool:

“Switching from one language to another in the classroom or in recreation is not problematic in itself and should not be taken as being akin to confusion. In fact, in recent years, code switching from one language to another in the bilingual classroom has been developed as a valid teaching tool that, when utilised effectively, leads to greater depth of knowledge and ‘translanguaging’ skills (Baker 2000; Williams 2003) – i.e. hearing or reading about something in one language and explaining it in another can strengthen learners’ ability in both languages and can also give them a fuller and deeper understanding of the subject matter.” (Thomas & Lewis, 2012: 247)

It is argued that by putting two language practices alongside each other makes it possible to explicitly notice language features, therefore supporting language acquisition. The work of Lyster (1998; 2007) draws attention to
‘noticing’ as a pedagogic strategy (Coyle, 2013). Translanguaging clearly disrupts traditional thinking which assumed that the use of two languages led to ‘cross contamination’ and confusion (it also conflicts with language-in-education policy in many minority jurisdictions3). Advocates of the bilingual approach challenge, therefore, the notion that instruction should be carried out exclusively in the target language, that translation between the L1 and L2 has no place in developing language or literacy, and that the two languages should be kept separate. By embracing translanguaging, children’s school communicative practices, it is argued, can better reflect and support children’s communicative competences out of school. A flexible bilingual pedagogy is argued, therefore, to reflect children’s own bilingual identities outside of the classroom.

In addition to issues of language input, however, research identifies that children’s motivation to learn, their own engagement with using the language in a social contexts, and the attitudes of their parents are important to language acquisition (cf. Coady, 2001; Dörnyei, 2006; Gathercole and Thomas, 2009 and Hickey, 2012). The following sections address children’s language attitudes and language practices.

2.1.3 Children’s Language Attitudes

Children’s metapragmatic awareness means they are highly sensitive to language norms, practices and experiences. This means that, as well as developing children’s language skills, school is a place where children learn how, when and with whom to use a language. Language norms and preferences are, therefore, learnt through the pedagogical experience. Dörnyei (2006) argues that the pedagogical experience, together with the expectations of significant others, also construct personal language attitudes in second language learners of any age. Schools can in themselves affect attitudes to a language. Oliver and Purdie (1998) stress that, whilst the school context influences children’s identifications, these identifications are not fixed or immutable. Nonetheless, work influenced by Grosjean (1982) has shown the importance of studying the beliefs and understandings which children have about languages, because they relate to children’s language behaviour. Research interests in minority language contexts usually extend beyond language behaviour e.g. using measures of proficiency, acquisition and usage, to investigate how children’s perceptions influence either their own linguistic behaviour, or their behaviour towards other speakers, or bilingualism in general. Indeed, it is the inter-relatedness between these factors that are usually under investigation (e.g. Baker, 1992; MacKinnon, 1981). Attitudinal research has tended to utilise questionnaire surveys to solicit evaluations e.g. from self-reporting of beliefs, feelings and actual and intended behaviour, but has also utilised interviews, participant observation, content analysis of secondary data sources, proficiency tests, staged encounters and other forms of performative research.

One strand of this research compares the attitudes of school pupils in different instructional settings. Early research in Wales found, for example, that children in Welsh-English schools held more favourable attitudes to Welsh than children in Welsh-speaking neighbourhoods (Sharp et al. 1973 cited in Baker, 1992: 43). The reasons for this were considered to include internal factors (e.g. the teachers, ethos, and attainment) and external factors (e.g. the attitudes of parents and the use of language in the community). In contrast, research by Aistaran (2003, cited in Cenoz 2008) found children instructed in Basque and children who are instructed through both Basque and Spanish have more positive attitudes than students who are taught Basque as a school subject.

Baker (1992) modelled quantitative survey data, which asked children aged 11-14 to respond to a list of attitudinal statements, to test for the effect of age, gender, school, ability, language background (e.g. familial use) and cultural background (e.g. engagement with cultural activities and literary culture) on language attitudes. The strongest

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3 In Catalonia, the Language Policy Act of 1998 states that Catalan must be used as the language of instruction. Gaelic is the ‘official’ language of ‘Gaelic medium education’ in Scotland.
influence on language attitudes was found to be cultural factors, followed by ‘language background’, whereas ‘age’ and ‘gender’ had a weak influence, with girls and younger children having more favourable attitudes to Welsh. Ability in Welsh and the school instructional type had negligible effects, however. Research has shown that there is a relationship between parental attitudes towards a language and school type (Harris, 2008). Parental praise for achievements in Irish has been identified by Harris and colleagues as important to children’s acquisition (Harris and Murtagh, 1999 cited in Harris 2008).

The differences in pupils’ attitudes in similar instructional types have been studied by Coady (2001) and Fleming & Debski in Ireland. Coady (2001) found that there were no differences between the attitudes of pupils in Irish immersion and in schools in which Irish is taught as a school subject, although habitual use of Irish was higher by Irish-medium pupils. Fleming & Debski (2007) found that children in English medium schools had the most positive attitudes towards Irish, as measured by a Gardner attitude/motivation test battery, despite having only “token bilingualism”. Murtagh’s (2007) study of post-primary student proficiency and motivation found, however, the opposite. By applying a questionnaire test instrument based on Gardner’s (1985) AMTB battery test (which uses three scales: desire to learn, motivational intensity and attitudes to learning), she identified significant differences in the motivations of pupils, according to the type of instruction. The study found that students engaged in an immersion Irish programme are the most positive towards the language, and invest the largest amount of time in learning. A significant positive relationship was found between the use of Irish outside school and children’s motivation to learn Irish, and their positive evaluations of their schooling. Coady (2001) calls for more qualitative research on language attitudes, but to date, few qualitative studies have been conducted with young children in comparable minority language contexts.

2.1.4 Children’s Bilingual Language Practices

There is very limited evidence of Gaelic-speaking children’s bilingual practices. The two major studies of Gaelic language attainment in GME (Johnston et al, 1999 and O’ Hanlon et al, 2012a) have relied on teachers’ judgements of children’s language attainment, as measured against curricular expectations, but did not seek to explore patterns or levels of use. O’ Hanlon et al (2012b) used a survey to collect data on levels of Gaelic use, relative to English, in different school settings based on a school representative’s judgement. Accordingly, the results of these studies have not taken into account language form and tell little about how young speakers use Gaelic as part of their bilingual repertoire. Research evidence on children’s language practices in other minority language situations draws on systematic observation in the classroom, questionnaire data on self-reported use by children, and language elicitation tests and interviews.

Although research shows that children attending immersion programmes benefit linguistically, research on children who do not speak the ML language at home has found that children make limited use of their L2 in other social contexts, particularly when they live in communities where membership does not require the use of L2, and does not necessarily support its use. Earlier evidence from Canada in relation to French-English bilinguals (Genesee, 1978) found that children attending French immersion schooling typically limited their use of French to school, and that this affected their productive knowledge of French. Similar patterns were identified by Vila (1996) in relation to Castillian-Catalan bilingual children in Catalonia. Fleming and Debski (2007) also observe that both Irish immersion pupils in English-speaking areas and pupils in Irish-medium schools in the Gaeltacht have a low use of Irish outside of school.

In Fleming and Debski’s study, differences were found in attainment, and in use, between these two educational contexts, but Gaeltacht pupils reported a greater use of conversational Irish outside of school. They found that pupils in Irish-medium schools were more likely to speak Irish to friends in school, but that Gaeltacht school children were more likely to speak Irish to friends outside school, therefore hinting that the norms of bilingualism in peer-groups
are spatially produced and maintained. Thomas and Roberts (2011) suggest that a reliance on the dominant language is perpetuated by the norm of using the dominant language as the ‘language of inclusion’, a pattern which children are socialised into reproducing from an early age. Hickey (2001) notes that language accommodation practices occur in L1 Irish speakers at a very early age, and often arise in immersion contexts in which L1 and L2 speakers are co-taught. Similarly Vila i Moreno (2008) cites his earlier research (2006) which shows that, despite the prevalence of the immersion model in Catalonia, the ‘subordination norm’ has proved resistant to change in primary school children. Indeed, research has found evidence of a direct link between the proportion of Catalan L1 children in a given school and the use of the language: spontaneous pupil-pupil interaction in schools in which Catalan L2 children are the majority are typically in Castilian, not Catalan. This, they conclude, is because schools (and teachers) are limited in their ability to modify children’s behaviour if, in other contexts, children are being socialised into very different language norms e.g. in the home. Studies by Vila i Moreno (2008) and Gathercole & Thomas (2005) highlight that linguistic etiquette and language norms are reproduced between generations, despite the education system and school language policy.

Thomas and Roberts’ study (op cit.) sought to identify factors that influence current patterns of Welsh language use among primary-aged school children in and outside the classroom. Questionnaire and observation data on 145 children aged 8-11 in a strongly Welsh-speaking area found that in schools in which the majority (more than 65%) of pupils were from Welsh-speaking homes used Welsh, mostly or always with each other in class, whereas in schools in which the majority of children lived in English-speaking homes, only 24.7% reported using Welsh mostly or always with each other. Outside school, use amongst peers was lower: only 17.6 percent of children in schools in which the majority of pupils are from English-speaking homes reported using Welsh mostly or always with friends outside of school; the equivalent figure for pupils in schools with a majority of L1 speakers is 67.2 percent. The findings lead the authors to comment that, “this trend is stronger where children are surrounded by children from English-speaking homes...[and] has implications for classroom planning and activities, which may benefit from partial streaming by language to encourage greater use of the minority language” (Thomas and Roberts, 2011: 99). They found that children in L2 dominant Welsh primary schools had less confidence in their ability to speak Welsh, despite the objective of Welsh immersion being to produce L2 speakers with ‘native’ like communicative competence. The use of English in L1-L2 peer-to-peer conversations is, they state, often unchallenged even in school. Moreover, focus group interviews with 4-7 and 8-11 year olds revealed that all children often turn to English, both in class and in the playground. This led them to conclude that that the use of English in the controlled linguistic environment of the classroom, as evidenced by pupil-teacher interactions, “is now likely to threaten the basis upon which minority language education systems are based”.

Thomas and Roberts (ibid.) argue that persistent use of the dominant language with peers outside the classroom and in other interpersonal relations is not explained wholly by proficiency, however, but by their language socialisation experiences and the modelling of language behaviour in the home and in other social networks. In particular, they argue that use of Welsh in and outside of school is affected by children’s home language experience and the availability of a ‘critical mass’ of peers who share the same language experiences:

“Minority language education...cannot by itself be responsible for children’s ultimate linguistic achievements. It is in the child’s social use of language that widespread societal and individual bilingualism becomes a reality, and it is in this domain of language use that we are currently failing [in Wales].” (Thomas and Roberts, 2011: 92)

Comparable research by Murtagh (2007) on out-of-school use of Irish found that Irish-medium pupils have a high level of access to out-of-school Irish-speaking networks, and therefore opportunities to speak Irish, but only 18.8 percent reported Irish being used ‘often’ or ‘very often’ at home, and 31.3 percent use Irish with friends outside of
school. This evidence confirms that a ‘critical mass’ of peer users is in itself insufficient, and that a range of contextual factors influence, children’s bilingual practices outside of school.

2.1.5  **Summary**

This review of the key literature highlights that models for teaching minority languages in the education system are continually evolving in response to current best practice in language pedagogy and in response to changing sociolinguistic and political contexts. It also draws our attention to the sociolinguistic diversity of school children which the minority language education system, as a language planning tool, is typically seeking to target. Many children in ML education are dependent upon the school for language input and often children, irrespective of whether the minority language is used in the home or not, live in communities in which the language is not widely spoken. The international research evidence tells us that these factors have a bearing on language development and attainment, language attitudes and on children’s bilingual language practices.

The school is not only important for developing children’s language proficiency; it is also an important site of language socialisation. It socialises children into when, with whom, and where to use Gaelic. The ‘strength’ of the school model is likely, therefore, to produce different language ideologies, norms and individual experiences and to affect how children draw on their bilingual repertoires.

Clearly, a better understanding of young people’s language practices requires the Gaelic research community to develop datasets from spontaneous interactions in naturally occurring situations, which better understand the way in which children draw on their Gaelic-English bilingual repertoires. The interactional setting of the Gaelic-medium classroom allows us to explore the attitudes and norms of pupil-to-pupil language use of pupils with diverse linguistic backgrounds.

2.2  **Gaelic Language Proficiency and Attainment in the Classroom**

In 2010, some 867 children were enrolled in 58 Sgoiltean Àraich (Gaelic-medium or bilingual pre-school provision) across Scotland (Galloway, 2011) and some 2300 primary students received Gaelic medium in two dedicated Gaelic language schools (Glasgow and Inverness) and in classes in 58 dual-stream schools. The Annual Census of Pupils in Scotland data from 2011 is displayed in Table 1. It shows that the number of primary pupils in GME has remained stable since 2010, with 2269 pupils recorded in 2013. 428 pupils entered GME primary education in 2012-13; Bòrd na Gàidhlig aim to increase this figure to 800 by 2017 (Bòrd na Gàidhlig, 2012).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: All Pupils in Scotland receiving Gaelic Education, 2010-13</th>
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<td>2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gaelic medium primary</td>
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<td>Gaelic learners primary</td>
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<td>Gaelic medium secondary: Gaelic taught through Gaelic</td>
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<td>Gaelic medium secondary: some subjects other than Gaelic taught through Gaelic</td>
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<td>Gaelic learners secondary</td>
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Sociolinguistic surveys in other contexts, such as Irish (see CILAR, 1975; Ó Riagáin, 1988; Ó Giollagáin, 2007), have shown that linguistic ability is highly variable amongst those who have gained competence through the education system.

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4 The Census of Pupils in Scotland 2005-2009 do not disaggregate data between primary and secondary school education, or between Gaelic-medium and Gaelic learner classes.
system and the fragmented evidence in Scotland suggests likewise (see Milligan, 2010; Müller, 2006). There is no evidence to suggest that the GM education system is succeeding in transforming those who come to school as English speakers into active Gaelic speakers, and whether the outcome is geographically variable. Indeed, research on the provision and attainment of Gaelic in secondary education (see Galloway, 2010; O’Hanlon et al., 2010) suggests that continuity in the GM secondary education sector is severely undermining the capacity of GM education to help second-language speakers obtain fluency in the language. Whilst the number of secondary pupils taking learners classes has increased to 3064 (Pupils in Scotland, 2013) and retention is reported to be high between GM primary classes and studying Gàidhlig in S1, there has been a decline in those studying for Higher or Advanced Higher qualifications (O’Hanlon et al., 2010). Nonetheless, the education system is central to the production of new speakers of Gaelic: 44 percent of all Gaelic speakers under the age of 16 were identified by the 2001 census as being raised in households in which no adult spoke Gaelic; in 2011 only 43 percent of Gaelic speakers lived in a household where Gaelic was spoken and only 525 pupils identified Gaelic as their home language in 2013 (Pupils in Scotland, 2013).

When discussing Gaelic language proficiency and attainment in the primary school, it is important to keep in mind, therefore, that, typically, many children enrolled in GME do not come from homes where Gaelic language is used and are therefore learning the language as a new, additional language (HMIE, 2011). If only a small minority of children in GME have Gaelic as their first language before starting school then it is clear that the immersion process at nursery and the early stages of primary school is influential in developing Gaelic language use. Recommendations for GME state that children at pre-school and early stages should develop their Gaelic language in a total immersion setting, where Gaelic is the only language of communication. This should then lead to a period of immersion where English is introduced and, as with other curricular areas, taught through the medium of Gaelic (HMIE, 2011).

Guidance from Curriculum for Excellence states “In Gàidhlig medium classes learning and teaching is wholly through Gàidhlig during the immersion phase from P1 to P3. 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” (Education Scotland, 2007; 3). Emphasis is placed on developing oral competence in Gaelic, “an emphasis needs to be placed on listening and talking at all stages to allow learners to practise, use and enrich their Gàidhlig” (Education Scotland, 2007; 3). The aim of best immersion practice is for children to become equally proficient in both Gaelic and English, achieving “equal fluency and literacy in both Gaelic and English” (HMIE, 2011; 3).

Previous research on attainment in GM children by Johnstone et al (1999) and O’Hanlon et al (2010) indicate that, “children are not being disadvantaged in comparison with children educated through English” (Johnstone, 2000; 12) and in fact, “in many but not all instances they out-performed English–medium pupils and in addition gained the advantage of becoming proficient in two languages” (Johnstone 2000; 12). A more recent study on Gaelic attainment, as measured by criterion referenced tests to measure attainment against curricular expectations, also found that academic achievement by pupils in GME was of a good standard. By the end of primary school, pupils “judged by their schools to have reached the level of attainment expected of pupils at that stage (Level D of the S-14 Curriculum)” in all four skills in English, Science and Mathematics (O’Hanlon et al 2010; 22). In addition to attaining the levels expected of them in English, Maths and Science, results also indicated that most GM pupils also attain this level in Gaelic reading, writing, talking and listening (ibid.), confirming that GM children are not disadvantaged in terms of attainment in these subjects. There is also weak evidence to indicate that in Primary 7 and S2, “Gaelic-

6Stuart Dunmore, the Soillese Research Student based at the University of Edinburgh is conducting his doctoral research into Gaelic language use amongst adults who have been educated through the medium of Gaelic in Scotland.

6According to Robasdan (2006), only 50 percent of GME primary school pupils transfer to secondary school continue in any form of GM education.
medium or Gàidhlig pupils might now have higher attainment than the English-medium of non-Gàidhlig pupils in English reading and writing” (O’Hanlon et al, 2010; 20), perhaps demonstrating the advantages of bilingualism found in studies in other languages.

Turning to Gaelic skills specifically, Johnstone et al (1999) found that by Primary 7, GM pupils performed, “only slightly below what would be expected in terms of the national targets” in Gaelic listening, talking and reading (Johnstone et al, 2000: 5). However, results indicated that “performance in Gaelic writing was considerably below expected performance” and it was recommended that this area of learning and teaching required further development. However, the research by O’Hanlon et al (2010) indicated that there was no observable difference in attainment between Gaelic writing, reading, listening and talking at Primary 7. They did find some evidence, however, that Gaelic-medium pupils’ attainment in English overtakes their attainment in Gaelic by Primary 7. Although pupils in Gaelic-medium were judged to have attained the expected Level for Gaelic in Primary 7 there seems to be a noticeable gap between attainment in Gaelic and attainment in English (ibid.). The authors identify that lower attainment in Gaelic is likely attributable to a range of factors, including the fact that some children’s first language is English and not Gaelic, English is spoken more often in the home compared to Gaelic, fewer parents are able to support children with Gaelic homework and there is less support from the community in terms of Gaelic clubs for children. These are certainly issues in areas with little or no community Gaelic, but the report also found evidence to suggest that the dominance of English in communities where Gaelic is still spoken, could have an impact on attainment by Primary 7. Whilst there is formal guidance for implementing immersion from the pre-school upwards, research indicates that there is a “lack of shared understanding” (HMIE, 2011; 4) about the terms ‘total immersion’ and ‘immersion’, with inconsistencies in interpretation across schools and authorities (HMIE, 2011). The results of this can be that some schools may provide less of an immersion experience than others. Currently, no national guidance is available to ensure that there is consistent, good practice across schools and authorities (HMIE, 2011). Whilst the existing evidence suggests that, by Primary 7, “there are no associations between Gaelic-medium teaching time and attainment in Gaelic” (O’Hanlon et al, 2010; 38), this is an area requiring further research.

In summary, whilst existing research evidence suggests that attainment in both English and Gaelic is of the required standard when children reach the Primary 7 stage, it appears that Gaelic language levels tend to be slightly lower than those in English language at this stage. As well as analysing the Gaelic language spoken by a sample of GM pupils, this study focuses on the attitudes these children have to Gaelic and also considers the issues related to Gaelic language development from the point of view of GM practitioners.

2.3 Current Descriptions of Scottish Gaelic

Since Celtic studies began as an academic discipline there have been many types of descriptions of Gaelic: there are numerous philological examinations of how Scottish Gaelic (ScG) relates to Modern Irish, Common Gaelic and Old Irish (e.g. Jackson, 1968; O’Rahilly, 1932; Ó Buachalla, 2002); there are studies of separate dialects (e.g. Holmer, 1962; Borgstrøm, 1940, 1941; Ofstedal, 1956; Grannd 2000, 2002) and the invaluable Survey of the Gaelic Dialects of Scotland (SGDS) (1997); there are also plentiful scholarly discussions of particular aspects of phonology, morphology and syntax and a handful of descriptive grammar texts, some with the particular function of being used as a teaching tool or reference (Calder, 1923; Ó Maolalaigh, 1998). This section aims to provide a modern standard against which we can compare the Gaelic of the school pupils who participated in this study. However unlike, for example, Irish and other languages there is no official standard against which to compare Gaelic; Gramadach na Gaeilge agus Litriú na Gaeilge - An Caighdeán Oifigiúil (*)(The Grammar of Irish the Orthography of Irish - The Official Standard*) was first published in 1958 and has been most recently revised in 2012.
In looking for a model against which we could compare the pupils’ language we looked for texts which were accessible, recently published and not specific to any one dialect (although it would be interesting at a future time to compare Gaelic as spoken in the Primary where the fieldwork was carried out with the Gaelic as recorded in the SGDS). We chose as our models of modern standard Gaelic Bauer’s *Blas na Gàidhlig* (2011) and Lamb’s *Scottish Gaelic* (2001); these provide descriptions of both the sounds and structures of the language against which particular elements of the Gaelic heard in the GME environment can be compared.

Bauer’s (2011) text classes itself as ‘the Practical Guide to Gaelic Pronunciation’: it is not a history of how Gaelic pronunciation has come to be what it is; it is a tool for teachers and learners of the language which offers authentic descriptions of Gaelic phonemes. Unlike the fairly numerous descriptions of different Gaelic dialects, this text attempts to offer a ‘Common Gaelic Pronunciation’: ‘a pronunciation that is easily understood by most Gaelic speakers’ (ibid: 20). The book is split into several sections and from these one can pull out the main characteristics of Gaelic pronunciation:

- front and back vowels and the importance of distinguishing between long and short versions.
- the consonants: stop, nasals, liquids, taps and trills, fricatives and gutturals. Importantly this section includes a useful explanation on Gaelic voicing and unvoicing.

In addition to looking at the individual sounds which make up Gaelic, this guide offers useful guidance on the phonology of the language. The way in which the author has broken down complex issues of linguistic description could be quite useful when ‘measuring’ young speakers’ Gaelic. The following features are included:

- diphthongs: combinations of vowel sounds which count as one sound (Bauer isn’t able to be precise about the number but he says nine will do, although there may be as many as 40)
- hiatus: the feature keeping two vowel sounds which occur next to each other separate; the format of this can vary from dialect to dialect.
- nasal vowels: producing vowel sounds with a lowered velum (i.e. through your nose).
- lenition: a common form of initial mutation governed by a set of grammatical rules where consonants are ‘softened’.
- slenderisation: the term for palatalisation in Gaelic.
- pre-aspiration: the ‘puff of air’ found before orthographic ‘c’, ‘p’ and ‘t’.

The transcriptions, descriptions and sound files make this book a very useful tool not only for Gaelic learners and teachers, but also potentially as a simple and accessible scale against which to measure Gaelic. Lamb (2001) is similarly careful to describe what his book is, or rather is not: he makes the point in his introduction to his book that it is not ‘a complete grammar’ and that ‘such a publication is a desideratum of ScG linguistics and pedagogy’ (ibid: 4): ten years after the publication of this book, this is still the case.

Lamb’s text is useful in that it provides relatively accessible information on the morphology and syntax of Gaelic.

With regard to morphological features, Lamb makes the following points:

- ScG is largely a **fusional language** - more so with pronominal forms (e.g. prepositional pronouns) than with verbs.
- ScG stems can be altered in a number of ways - prefixation, suffication, stem modification, suppletion.

**Nominal morphology**: Lamb includes a description of how the Gaelic nominal system declines for case, definiteness, number, gender and person with lenition and palatalisation marking many of the features -- importantly he does note that there is a ‘levelling of morphological contrasts’ (ibid: 25) occurring in the language.
- **Pronouns**: the practice of combining pronouns to form 'hybrids' prepositional pronouns and prepositional possessive pronouns was mentioned above; additionally pronouns can have emphatic suffixes; possessive, prepositional or prepositional pronouns can be used instead of simple pronouns in particular circumstances; demonstrative pronouns are encoded with three degrees of proximity or specificity; reflexive and reciprocal pronouns are seldom used (and not in the way English / French might use them); interrogative pronouns - only càite (where) takes the independent form of the verb, whereas the others take either dependent or relative forms; indefinite pronouns are encoded either with air chòireigin or air bith / ge be / as bith.

- **Numerals**: Lamb describes the 'traditional' cardinal system of counting, as opposed to the one which is currently taught in schools; there is an ordinal system (mostly used up to 10) and numerical pronouns.

- **Adjectives**: there are both pre- and post- nominal adjectives in Gaelic - pre-nominal adjectives usually lenite a following noun; post-nominal adjectives can be attributive and predicative, where there is a string of adjectives they occur in size-quality-colour order and when attributive must agree with head noun for gender, number and case. Most adjectives have a comparative form; the marker nas is used for comparative adjectives and as is used for superlative adjectives as this contains the copula traditionally this would need to agree in tense with the main verb (changing to na bu in past and conditional); Lamb notes that this distinction is not usually upheld in speech practices of younger people.

- **Adverbs**: Lamb notes that the grammatical category of adverb is not very helpful in ScG as they are quite different to other languages, according to him the easiest way to sort adverbs is by function, so he discusses adverbs of: manner, time, direction/location and degree (ibid: 44).

- **Prepositions**: Gaelic has three classes of prepositions: simple (which can incorporate pronominal elements); compound consisting of adjective, adverb or noun + simple preposition; complex consisting of simple preposition + noun. Simple prepositions take the dative case (although a few take nom. / acc. or genitive); some cause lenition of following noun; some can combine with the definite article. As noted already, prepositions can be inflected for person, gender and number as can possessive prepositional pronouns.

- **Verbal morphology**: Gaelic is a VSO (verb-subject-object) language; Lamb points out, however, that the initial verb is not always the predicating element and he also summarises that the verbal system is 'somewhat complex' (ibid: 51).

  - Lamb discusses 'distribution' of the verb and how the position of the verbal noun in periphrastic utterances 'can vary depending on which aspectual / modal prepositions are employed' (ibid).
  - Verb structure depends on whether a verb is weak (regular) or strong (irregular); Lamb points out the difference between the dependent and independent forms of the verbs will differ dependent upon whether they are weak or strong.
  - Person and number are only marked in certain tenses/moods e.g. chuirinn (conditional) etc, and cuirim (imperative) etc.
  - When a verbal noun takes a pronoun object, it is incorporated in the form of a possessive prepositional pronoun e.g. tha mi ga thuigsinn (I understand it).
  - Lamb quotes Macaulay (1992) considerably in his discussion of tense and aspect in Gaelic: a crude summary of this is that tense and aspect in Gaelic and English do not coalesce precisely. His discussion on 'mode' is lengthy, but of particular significance is the summary of how utterances expressing obligation and ability are structured with e.g. is/b' urrainn, we get is urrainn dhuibh sin a dhéanamh (is urrainn + do + (NP) + (NPOBJ) + INF. Lamb goes on to consider negation of verbs, causative constructions, passives and impersonals, participles and gerunds.
Lamb's morphological analysis of Gaelic (above) is a useful description; his text continues with a syntactical analysis of the language, but as this study is not proposing a syntactical deconstruction of the children's language, a summary of the main points made by Lamb in that regard are not necessary here. Where Lamb's text is of further relevance to this study is in his discussion of the 'Influence of English' (ibid: 98-100). With regard to borrowed words, Lamb suggests that 'almost any content word (e.g. nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and verbal nouns) can be adopted without alteration' (ibid); Lamb notes that prepositions are rarely borrowed; mutations of borrowed words may or may not occur. Lamb also notes the phenomenon of borrowing English idioms into Gaelic (calquing).

Lamb's description of Gaelic, above, is technical and not aimed at a general readership or for pedagogical purposes, however, the description he gives of Gaelic aligns completely with the form of the language as given in the online teaching resource *Mìrean* ([http://storiann.co.uk/mirean/introduction](http://storiann.co.uk/mirean/introduction) - accessed 20 May 2014), and to which the teachers interviewed for this research project referred. While *Mìrean* is not a prescribed resource, it has been created with the explicit aim of offering "a simple introduction to the basics of Gaelic grammar and suggests ways, with support material, of bringing on pupils' Gaelic"; it is thus also a useful representation of a perceived standard.

While the above descriptions purport to relate to a 'standard Gaelic', one of the issues informing much of this research concerns the perceived difference between the concept of standard Gaelic and current realisation practices amongst young speakers of Gaelic in the GM sector. Before the growth of GME, MacAulay (1986) had already pointed to the phenomenon of language change in his eponymously named article 'New Gaelic' which pointed to various changes in Gaelic lexis, morphology and phonology. Bateman (2010) reiterates MacAulay's point that the spoken language is very different to the written standard that she (and others) attempt to teach. Bateman points out various features that her (university Gaelic) students use: "Tha sèimheachadh gu tric a dhith leis an alt san tuiseal tabhartach, agus gun chaolachadh ann am faclan boireann san tuiseal tabhartach (m.e. anns a’ chraobh; cf. anns a’ chraobh) no ann am faclan ginideach (m.e. biadh an uan; cf. biadh an uain)." (ibid. 89) Dorian (1981) in her seminal work on language death (based on the East Sutherland dialect of Gaelic [ESG]) indicated in relation to ESG that reduction of grammatical systems often occurred in language shift situation. Most recently Cole (2013) in her analysis of morphological changes in Uist Gaelic has usefully summarised theories on the practice of language simplification in language shift situations:

a) Structural change is motivated by the merger of grammatical categories in contact languages to produce one system with two forms (Sasse 1992b).

b) Structural change is the result of interrupted transmission of the language as the community shifts from the minority to the dominant language (Thomason 2001).

c) Structural change is the result of the universal tendency for languages to drift in a particular, predictable direction as a result of, for example, analogical levelling and extension, grammaticalisation and loss of final unstressed syllables (Sapir 1921, McMahon 1994), and would be likely to arise regardless of external factors (Cole 2013: 119).

Although this study does not add significantly to the theoretical understanding of language shift processes in linguistic terms, it contributes to our understanding of how Gaelic, as used in the GME environment, relates to the perceived Gaelic standard.
3  Research Methodology

3.1  Method Rationale

A case study approach was adopted for this study since a ‘single instance of a bounded system, for example... a class, a school,... provides a unique example of real people in real situations’ (Cohen et al. p.181) which can be designed to illustrate a more general principle (Nisbet and Watt 1984:72) and can be used as an exploratory pilot study for future research. Whilst open to wide interpretation, a case facilitates investigating a phenomenon (i.e. language use) in context whilst drawing on a variety of data sources and methods. This allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events and to construct the understandings from multiple facets and lenses (Creswell, 2012; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Since the research lies at the intersection of social, linguistic and pedagogic factors, it was important to enable different types of data to be gathered which would enable a wider picture to be understood. That is, classroom language which encompasses learning and social interaction is inextricably linked to the pedagogic environment and the individuals within. Foocussing on one element in isolation could only present a partial picture.

In order to collect linguistic and pedagogic data in situ, it was decided to use a mixed methods interventionist approach which would try to elicit pupil language from a data-rich setting where pupils were encouraged to interact through tasks including group work and teacher dialogue. The regular teacher preferred the research team to set up tasks and activities which would generate data rather than design the tasks herself. Methods included a language-rich series of tasks involving pupil participation in class, in groups and individually to generate the data both oral and written, a combination of audio and visual recordings of language collected in situ, written examples of language practice, participant self-reporting on language attitude and usage, and pupil observation - to generate a multiple data source. Interviews with teachers at this school into the experiences of learning and teaching Gaelic in primary were also collected.

The data fall into three types: language corpus data, to be analysed using content/discourse analysis to understand the nature of the language used and its linguistic features; qualitative and quantitative attitudinal data, to generate an understanding of how learners perceive their own Gaelic language ‘performance’, and that of others; and pedagogic data to understand better the role of the classroom context, approaches to learning and the tasks used to support learning, supplemented by the teacher interview data.

Any study of language use in the classroom has to take account of the ways in which language is typically used by all those within a particular social context – in this case the class teacher (CT) and her pupils. In immersion settings, ways in which languages are used in order to learn are well-documented. Immersion classrooms studies on the progression of linguistic competence of children over a period of time also highlight the potential differences between the oral language and writing skills in those instances where the children are being educated through a second or additional language. Whilst this study is not specifically focussing on classroom interaction, nonetheless opportunities for pupils to use the language for learning gains, social chat, procedural understanding, feedback and cognitive engagement will be dependent upon the learning context and the teaching and learning approach applied (Lyster, 2007). Arguably a transmission model affords fewer opportunities for pupil discussion and interaction than a more socially-constructed dialogic learning environment. Inevitably the variables which impact on learning are dependent on particular learning conditions. In this particular context we chose to document classroom interaction through the use of intervention tasks by a researcher-teacher and through video capture of language in use.
3.2 Working with the School and Designing the Task for Collecting Language Data

Using our contacts with associate tutors from the School of Education we identified a primary school where there is still some Gaelic spoken in the community and which had staff willing to support our research project. We chose to locate our study in such an area so that we would be able to compare the language of the children who have Gaelic in the home to the language of those who do not; it is recognised that it would be of value to replicate this study in areas which are both stronger and weaker Gaelic communities. We contacted the case school in December 2012 to ascertain interest in collaboration. Subsequently ethical approval was sought and achieved from the University of Aberdeen’s relevant research ethics committee and, adhering to ethical procedures, we negotiated access to the school via the Head Teacher and then worked with the Depute Head Teacher (DHT). Our focus was on pupils at the upper stages of primary school and the DHT facilitated communication between us and the class teacher prior to our arrival. Written parental informed consent was achieved.

The aim of the class visit was to i) record examples of pupils’ language in their regular environment and, ii) to discuss with them their own attitudes towards Gaelic. In order to fulfil our first aim we had to ensure that the children felt relaxed and engaged in their tasks. The first morning’s activities focussed largely around an oral task with several component parts. Firstly, pupils and lesson leaders engaged in a question and answer session on the topic: thus introducing the topic and vocabulary and serving as a settling activity. Next, informal pair or group task work was carried out during which pupils were required to talk to one another (recorded using audio-recorders) thus giving us examples of casual speech. In an attempt to capture them giving more formal ‘performed’ speech we finally required them to interview one another about their task using video-cameras.

3.3 Designing the Language Attitudes Data Collection Tools

A short questionnaire was designed to elicit the language attitudes of all pupils in the class. The survey consisted of 19 items, using 5-point rating scales, to gain insights into how learners perceived their Gaelic and English language skills and to assess various learner attitudes to Gaelic (see Appendix 1: Questionnaire). Additionally, the questionnaire collected data on pupils’ home language environment and background. The questionnaire was designed to collect data on four parameters:

- Perceptions of others’ attitudes towards their identity as Gaelic speakers
- Attitudes towards using Gaelic
- Expectations of their future use of Gaelic
- Their attitudes towards bilingualism.

The questionnaire data generated an overview of the language background of the class and of their attitudes to Gaelic language, which was subject to descriptive analysis using SPSS. These data were supplemented with semi-structured interviews with a sample of eleven pupils. Pupils were interviewed in pairs by a researcher, who followed a topic-guide structured by way of the following key areas:

- Language use in the home
- Experiences of language development
- The use of Gaelic out of school
- Pupils’ affective attitudes towards Gaelic.

The interviews were recorded and fully transcribed to facilitate in-depth thematic analysis of the attitudes, expectations and beliefs of learners towards Gaelic. The thematic analysis sought to identify commonalities and
differences within and between pupils through coding and analysing the themes as they emerged from the data.

Interviewing Education Practitioners

In order to contextualise more accurately our work in the GME environment we decided it would be appropriate to interview a small number of education practitioners. To this end we carried out interviews with two Gaelic medium classroom practitioners: the Deputy Head who teaches at the early-stages and is also involved in the professional development of Gaelic medium teachers, and the Class Teacher. Face-to-face interviews were carried out in Gaelic with both teachers and they were asked how they encourage Gaelic language acquisition and accuracy and the challenges.

3.3 Description of School Data Collection

The aim of the task was to encourage the children to speak to each other in small groups or pairs so that their language use could be recorded; a lesson was planned on a topic that the pupils could easily relate to, but also one that would not deviate from their normal class activity relating to Curriculum for Excellence. The Research Team delivered a lesson to the children on the topic of 'islands' - see Appendix 2 for the lesson plan.

The Deputy Head Teacher and the Class Teacher had identified four children who could be the focus of the study: these children represented a mix of gender and home language backgrounds (they were also recommended for their normal willingness to participate in class activities). The four children come from the following linguistic background (in line with ethical research procedures, these are not the real names of the children):

Hazel (HAZ) (P5) no Gaelic at home (sibling in GME) although her mother is learning Gaelic

Christopher (CHR) (P6) no Gaelic at home (sibling in GME) - had moved to this school from a big mainland Gaelic medium school.

Calum (CAL) (P6) Gaelic spoken at home

Seòras (SEÒ) (P6) Gaelic spoken at home

All 18 children participated in the activities; there was an initial whole-class discussion after which the class split into groups / pairs to perform the various oral tasks: the four pupils who are the focus of this study worked together in two pairs. We asked the pupils to 'create' their own island: they had to discuss with each what the island would be like (we clearly used the phrase cò ris a tha e coltach – what is it like). The pupils were asked to think about their island (they could take notes if they wanted to), before mapping it; while they worked they were recorded talking to each other. The pupils were happy with this arrangement and did not pay any particular attention to the audio-recorders. All pupils were recorded doing this activity, although only data from 4 focus pupils is represented here.

The second 'island' activity involved the children making videos of themselves using video-cameras: the pupils interviewed each other about their islands. The pupils all enjoyed using the video-cameras and were very engaged with the task in hand. The pupils did not only conduct interviews, they also spontaneously started interviewing other groups: this can be viewed as an indication of how relaxed they were with this speaking activity. The children were engaged in this task for approximately 45 minutes. The purpose of this second exercise was to capture examples of 'performed' speech. Both of these exercises took up one school morning.

The third element of our work with the pupils was to explore the attitudes of the group towards speaking Gaelic. Language attitude surveys were distributed among the whole group: the pupils were asked to answer freely and honestly and were told that there were no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. Following this about half of the pupils were selected for interview in depth about their attitude towards Gaelic: the four children already selected and a number
of other pupils who had been observed to be open and responsive during class the previous day. The pupils were interviewed in pairs: all the semi-structured interviews were recorded lasting between 10 and 20 minutes each.

4 Introduction to Research Findings

4.1 The Study Setting

Our case-study class of primary 5-6 pupils is in a dual-medium school. There are over 90 pupils in the GM stream, and since 2005 children in Gaelic medium have accounted for between 40 to 50 percent of all children in the school. In the GM stream the children are split into five classes. Locally, some forty percent of the local community had some knowledge of Gaelic at the 2011 census, and a third could speak Gaelic. A higher percentage of children of school-going age are Gaelic speakers, however, reflecting the strength of GME in the area: 45 percent of children aged 5-17 were recorded as Gaelic speakers in 2011.

In the GM classroom, much of a child’s learning takes place in interaction with peers as well as through instruction from the teacher. The classroom is a communicative, content-based environment, with the goal being to support pupils to learn Gaelic and to learn subject matter through the medium of Gaelic. The national curriculum means there is little opportunity to focus on Gaelic as a language; rather the learning is achieved through using the language. The vocabulary which the teacher uses is usually selected to ensure pupils have the language they need to interact or to carry out tasks. As such, in any Gaelic-medium classroom the emphasis is generally on ‘getting things done’ and not on the accuracy in using certain grammatical features. There is no standard procedure for feedback on errors, which means teachers have the freedom to adopt the practices which they judge to be most appropriate and/or effective.

4.2 Structure of Research Findings

The remainder of this report consists of the research findings which have been organised as follows:

- analysis of the pupils’ language: first analysing the structures used and their relationship to the standard models identified in the literature review (section 2.1), and then
- an analysis of how the pupils manage and negotiate their language production: considering how they cope when they lack a vocabulary item; what type of lexicon they use and how they interact with one another
- an analysis of the pupils’ attitudes towards Gaelic based on the interviews and questionnaires
- analyses of the education practitioners’ interviews.

5 Analysis and Discussion of Pupils’ Language

Although we collected 400 minutes of recorded Gaelic, only 80 minutes are used here for the detailed linguistic analysis. The following discussion is based on analysis of the following:

- audio recording of Pairs A (Hazel and Christopher) and B (Calum and Seòras) working together on their task
- interview with Pair A

Pair A have little or no Gaelic in the home, whereas pair B do have Gaelic at home.
5.1 Introduction to the Linguistic Analysis

Morphology and structure

Lamb (2003) indicated that he had noticed a ‘levelling of morphological contrasts’ in the Gaelic nominal system: noted below are comments on how nouns are treated with regard to gender, case and number. In addition to an analysis of how the children use nouns there is a section on verbal morphology and, more generally, the children’s flexibility with tenses; accuracy in use of dependent and independent forms of the verbs; usage of the copula and substantive verb ‘to be’; and treatment of auxiliary verbs.

Vocabulary and idiom

The research team analysed instances of English usage and noted non-standard use of idiom, specifically English calques in the Gaelic.

Pronunciation

As noted in the introduction this is not an in-depth phonological analysis: we do, however, offer comments on several pronunciation features (preaspiration, vowel lengths, quality of certain consonants).

In this section we refer to the children simply as A1 (Hazel) and A2 (Christopher), who have little or no Gaelic at home, and B1 (Calum) and B2 (Seòras), who do have Gaelic at home. We have adopted this system in this section so that it easier to contrast the Gaelic of the two pairs. For the purpose of the analysis we explored the corpus to find examples of the above features: it was not always possible, however, to give examples from both pairs.

5.2 Nouns

5.2.1 Gender

There are two genders in Gaelic: masculine and feminine. Noted below (Table 2) are five nouns in the nominative case: altogether they occur 10 times in the corpus; five times they show gender according to standard convention, and the rest of the time they are allocated the ‘wrong’ gender. Interestingly, speakers don’t use the same gender / definite article (gender marker) all the time. (CAL) has both an t-eilean and an eilean and (SEÒ) has both an gealach and a’ ghealach in nominative positions.

Gender in Gaelic can be marked at the start of a word by the form of the definite article and also according to whether or not any lenition has taken place; in an indefinite noun gender would be shown in standard written Gaelic by lenition of the adjective. It seems that these 2 speakers are aware that there are different definite articles and that lenition can occur here, but don’t know how to apply this according to standard convention.
Table 2 Gender in the Nominative Case

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Non-standard</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td><em>tha an t-eilean</em></td>
<td><em>tha an eilean mar</em></td>
<td>island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td><em>a’ghrian</em></td>
<td><em>an gearr</em></td>
<td>sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td><em>a’ ghealach</em></td>
<td><em>an ghealach</em></td>
<td>moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td><em>a’ ghealach</em></td>
<td><em>an gealach</em></td>
<td>moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>an craobh</em></td>
<td><em>an crach</em></td>
<td>tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td><em>an uisge</em></td>
<td><em>an uisg</em></td>
<td>water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td><em>craobh beag</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>tree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.2 The Plural

In standard Gaelic monosyllabic adjectives are suffixed with *-a* in plural situations. B2 does this once when appropriate, but doesn't do it another time (a sentence or two later):

B2 *Sin taighean mòr* there's big houses

B2 *toilaidh beaga* little building

The nominative plural definite article is *na* when this is used with a noun which starts with a vowel *h-* is normally interjected. There were six places where this would have been possible in the conversation (using three nouns): five by B1 and one by B2; instead of the theoretical standard (as presented in the first column below) a non-standard form is given:

Table 3 Plural Definite Articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Non-standard</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>na h-eileanan</em></td>
<td><em>na eileanan</em></td>
<td>the islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>na h-uinneagan</em></td>
<td><em>na uinneagan</em></td>
<td>the windows</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.3 The Dative Case

Standard Gaelic would normally require a dative case after a preposition when the noun is definite: the form of the dative noun and the definite article would depend on the gender of the noun and also on the initial letter of the noun. Basically, where possible both masculine and feminine nouns lenite and feminine nouns should also have an internal mutation known as 'slenderisation' (palatalisation) of the last consonant. For the most part the children realised the dative according to standard conventions:

---

7. We heard more use of it correctly with the placename An t-Eilean Sgitheanach; although the pupils would keep in the eclipsis (t-) in the dative case, when this would not be the standard.
Table 4 Dative Case

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Non-standard</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B2 tòrr dhen mhuir</td>
<td>a lot of the sea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1 anns a’ mheadhan</td>
<td>in the middle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1 anns a’ mhuir</td>
<td>in the sea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2 anns a’ chornair</td>
<td>in the corner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2 aig a’ mhullach</td>
<td>at the top</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1 tron mheadhan</td>
<td>through the middle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1 air an eilean</td>
<td>on the island</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1 aig a’ bhonn</td>
<td>at the bottom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1 den chumadh</td>
<td>of the shape</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1 Bidh e mar an size den duilleag*</td>
<td>It will be like the size of the page</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1 anns a’ pios</td>
<td>in the piece</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This is the only example where slenderisation could have occurred according to the parameters of standard Gaelic, but it was not audible.

Table 4 demonstrates that speakers from both pairs were able to use the dative according to standard convention: the only time there is evidence of non-standard usage is from A1 (no Gaelic in the home), although, as illustrated, she also gave standard realisations of the case.

5.2.4 The Genitive Case

In standard Gaelic a nouns would go into the genitive case in certain conditions: joining two nouns in a possessive relationship; after verbal nouns; following the infinitive; after compound prepositions (which do not end in a simple preposition) and after certain simple prepositions. Noted below is a discussion of how the young speakers dealt with nouns in two of these situations.

In the pair with Gaelic at home there were four places in the corpus where one could have expected to hear the genitive when the speakers were joining two nouns:

1. B2 Eilean na Rionnag Island of the Star(s)
2. B1 Eilean nan Rionnag Island of the Stars
3. B2 Eilean an Rionnag Island of the Star
4. B2 caisteal nam beanntan castle of the mountains

Examples 1, 2 and 3 are all representations of the same name (the name the children assigned to their imaginary island they were creating): when linking two definite nouns in Gaelic (as here), one would normally expect to find one definite article between the nouns and this article will show case according to gender or number; these young speakers have followed the standard pattern which would require no definite article at the beginning of the noun phrase. Rionnag is a feminine noun and as shown above in example 1 this would require the use of na as the definite article; according to the conventions of standard Gaelic we would also have expected to hear the palatalisation (or slenderisation) of the final (velar) consonant (represented rionnaig orthographically): this change, however, was not audible on the recording (although it would be fair to note that it is difficult to always hear this change). It should be noted that na is also the nominative plural definite article; however given that the same speaker uses a different singular definite article later, it may be safe to assume that he was attempting to use a case marker.
Example 2 again demonstrates a plausible genitive: *nan* being the form of the definite article used with genitive plurals; this would therefore translate as 'Island of the Stars': from the drawing the children did and from their discussion, this was not what they intended to infer.

In Example 3 the form of the definite article would have been correct if Rionnag were a masculine noun, but we would still have expected palatalisation of the final consonant.

Example 4 is an example of a genitive plural with correct definite article for genitive plural according to standard Gaelic patterning.

While Pair B have named one of their islands after a star, they have named another one after the moon: this one, however, causes some problem to one of the speakers, as although B1 uses a genitive definite article before the noun, he includes a definite article before *eilean*, which would not happen in standard Gaelic:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Non-standard</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Air eilean na gealaich</em></td>
<td>B1 <em>air an eilean na gealach</em></td>
<td>On the island of the moon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the examples so far showing genitive possessive positions occur in Pair B; the only time two nouns joined together in pseudo-genitive construction occur in the speech Pair A (for whom Gaelic is not used in the home) we get:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Non-standard</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entrance <em>a’ bheòil</em></td>
<td>A2 <em>an entrance am beul</em></td>
<td>The entrance of the mouth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here there are two definite articles and no attempt is made to show mutations with the second noun. It is significant that there are no other instances in the corpus of Pair A where a genitive might have occurred; it might have been possible that they attempted to express this sentiment using the English structure 'of the' (*den*) instead, but this is not verified by the data.

Another place we might expect to find genitives in Gaelic is after compound prepositions: given that the exercise the children were doing was about designing a location, there was plenty of opportunity to use this type of preposition. We find a definite noun once after a compound preposition in the speech of Pair A and nine times from Pair B: of these there was only one which demonstrated case marking according to standard Gaelic and two instances where some marking occurred marked case.
Table 5 Genitive Case Following Compound Prepositions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Showing case</th>
<th>Possible case marking</th>
<th>Case not marked according to standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1 air feadh an àite</td>
<td>B2 timcheall an eilean</td>
<td>A2 Dè mu dheidhinn na reachdan?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>throughout the place</td>
<td>around the island</td>
<td>What about the statues?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2 dè mu dheidhinn na ratraid?</td>
<td></td>
<td>B2 Dè mu dheidhinn na toglaichean?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what about the road?</td>
<td></td>
<td>What about the buildings?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2 Agus dè mu dheidhinn na taighean?</td>
<td></td>
<td>B2 what about the houses?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1 airson na báttaichean</td>
<td></td>
<td>B2 'son am bàta?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for the boats</td>
<td></td>
<td>for the boat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2 airson na báttaichean</td>
<td></td>
<td>B1 a' cleachdadh am fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for the boats</td>
<td></td>
<td>using the one</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again it is significant that Pair A, with one exception, do not use any compound prepositions and thus there are very few examples which we could use for analysis.

5.3 Verbs

5.3.1 Versatility with Tenses

The young speakers all seemed confident with a variety of verbal formats. Unfortunately the task in hand did not require them to speak much about past events so there are not many examples of verbs in the past tense in the corpus. We did however get examples of the verb 'to be' in present and future, including some irregular verbs in the future, conditional mood, imperatives, the copula and reported speech forms.

There was very little usage of irregular verbs: A2 used chluinn mi (I heard) for a past tense of cluinntinn (hearing) instead of standard chuala mi and we have recordings of B2 using a' déanamh (doing) in the future nì mi sin (I will do that). He does not, however, always maintain the distinctions between the independent form of the verb nì where the verb stands alone without any of the frequent pre-verb modifiers (conjunctions, interrogative markers etc) and the dependent form of the verb déan (which we would expect to find after the pre-verb modifiers in standard Gaelic). So B2 gives both non-standard an nì mise e mar sin? (will I do it like that?) and standard an dèan mise taigh-òsta? (will I do a hotel?).

B2 does demonstrate versatility when he uses the conditional mood: he is the only speaker of the 4 to use it in any of the recordings. Significantly he maintains the synthetic first person singular ending -(a)inn: dè thòisichinn ris? (what would I start with) and thòisichinn ris (I would start with). Although (with the same verb) he does not use the synthetic ending for first person plural (not all dialects of Gaelic would have traditionally used this synthetic ending, at any rate): tòisicheadh sinn leis na eileanan eile mar an gealach (we would start with the other islands like the moon); an tòisicheadh sinn leis na eileanan eile (would we start with the other islands). B2 does not only use the conditional with one verb; he also uses the idiomatic: an canadh tu (would you say).

Again there are no examples of conditionals in Pair A.

5.3.2 Auxiliary Verbs and Main Verbs in the Same Sentence
In a Gaelic sentence with an auxiliary verb, standard Gaelic would require that the main verb goes at the end of the sentence and that the 2 verbs are separated by the subject first and then the direct object, for example

\[ \text{Faodaidh } sinn \quad \text{taigh} \quad a \text{ thogail} \quad \text{May we build a house} \]

AUXILIARY \quad SUBJECT \quad DIRECT OBJECT \quad MAIN VERB

The example of this type of construction given in Mìrean is chan urrainn dhomh càil fhàcin (I can't see anything).

This pattern was not used by any of our four speakers, although all four had utterances where we might have expected to hear this. In all eight places where this pattern would have occurred in 'standard Gaelic' the direct object came after the main verb, except in example 6 (below), however this phrase did not quite pattern onto standard Gaelic as the main verb was not lenited.

Table 6 Word Order With Auxiliary Verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Non-standard</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Faodaidh sinn am fear agamsa a chleachdadh.</td>
<td>B1 Faodaidh sinn a’ cleachdadh am fear agamsa.</td>
<td>We can use my one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Faodaidh tusa an taigh a dhèanamh.</td>
<td>B1 Faodaidh tusa a déanamh an taigh.</td>
<td>You can do the house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 An urrainn dhuinn mar sketch beag a dhèanamh?</td>
<td>B2 An urrainn dhuinn dèanamh mar sketch beag?</td>
<td>Can we, like, do a little sketch?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 A bheil thu ag iarraidh sin a dhèanamh?</td>
<td>A1 A bheil thu ag iarraidh dèanamh sin?</td>
<td>Do you want to do that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 ‘S urrainn dhut cù a dhèanamh.</td>
<td>A2 ‘S urrainn dhut dèanamh cù.</td>
<td>You can do a dog.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Tha mise ag iarraidh Gàidhlig a dhèanamh.</td>
<td>A1 Tha i childminder Gàidhlig a déanamh.</td>
<td>I want to do Gaelic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 An urrainn dhut sin a dhèanamh?</td>
<td>A1 An urrainn dhut dèanamh sin?</td>
<td>Can you do that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Chan urrainn dhaibh sin a dhèanamh.</td>
<td>A1 Chan urrainn dhaibh a dèanamh sin.</td>
<td>They can’t do that.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.3 Substantive v. Copula

As noted in the introductory section 2.3, Gaelic has two verbs 'to be': a substantive and a copula; as would be expected, there are very clear distinctions of when one should be used over the other. However, we found that the young speakers more often than not did not use the copula according to traditional conventions:

**Standard Usage**

B1 *tha fios aige gur e* (he knows that it is)

B2 *‘S e tür* (it's a tower)

**Non-standard usage**

B1 *tha seo eilean eile* (this is another island)

A1 *tha i childminder* (she is a childminder)

A1 *bidh seo uile a' mhuir* (this will all be the sea)

Both B1 and B2 demonstrated one instance of standard usage (although B1 also gave a non-standard example); A1, however, did not use the copula where it would be expected in standard Gaelic and A2 did not use it at all.
5.3.2 Verbs with pronouns

In standard Gaelic the form the direct object pronoun takes depends on a number of situations. Where it occurs with a verbal noun, it would combine with the aspect marker *ag* to give new compounds: there are dialects where this has never been the case, but most of the vibrant, native dialects would have had this as standard in recent years, although even as early as 1982 Donald MacAulay commented on how it was ceasing to occur in every instance in his native Bernera (MacAulay, 1982). An utterance such as ‘she is helping me’ would be *tha i gam chuideachadh* with *gam* including the pronoun. There are four places where we might have found this construction; in all but three the speakers do not use a standard-like form:

Table 7 Direct Object Pronoun and the Verbal Noun

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Non-standard</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Tha mi ga choimhead suas</td>
<td>A2 <em>Tha mi coimhead e suas</em></td>
<td>I am looking it up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Tha mise ga cuideachadh</td>
<td>A1 <em>Tha mise a’ cuideachadh ise</em></td>
<td>I help her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Tha isge gam chuideachadh</td>
<td>A1 <em>Tha ise a’ cuideachadh mise</em></td>
<td>She helps me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Bidh daoine gam chuideachadh</td>
<td>A1 <em>Bidh daoine gam cuideachadh</em></td>
<td>People help me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only two out the four speakers use this construction. In example four above, the compound of pronoun and aspect marker has been made but the speaker fails to lenite the following verb, as would have been expected following the first person singular, which from the context was clearly what the speaker intended.

We also get an example in the corpus of how a pronoun is used with an auxiliary verb and main verb: in standard Gaelic this would normally require the possessive pronoun to be used as the pronoun, and we do find this in the one example that occurred in the data. However, it is conflated with the aspect marker that would normally be found with the verbal noun structure above:

B2 *an urrainn thusa ga mo chuideachadh* (can you help me?)

The evidence from the morphological and structural analysis shows that the language practice of our test group does differ to standard Gaelic. Basic word order, Gaelic is a VSO language, is being maintained and there is a degree of maintenance of the gender and case system; however, there are significant changes with regard to word order in auxiliary phrases, the copula and with pronouns. From this small study it appears, also, that Pair B (Gaelic in the home) produced speech which contained more of the Gaelic features (even if not always according to standard paradigms) than Pair A; Pair A’s speech was curiously lacking in the features chosen for discussion: this may, or may not, have been related to the elicitation task.

5.4 Idioms & Pronunciation

5.4.1 Idioms

This section includes notes on, for the most, various unrelated features of the pupils’ language use. Further discussion of their idiom is found section 6 on language management and negotiation.
In Pair B we recorded the phrase ‘what's it called?’ / or ‘what's its name?’ (the same in Gaelic) four times: on each occasion we noted that the speakers did not always give the same form; we found the standard dè an t-ainm a th’ air once from B1, but also:

B2 dè an ainm a tha air
B2 dè an ainm
B1 dè tha an t-ainm air

We heard various forms of this phrase from many of the pupils during the class activity.

The most noticeable English calque in the speech of these young speakers was their use of mar (like) for the ubiquitous filler in the vernacular of young English speakers 'like', as in 'do you know what I mean, like' / 'it's like really big'. Gaelic mar can have the same meaning as 'like' in certain circumstances and seems to have been transposed into Gaelic to perform the same function as English 'like'. For one of the four speakers it has become as ubiquitous as 'like'.

In the conversation between Pair A, it occurs 193 times in 30 minutes out of a total of 1706 words (nearly 1 in every 9 words) . Between pair B 49 occurrences of 1136 (1 in 23 words).

A1 produced the following sentence:

Ach mar tha e uabhasach sàmhach oir tha e mar diomhaireach so chan eil ... tha e mar direach mar daoine mar special allowed a dol an sin mar - direach 's urrainn mar daoine diofraichte a' dol an sin.

But is is really quiet because it is like secret so no ... it is like just like people like special allowed to go there like - just like different people can go there.

Another example of how our young speakers have transposed the English 'like' into the Gaelic word 'mar' is in place of the traditional idiom cò ris a tha e coltach - ‘what's it like’. One of the key elements of the task was to describe a place: thus we repeatedly asked the question 'what's it like?' / cò ris a tha e coltach?. The phrase was first used during the introductory powerpoint slide show with different island images: the children were asked ó ris a tha an t-eilean seo coltach? / 'what's this island like'? and the children responded with descriptions (assisted by us to support their vocabulary learning). It is likely that the pupils will have encountered this idiom before, but were unable to use it themselves: instead they used a phrase based on the English syntax: dè bha e mar?. There are no recordings of the four pupils using this phrase, but we did find it in the recordings of the other class members.

5.4.2 Pronunciation

We were not able to perform detailed analysis of the children's pronunciation, however there was a clear difference in the authentic sounds of the Gaelic of the two pairs. Pair A, for example, were not proficient at marking vowel length (in contrast with pair B who did so consistently): e.g. A1 gave a short vowel in blàth (warm); A2, on the other hand, in a couple of places lengthened a short vowel e.g. leth (half) was long.

Pair A also struggled with words with hiatus: for A1 the word rathad (road) was entirely monosyllabic and A2 overemphasised the hiatus marker in adhar (air): it became a strong glottal continuant. A1’s pronunciation of rathad also demonstrated her difficulty with Gaelic orthographic ‘d’s and ‘t’s: here it ended with an (English) tip-dental /d/ as opposed to the (Gaelic) blade-dental phoneme. There were numerous other places where A1 had these English-sounding ‘d’s and ‘t’s: for example in tòrr, taighean and tràighean and also in iad - always tip-dental, as opposed to Gaelic blade-dental.
Pair B, on the other hand, demonstrated authentic 'd's and 't's and hiatus in the word rathad.

All pupils used preaspiration and fricative consonants effectively.

5.5 Summary

The detailed linguistic analysis of the children's speech has shown that certain features of Gaelic are not realised as they are in standard Gaelic.

The children clearly use different definite articles with different nouns, displaying an awareness of Gaelic's case and gender system: of all the cases, they were most likely to display the dative in a manner closest to the standard and this held true for both Pair A and B. Pair A made some clear attempts to use a genitive case (again not always as per our perceived standard), however Pair B curiously had hardly any occasion in their speech to use a genitive and there are no examples in the corpus of them trying to make a genitive.

While they all maintain VSO, Pair A did not demonstrate much versatility with verb tenses, unlike Pair A who used some irregular verbs in the past tense and some conditionals and only Pair B used the copula according to the standard. Both pairs struggled with word order in sentences with auxiliary verbs and also with pronouns as objects of the verbs.

While both Pair A and Pair B had a good command of the complex Gaelic sound system, Pair A did struggle with some key features, such as vowel length, treatment of hiatus and dental consonants: possibly because they do not have as much exposure to the language as Pair B.

It would appear from this small-scale case study that the language of the pupils who do not have Gaelic at home deviates more from our conception of standard Gaelic than those who do still have Gaelic at home, although they too show some deviation from the standard. While this section has concentrated on the pupils' grasp of the structures of the language, the next section explores how they negotiate their way around the language in order to achieve successful communication.

6 Language Management and Negotiation

The research aimed to examine how children communicate with one another in the classroom setting. We used recorded pupil-pupil interactions, class-room observation and paired interviews with the children, to explore children’s bilingual practices. Our analyses sought to observe differences in communication patterns between Pair A (Hazel and Christopher who had no Gaelic in home) and Pair B (Seoras and Calum who had Gaelic in home), and to identify whether the children used Gaelic and English as two separate codes in verbal communication. We transcribed the children’s talk-in-interaction using conversation analytic conventions (see Appendix 3).

6.1 Pair A: Children with no Gaelic in the Home

We found that Pair A (Hazel and Christopher) were actively involved in upholding Gaelic as the normative language of the classroom. The children worked together to reach mutual comprehension by deploying a range of strategies to negotiate linguistic gaps and to express their ideas in Gaelic. The use of the speech fillers ‘mar’, which itself is a calque of the English speech filler ‘like’, and ‘an uair sin’ (then) were commonplace (see section 5.4.1): there were 25 uses of ‘an uair sin’ and 193 uses of ‘mar’ in 30 minutes of their recorded speech. The use of such fillers signalled to their interlocutor that they were still speaking, whilst giving the speaker time to consider how to express themselves.

Unassimilated word borrowings from English were consistently preceded by the filler ‘mar’, as Hazel or Christopher actively searched first for the Gaelic lexicon before uttering the English word. Whilst English speech fillers such as
‘right’ and ‘like’ were used, English borrowings were mainly concrete nouns. In the example given below, Hazel and Christopher discuss the weather typical of their imaginary island. This example serves to illustrate how they determine how to express a concept which they express in English, ‘mixed weather’, in Gaelic.

Example 1

1 HAZ: a bheil e dol a bhith mar (0.2) fuar?
Is it going to be like cold?

2 CHR: uill ’s dòcha (0.6) tha mi a’ smaointinn
Well perhaps I think
eil fhìos agad ma bha e ann an Dubhaidh (?)you know if it was in Dubai
(0.5)
bidh e math ma bha e mar snug mar smiley face
It will be good if it was like a huge like smiley face
agus taighean ann agus rudan e:
and houses there and stuff eh

3 HAZ: no a bheil e direach dol a bhith mar an t-Eilean Sgitheanach
Or is it just going to be like the Isle of Skye
mar uaireannan tha e blàth agus uaireannan tha e fuar?
like sometimes it is warm and sometimes it is cold

4 CHR: Yeah↑, so mar mixed. A bheil facal airson sin↑
Yeah

5 HAZ: uill ’s dòcha dìreach mar sgrìobh mar (0.9)
Well perhaps just like write like
uaireannan blàth uairean teth uaireanan
sometime warm and sometimes hot
((they look in the dictionary))

6 CHR: Measgaich ((uncertainly))
Mix

dè tha weather?
What is weather

7 HAZ: (laughing) mar mixte mar blàth agus fuar
Like, mixed like warm and cold

8 CHR: Oh yeah. mixichte mar blàth agus fuar
Oh yeah. Mixed like warm and cold
so tha sinn direach a’ sgrìobhadh sin
So we are just writing that

In Turn 4, Christopher identifies ‘mixed’ as essential information for the task, whereas Hazel suggests the same meaning can be conveyed by describing the weather as ‘sometimes cold and sometimes hot’. It is evident in Turns 3, 5 and 7 that Hazel does not see any need for the adjective ‘mixed’, but Christopher does and thus looks it up in the dictionary. In Turn 6 Christopher locates the noun, ‘mix’ but does not know how to form the adjective, ‘mixed’; nor does he know the Gaelic for ‘weather’. Patiently, Hazel contributes the adjectival ending, but maintains again in Turn 7 that the English equivalent is not necessary, resolving the problem with a compromise: ‘mixed, sometimes hot and sometimes cold’. In this example, the use of the dictionary coupled with peer feedback resolved the problem, and the peer imitation in Turn 8 exemplifies how their collaborative negotiation of the task is connected to Gaelic language learning.

The excerpt not only illustrates their communicative strategies: it also highlights that lexical gaps are only seen as problematic if they are essential to the task of describing their island to others in performed speech. We see that no Gaelic description was sought for ‘huge smiley face’. They proceeded to draw a ‘huge smiley face’ on their paper. If the lexicon is not identified by the children as essential information to convey in the performative task, then the
English word is borrowed to meet the momentary needs and goals of their interaction. Indeed, we found that the majority of gaps were, unresolved, with neither child seeking to convey the meaning in Gaelic, for example, for ‘city’, ‘in between’, ‘instead of’, ‘lawyer’, ‘size’, ‘straight’, ‘pier’, ‘hidden’, ‘kind-of’, ‘memorial’, ‘walking stick’ or ‘sort-of’.

The example below illustrates several other ways in which lexical gaps are resolved. Whilst Hazel and Christopher’s use of English was largely unassimilated, their speech did contain some examples of assimilated English lexicon. One recurring type of assimilation was through adding the Gaelic verbal morpheme –(e)adh to English verbs, as illustrated by Christopher’s use of fligheadh in Turn 2. The children would also propose descriptive alternatives to English terms, such as the example in Turns 14 and 16, when Christopher proposes ‘litter picker’ as duine sgudal (litter man).

Example 2

1 HAZ: agus mar dè obraichean a bhith aca?
   And like, what jobs will they have?
2 CHR: emmm (0.8) a’ feuchainn ri faighinn muc a’ fligheadh ((laughter))
   Trying to get flying pig
3 HAZ: what No, mar, a bheil mar tuathanach no mar...
   What? No, like, are like farmers or like...
4 CHR: Obraichean inntin-, inntinneach mar - a’ feuchainn ri faighinn
   Interest- work, interesting like - trying to get
   daoine ann an adhar ach >chan eil ↑thios am<
   people in the air but. I don’t know.
5 HAZ: A bheil e dol a bhith mar obraichean bho mar city mar
   Is it going to be like jobs from like a city like
6 CHR: Obraichean ma[r]
   Jobs like
7 HAZ: [la]wyer agus rudan mar sin no ag obrachadh mar air
   Lawyer and things like that or working like on
   tuathanach? (0.7) No mar daoine ag obair air an tràigh
   a farm? Or like people working on the beach
8 CHR: ((laughs))
9 HAZ: ma[r]
   like
10 CHR: [“Sand” (0.4)get your free sand here” ((singing))((delineating character))
11 HAZ: ((laughs))
12 CHR: Ok right
13 HAZ: no mar tha iad chan eil fios agam. No mar bidh iad a’ dèanamh
   Or like they are I don’t know. Or like they will be making
   cinnteach mar nach eil mar sgudal sam bith [air an tràigh]
   sure like there isn’t any rubbish on the beach
14 CHR: [Ok so, mar] litter picker
   Ok, so like a litter picker
15 HAZ: Yeah t[ha e mar]
   Yeah, it is like
16 CHR: [duine sgudal]
   a litter man

In only one instance was English used as a discourse marker: in this instance to delineate Christopher’s speech from the character being depicted on the drawing, when he sings, “sand, get your free sand here!” in Turn 10.
When the word gap was deemed essential to the task, but could not be filled by consulting the dictionary or thesaurus, ‘Dòigh eile air a ràdh’ (see Photo 1) Hazel asked a teacher e.g. for a way to express ‘secret’ and ‘seafood’. These examples show how the children sought to sustain Gaelic as the normative language of the classroom and worked collaboratively to resolve any language problems in successfully completing their task. Pupil feedback on lexical errors was minimal in Pair A, with no evidence of feedback on phonological or grammatical errors.

6.2 Pair B: Children with Gaelic in the Home

In contrast to Hazel and Christopher, Seòras and Calum’s conversation was monolingual Gaelic and there were very few examples of either assimilated or unassimilated English lexicon or of code-mixing or switching. Whereas Hazel and Christopher’s use of English was essential for communicating meaning, Seòras and Calum’s use of English was primarily for getting attention and for affect. While their Gaelic speech contains examples of lexical gaps, these gaps are typically overcome by finding alternative words and phrases for expressing meaning. Their dialogue is characterised, therefore, by self-repair and corrective feedback. In the example below, Seòras is interviewing Calum about his hobbies. The example demonstrates their efforts to express the Gaelic for ‘playing the bagpipes’. In Gaelic, the idiomatic way to express playing the bagpipes is through using the verb ‘to sing’. In Gaelic ‘bagpipes’ is a singular feminine noun which, following the verbal noun and compound prepositions, takes the genitive case: at least according to grammatical norms.

Example 3

1 SEÒ: Dè na cur-seachadan a th’agad↑
What are your hobbies?
2 CAL: Wë:ll, is toil leam a’ cluich ball↓-coise heh ((smiles)) is iom↑ai:n is am
Well, I like playing football and shinty and the
Playstation.
3 SEÒ: Inntinneach. Agus dè mu dheidhinn a’ phiob↑
Interesting. And what about the pipes?
4 CAL: Dè?
What?
5 SEÒ: Dè mu dheidhinn na phiob↓
What about the pipes?
6 CAL: Oh yeah bidh mi a’ cluich na phiob bidh mi a’ seinn na phiob is a’ cluich↓ a’bhocsa.
Oh yeah, I play the pipes, I sing the pipes and play the
box.
7 SEÒ: Inntinneach. Tapadh leibh ↑Calum.
Interesting. That you (pl.) Calum.

In Turn 3, Seòras asks whether Calum plays the bagpipes, using the nominative rather than genitive case, as indicated by the article a’. Calum’s retort of ‘What?’, which may be intended to provoke self-correction, gives Seòras
the opportunity to self-repair, this time by marking the genitive case with the article for single feminine nouns, *na*, in Turn 5. Calum, in his reply, first uses the verb *a’ cluich* (playing) but then self-repairs with the idiomatic verb *a’ seinn* (singing). Like Seòras, he lenites the noun, *na phìob*, whereas the article *na* blocks lenition, according to accepted norms. Note that in Turn 2, the English term ‘playstation’ is assimilated by use of the definite article for labial consonants, *am*.

As a likely consequence of a relatively higher level of Gaelic input in the home, Pair B are generally able to fill any lexical gaps independently of the support from written resources or a teacher. The example below illustrates how Calum seeks to resolve Seòras’ use of the English term ‘port area’, when discussing who will draw what.
Calum’s querying of, ‘Port area?’ prompts Seòras to explain in Turn 4 what he means in Gaelic, enabling Seòras to supply an appropriate Gaelic term, *cidhe*. Calum is motivated to address such lexical gaps, but he doesn’t seek to repair Seòras’ grammatical ‘errors’. For example, Seòras is using the independent form of the verb, *nì* in Turn 2, instead of the norm of the dependent form, but Calum does not recast or give any other cues for correction.

### 6.3 Summary of Code-switching and Mixing

To summarise, we found that both pairs of children were actively involved in sustaining Gaelic as the normative language of the classroom, with little switching within conversational turns or between turns. Switches to English were used primarily for effect, such as to impersonate a character, or as a discourse organisational tool, such as capturing the attention of classmates. The children strived, therefore, to use Gaelic and English as separate codes.

Borrowing from English was prevalent in Pair A’s natural speech, which the data suggests is due to the competence of speakers, but largely absent in Pair B’s natural speech. In Pair B, the use of English in speech was ‘marked’ (Myers-Scotton, 2006); it typically aroused attention, with the exception of English internationalisms, such as *Playstation*. However, Pair A used ‘borrowing’ as a conversational strategy in the moment of interaction as they negotiated what form their island might take. When attending to the task of being able to describe their island to others in ‘performed’ speech, they strived to overcome lexical gaps in their Gaelic. As such, to be able to achieve the task,
they deployed a range of discursive and practical strategies to ensure they could communicate meaning in Gaelic alone to their classmates.

Whilst Mcleod (2004) notes that most Gaelic speakers, when faced with a lexical gap, will tend to simply insert the relevant English word into a Gaelic sentence, and Will (2012) notes that code-switching and mixing is the ‘norm’ in the adult community, the monolingual ideology of the classroom means children resist borrowing or mixing in pupil talk. Section 5 below draws on interview data to explain how the children rationalised these choices and practices.

7 Pupils’ Attitudes towards Gaelic

This section draws on our findings from the pupil interviews and surveys (see Appendix 1), which explore children’s’ own perceptions of their bilingual proficiency and their language practices, before examining their affective beliefs towards Gaelic and their Gaelic-speaker identities.

7.1 Introduction to Pupils’ Attitudes

Our survey and interviews further explored the children’s perceptions of their own competence, and their attitudes towards using Gaelic and English. In the survey, the eighteen children in the class were asked to respond to 11 statements using a 5-point agreement scale (see Appendix 1). The scores were reversed for negative statements (2/6/10) and mean scores calculated, whereby a score of 5 represents a very positive attitude and a score of 0 a very negative attitude:

- Their perception of others’ attitudes towards their identity as Gaelic speakers (2/10/7) 4.3
- Their attitudes towards using Gaelic (1/6/9) 3.4
- Their own expectations of their future use of Gaelic (4/3/8) 3.8
- Their attitudes towards bilingualism (5/9) 4.5

Overall, we found that children generally held a very positive attitude towards the Gaelic language. The children were more positive about the perception of others towards their identity as Gaelic speakers (4.3) and towards bilingualism (4.5) than they were about their language practices, both current (3.4) and expected (3.8). The results suggest that the children did not see their Gaelic-speaking identities as conflicting with their identities as pupils of this school: none identified that other children in the English stream teased them for being a Gaelic speaker, although only three children felt that non-Gaelic-speaking pupils might be envious of their bilingualism. The majority of children (fifteen) agreed or strongly agreed that their parents wanted them to continue learning Gaelic in High School and the same proportion agreed that they wanted to continue to learn Gaelic in school: only one disagreed with this statement. The majority of children perceived their own aspirations to be in keeping with the aspirations of their parents; however, two children believed they held contrary views to their parents. One child wanted to continue to learn Gaelic, but perceived his/her parents might disagree and another child did not wish to continue learning Gaelic whilst his/her parents were ambivalent.
The children expressed less certainty regarding the role of Gaelic in adulthood. Whilst ten agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘Gaelic will be important for when I am seeking work’, only seven children agreed with the statement ‘I will speak Gaelic all of my life’. Our interviews suggest that this uncertainty reflects pupils’ awareness of the small numbers and concentrations of Gaelic speakers and a lack of confidence in its relevance beyond their education. Pàdraig explained that, whilst he’d like to speak it in later life, that:

“Maybe mar… maybe dhìochuimhnich sinn beagan dheth ach Gàidhlig fhathast againn.
(“Maybe like maybe we will forget some of it but we’ll still have Gaelic.”)

During interview we explored the children’s beliefs about the geography of Gaelic in Scotland. When asked if many people spoke Gaelic in Scotland, one pupil explained:

“Well, tha air an eilean seo – tha iad a bruidhinn tòrr Gàidhlig agus chan eil really àite sam bith eile [ann an Alba].” (Hazel)
(“Well, yes on this island – they speak lots of Gaelic but not really anywhere else [in Scotland.”)
However, other children identified that Gaelic was spoken throughout Scotland, albeit by a minority, and that there was increased public interest in Gaelic, and in learning Gaelic:

“Daoine mar, ma tha iad a’ tighinn suas an seo chan eil Gàidhlig... tha iad...airson Gàidhlig fhaighinn. Agus. Ach tha Gàidhlig aig tòrr daoine.” (Pàdraig)

(“People like, if they are coming up here they don’t have Gaelic...they want to learn Gaelic. And. But plenty of folk have Gaelic.”)

Pàdraig explained, however, that Gaelic was “virtually wiped out” in parts of the mainland, whereas it had been at once the dominant language of Scotland.

Most children had been to other places where they had heard Gaelic being spoken, including towns such as Glasgow and Inverness, and other islands in the so-called heartlands, but they also had an awareness of how special their island was in maintaining the language and they valued their own role in sustaining the islands’ cultural identity.

Connectedly, 15 children agreed or strongly agreed with the statements ‘it’s better to be bilingual than monolingual’ and ‘I enjoy having two languages’. Research has identified the cognitive, social and cultural benefits of being bilingual or multilingual, and some children were aware that being bilingual helps them to learn an additional language and were in fact learning French at school.

The weakest mean score was recorded for children’s attitudes towards their current use of Gaelic. Thirteen agreed, or strongly agreed with the statement ‘I like speaking Gaelic’ and the remainder were neutral. When it came to using Gaelic outside of the education system, some children were less confident. Only three children disagreed with the statement ‘I don’t like using Gaelic outside of school’; nine were neutral and six were in agreement. Children’s understanding of their own bilingual proficiency and use is explored in more detail in the following section.

7.2 Children’s Language Practices

7.2.1 Children’s Understanding of their Bilingual Proficiency

Previous research has indicated that children in Gaelic medium perform better in English than they do in Gaelic at the P7 stage (O’Hanlon et al, 2010). There is anecdotal evidence from teachers reporting that the children’s English language skills are more advanced than their Gaelic skills.

We were interested to find out whether children felt more or less comfortable using English or using Gaelic for different tasks. Our survey asked the children to rate on a five-point scale how happy they were when speaking, reading, writing and spelling in each language (Table 8). The highest combined mean scores were for speaking skills, and the lowest for spelling. The survey showed that children were, on average, more positive about their use of English for these activities than their use of Gaelic. The gap between the mean scores for English and Gaelic were largest for reading (.61) and writing (.56). There was little difference in the mean score for speaking English and Gaelic, and less variance across the sample.
Table 8: Children’s Attitudes Towards their Bilingual Skills (Survey of school pupils, 2013)

Thinking of the different things you do at school, how do you feel about:
(1 = completely unhappy 2 = a little unhappy 3 = OK 4 = happy enough and 5 = completely happy)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sgriobhadh sa Ghàidhlig (Writing in Gaelic)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>.958</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sgriobhadh sa Bheurla (Writing in English)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>.895</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leughadh sa Ghàidhlig (Reading in Gaelic)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>1.149</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leughadh sa Bheurla (Reading in English)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>.924</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litreachadh sa Ghàidhlig (Spelling in Gaelic)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>1.243</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litreachadh sa Bheurla (Spelling in English)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>1.215</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruighinn sa Ghàidhlig (Speaking in Gaelic)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>.958</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruighinn sa Bheurla (Speaking in English)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>.778</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At a disaggregated level, the combined mean scores for the group of four English skills as compared to the mean score for the four Gaelic skills show that four children are happier, on average, using Gaelic than using English and for two, there is no difference in the scores. The remainder (12), on average, feel happier using English for these activities than Gaelic.

Three children have a very positive attitude towards their Gaelic skills, two of whom have Gaelic in the home and a high ‘density’ of networks to speak Gaelic: but the third did not have spoken Gaelic to anybody outside the school in the week prior to the study. However, whilst there is not a statistically significant relationship between the density of pupils’ Gaelic-speaking networks and their Gaelic language skills, there is significant relationship between children’s Gaelic language skills and English language skills ($r = 0.557$, $p = 0.01$). With such a small sample, it is not possible to extrapolate from these findings. However if this pattern were replicated in a much larger sample, then it would suggest that Gaelic-medium is successfully socialising children into being confident Gaelic users.

Our interviews explored further the children’s perceptions of their own competence, and their attitudes towards using Gaelic and English. Children who understood their English skills to be generally stronger than their Gaelic skills had no Gaelic at home, and explained that they did not have the same breadth of vocabulary in Gaelic as they have in English and that they were dependent upon the teacher for Gaelic language learning. Christopher explained:

“[T]ha mi nas fhèàrr air Beurla oir chan eil tòrr, mar, cuideachadh agam airson Gàidhlig ach an tidsear agam, so…” (Christopher)

(“I am better at English because I don’t have much, like, help for Gaelic but my teacher, so…”)

He understood his Gaelic language skills in relation to others in the class, who had greater language input at home:

“Uill, tha Seòras ann an clas againn; tha esan uabhasach math air Gàidhlig oir tha a h-uile duine bruighinn Gàidhlig ann an taigh aige, mar sin, tha e math air Gàidhlig.” (Christopher)

(“Well, Seòras in our class, he is really good at Gaelic because everyone in his home speaks Gaelic, so, he is good at Gaelic.”)

It was more common, however, for the children to express that they were at least as comfortable in Gaelic as in English, and several told us were more confident in writing in Gaelic than English.
7.2.2 Code-switching and Mixing

After Gracia (2009: 116) O’Hanlon (unpublished) explains that the system of Gaelic medium in Scotland is orientated towards a ‘diglossic’ rather than a ‘bilingual’ model since the framework involves “working towards the development of the students’ bilingualism according to two monoglossic standards”. The dominant model of ‘Gaelic-medium education’ has been bounded primary school ‘units’ with the current recommendation that pupils be ‘totally immersed’ for the first three years, before English is gradually introduced as a language subject. Correspondingly, O’Hanlon’s identification of Gaelic as the medium of instruction is also based on treating Gaelic and English as separate codes, based on surveys requiring teachers to define the amount of time they use Gaelic as a medium of instruction.

More recent research based on classroom observation notes, however, that code-switching and translanguaging is prevalent in teachers, as well as in pupils (Will, 2012). We wished to explore, therefore, the children’s understanding of the interaction between the two languages, and their use of code-switching and mixing.

The survey asked whether children agreed with the statement ‘I mix Gaelic and English when I am speaking’; only four agreed with this statement. Our interview data, as well as our classroom observation, suggests that this result reflects the dominance of English monolingual speech outside the classroom rather than the use of English when in a Gaelic dominant context. It is also likely to reflect, however, the effort to treat Gaelic and English as separate codes in the classroom or in other Gaelic-speaking contexts outside of school.

In interview children told us that they would borrow from English to fill lexical gaps, modelling a practice they observed in adult speakers, but they were very conscious of sustaining upholding Gaelic as the normative language when, for example, in the Gaelic class or at Sradagan:

“Dìreach uaireannan ma tha mi, mar, stuck air facal agus an uair sin tha mi direach, mar, ag ràdh facal Beurla is uaireannan, mar, bidh daoine gam cuideachadh faighinn am facal Gàidhlig.” (Hazel)

(“Just sometimes if I’m, like, stuck on a word and then I just like, say an English word sometimes, like, people will help me get a word in Gaelic.”)

Lee explained that this was something that did concern her in the classroom, but that her general strategy was to ask the teacher, or to consult the dictionary. Isabella clarified, however, that this was a practice only necessary for written work, such as when writing a story, but otherwise she would say the word in English – and then, if overheard, the teacher would supply the Gaelic vocabulary or if relevant, the whole class. Unsolicited use of English in the classroom, they explained, was typically corrected by the teacher, and switching unconsciously to Gaelic in the playground was self-corrected.

7.2.3 Out of Class Bilingual Practices

There is no national school-level data on pupils according to their home language use. Forthcoming output from the 2011 census will generate figures on the number of children who live in Gaelic-speaking homes, but meantime, the only data available is from the Annual Pupil Census. The latest data tells us that only 525 school pupils categorise Gaelic as their ‘home language’ (Scottish Government, 2014). Whilst these data are unreliable, it suggests a significant majority of the c. 2600 children in Gaelic-medium education live in homes in which Gaelic is not used, or is not the main language. Children’s opportunities for Gaelic early years language socialisation, social use, and even the duration of their time in Gaelic-medium education can vary.

The school questionnaire elicited data which indicate languages spoken by their parents. Relative to parental use amongst young Gaelic speakers in general, the study cohort has a relatively high opportunity to use Gaelic in the home: 14 of 18 children live in households with a Gaelic-speaking parent, and six children’s parents both speak Gaelic. The survey also asked young speakers whether they had spoken Gaelic during the past week with their parents, siblings, friends or neighbours (Table 9). Five children had spoken no Gaelic to family, friends or neighbours
the week prior to the school visit; three children had spoken to people in all six categories, suggesting that Gaelic was one of the languages of the home and that their Gaelic language networks were denser than their fellow students. Only half of the eighteen children had used Gaelic with friends or neighbours outside of the classroom. Twelve of eighteen children told us that they had, however, spoken Gaelic to either their mother or father in the week prior to our visit.

### Table 9: The use of Gaelic by Young Speakers (Survey of school pupils, 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In past week, spoke Gaelic to:</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother/s</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister/s</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbours</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
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However, when compared with our interviews later, the children revealed that the use of Gaelic in many households was limited. Children explained this could be due to for example, only one of their parents speaking Gaelic, or because a parent was learning to speak Gaelic, but was not yet fluent. For children who lived in households where Gaelic was not commonly used, their use of Gaelic in the home was typically infrequent and parent-child Gaelic use was confined to particular kinds of exchanges. For example, one child told us that her father would read to her in Gaelic when helping with homework, but would discuss the homework in English, due to a lack of confidence or proficiency. Another told us that her father was too shy to speak Gaelic to her, or to anyone, although he could: “cha toil e a’ bruidhinn mar, duine, mar, tha e kind of shy…” (He doesn’t, like, talking (to) people, like, he is kind of shy”.

We prompted the children to give examples of when they did use Gaelic in a home setting- these included when an older speaker, such as a Grandparent or a friend of their parents, was visiting or the children were visiting them. Respecting the language preference of elders is the norm in Gaelic-speaking communities, and the presence of Gaelic-speaking elders has been found to initiate a switch to Gaelic (e.g. Smith-Christmas and Smackman, 2009). In our study, one child told us that she only speaks Gaelic to her sister when her Gaelic speaking grandparents are present. Research on Welsh language has indicated the strong influence of extended family members on minority language development (Morris and Jones, 2009). Grandparents play an important role in /Gaelic language use, which in turn, gives these children access to proficient speakers in a non-school setting and it provides them with opportunities to use Gaelic.

Several of the children had siblings who were also in Gaelic medium schooling, and they told us how their parents would encourage them to use Gaelic together. Lee, however, found it difficult to articulate why using Gaelic with her brother in a home setting was at odds with her sense of Gaelic-speaking self:

**Interviewer:** Agus am bi thu fhéin agus Christopher bruidhinn Gàidhlig ri chèile aig an taigh?

Do yourself and Christopher speak Gaelic together at home?

**Lee:** Uaireannan bidh dadaidh direach a’ canadh rium is bruidhinn Gàidhlig gu – mar, bruidhinn Gàidhlig gu, mar, agus bidh sinn a’ bruidhinn Gàidhlig. Tha e really, tha e beagan diofraichte oir tha sinn a’ bruidhinn Gàidhlig ann an taigh ach chan eil sinn really bruidhinn Beurla ann an sgoil so tha e......
Sometimes Daddy will just say to me speak Gaelic to – like, speak Gaelic to, like, and we will speak Gaelic. It is really, it is a little different because we are speaking Gaelic at home and we are not really speaking English in school so it is.....

**Interviewer:** *Anns an sgoil, sa chlas tha sibh bruidhinn Gàidhlig ri chèile?*

In school, in class you speak Gaelic with each other?

**Lee:** *Uh-huh.*

**Interviewer:** *Agus a bheil e neònach nuair a thèid sibh dhachaidh agus dè tha sibh bruidhinn ri chèile mar is trice nuair a tha sibh aig an taigh?*

And is it strange when you go home and what do you speak to each other usually when you’re at home?

**Lee:** *Direach, mar, bruidhinn Beurla.*

Just like speak English.

As such, children with Gaelic-speaking siblings in largely monolingual home settings told us that Gaelic was the natural language of social interaction at school, but English the natural main language of social interaction at home. In this study, it became clear that only children, who live in households where one or more parents are fluent, active speakers, have daily access to ‘proficient’ users of Gaelic. Several children told us how they watched programmes on the Gaelic television channel, BBC Alba, at home, and linked this to their own language development.

A low level of Gaelic language use in the home is supported by previous research which indicates low Gaelic language use between parents who have some level of Gaelic and their children (Stockdale et al., 2003). Research by O’Hanlon et al (2013) on public attitudes to Gaelic in Scotland has indicated that the public perceive parents who speak Gaelic as having the most responsibility for ensuring that Gaelic is spoken in Scotland. However, our research highlights that mixed-language households are the norm, and that Gaelic-speaking parents who seek to implement strategies for normalising the use of Gaelic are not necessarily successful. The discussion around Gaelic homework would seem to be an important link in terms of Gaelic language in the classroom and in the home, and could be an area where parents who are learning the language could build upon their use of Gaelic language with their children.

The findings here support anecdotal evidence and the findings of O’Hanlon et al (2012b). Whilst Gaelic is the normative language of the classroom, outside English is the norm, even when interacting with pupils from Gaelic class. Children interviewed told us that they tend not to speak Gaelic in the corridor, cloakroom or playground and will switch from English to Gaelic as they enter the classroom because they recognise that they are entering a setting in which they are expected to speak Gaelic, and in which it is the norm to do so. The role of teacher, who has the authority to control code choice, is important, as Lee and Dawn explain:

**Interviewer:** *Carson a tha sibh a’ bruidhinn Beurla a-muigh sa raon-chluich?*

Why do you speak English in the playground?

**Lee:** *Chan eil really ...*

There isn’t really....

**Dawn:** *Tha sinn really cleachdte ri a bhith a’ bruidhinn Beurla.*

We are just used to speaking English

**Lee:** *Is chan eil really tidsearan ann a shin...*

And there aren’t really teachers there...
Other children explained that they use English in the playground because children ‘in English’ were present and because there was no need to use Gaelic. The norm of using the ‘language of inclusion’ in the playground (Thomas and Roberts, 2011; Hickey, 2001) was something that children were conscious of upholding, and therefore, of breaking, as Pàdraig describes here:

“Uill tha duine a’ bruidhinn Beurla ach uaireannan dìreach, mar, bidh sinn ‘accidently’ bruidhinn Gàidhlig! Ach, bidh sinn, uaireannan tha sinn dol a-mach agus chan fhaod sinn a’ bruidhinn Beurla agus tha feum againn a’ bruidhinn Gàidhlig.” (Pàdraig)

(“Well, people speak English [in the playground] but sometimes just, like, we ‘accidentally’ speak Gaelic! But we will, sometimes we are going out and we can’t speak English, we have to speak Gaelic.”)

On the other hand, one speaker appeared less sensitive to such language norms and was confident in asserting a Gaelic-speaking identity. He had previously attended a ‘Gaelic school’, and was involved in the shinty and football teams. He told us he used both Gaelic and English with friends in the playground or when playing sport, although to what extent it was unclear:

“Uaireannan bidh mi a’ bruidhinn Gàidhlig gu, mar, em, mar caran leth no cairteal de na caraidean agam-, ’s toil leothsan a bhith bruidhinn Gàidhlig. Ach tha mi a’ bruidhinn Gàidhlig gu an nàbaidh agam oir tha Gàidhlig aiceise.” (Christopher).

(“Sometimes I speak Gaelic to, like, em, like about half or quarter of my friends – they like to speak Gaelic. But I speak Gaelic to my neighbour because she has Gaelic.”)

It was striking, however, how restricted children’s use of Gaelic was outside of school. Few of the children interviewed were engaged in Sradagan, Gaelic-speaking youth clubs, or Fèisean, music-based festivals for children. This was reflected in the ambivalence children held towards the statement ‘I don’t like using Gaelic outside of school’: only three children disagreed or strongly disagreed with this, nine were neutral and six were in agreement. This is despite children’s positive attitudes towards speaking Gaelic and being bilingual. Children seldom need to negotiate using Gaelic outside of school and, for most, its use is ‘reserved’ for the occasions when it is socially appropriate to do so. These include Fèisean, summer clubs and Mòds (local festivals celebrating the Gaelic language), at which some of the children take part in competitions for Gaelic solo and choral singing or poetry recitation.

7.3 Summary of Pupils’ Language Attitudes

Overall, we found that children generally held a very positive attitude towards the Gaelic language and towards their bilingual, Gaelic-speaking identities. The children were more positive about the perception of others towards their identity as Gaelic speakers and towards bilingualism in general, however, than they were about their own language practices. The majority of children have, on average, more confidence in their use of English for reading, writing, spelling and speaking skills, than Gaelic. On the other hand, there was little difference in the mean score for speaking English and Gaelic, and less variance across the sample. The children are confident Gaelic speakers. This is despite these findings:

- only six of the eighteen children live in households in which both parents can speak Gaelic (to some degree);
- a sizeable minority of six are likely to have no Gaelic input in the home;
- most children have very limited opportunity to use Gaelic outside of the classroom or the family home.

This suggests that this Gaelic-medium school is successfully socialising children into being confident Gaelic users in the classroom. The children express some uncertainty, however, about their future expectation of use which suggests a lack of confidence in Gaelic’s relevance beyond their education.
8 Teachers’ Perceptions of Pupil Language Competencies

8.1 Introduction: Interviews with Gaelic Medium Teaching Practitioners

Interviews were carried out with two Gaelic medium classroom teachers. One was an early-stages teacher who has additional responsibility as depute-head (Teacher A). The other teacher was an upper-stages class teacher (Teacher B). Face-to-face interviews were carried out in Gaelic with both teachers and they were asked how they encourage Gaelic language development and what challenges they face in doing this.

Both teachers spoke very positively about their professional roles in GME and were very honest about both the successes of GME and areas for possible improvement. Whilst their experiences and opinions may not be representative of GME teachers in general, their views are important to our understanding of the particular context of this case-study. The three main themes that emerged from these interviews are:

- Encouraging accurate language use and accurate grammar
- Developing accurate language use while delivering the full primary curriculum
- Providing opportunities for children to speak Gaelic and listen to other Gaelic speakers.

8.2 Encouraging and Using Accurate Language Use and Accurate Grammar

Both teachers spoke at length about the challenges facing Gaelic medium teachers in encouraging accurate Gaelic grammar use amongst young speakers and they spoke of how they had both reached the same conclusion that direct intervention was required in order to ensure accurate use of grammar. They felt that this strategy contradicted the advice given to them in the early days of GME, when it was recommended that teachers should not focus on correcting the children’s Gaelic language and that the children would develop correct language use through experience:

“Tha cuimhn’ agam aig cùrsaichean, nuair a thòisich mise a’ teagasg bha sinn ag ràdh, ‘na ceartaich idir iad. Na bi ceartachadh clann sa chlas idir: cuiridh tu ceàrr iad is ionnsaichidh iad co-dhiù.’” (Teacher A)

(“I remember on courses, when I started teaching, we would say, ‘don’t correct them: you’ll confuse them and they’ll learn anyway.”)

However, the teachers’ experience is that this strategy is not effective in encouraging accurate use of the language. Both teachers now use a more direct approach when dealing with common mistakes, sometimes stopping the whole class and focussing in on a particular issue relating to grammar or language use in line with Lyster’s thinking. This allows them to respond to developing children’s fluency by enabling the direction of learning to follow a focus on improving articulation in grammar.

“…A h-uile duine ga dhèanamh aig an aon às an dòchas nuair sin gun tog iad na rudan a tha thu ag ràdh” (Teacher B)

(“Everyone doing it together at the same time and you hope that they remember what you say.”)

The teachers’ approach to correcting grammatical mistakes is supported by HMIE, who recognise the importance of correcting language errors and the need for a school policy to provide guidance on how best to do this; “In relation to the development of Gaelic language skills, it would be important to continue the practice of schools having a policy on how to correct children’s language errors so that these errors are not allowed to become the norm. Left uncorrected, language errors become more challenging for children to address” (HMIE, 2011:6).
Through discussion with Education Scotland/Foghlam Alba, they would also recommend that teachers plan the development of Gaelic grammar and language structures as an integral part of learning, teaching and assessment and would recommend that schools identify, on plans, how they are to teach Gaelic grammar and language structures within the classroom. This indicates the importance that Education Scotland/Foghlam Alba places on the children’s understanding and developing knowledge of grammar and language structures.

The language and grammatical issues that the teachers spoke of the children having difficulty with include:

- The general lack of use of the copula (e.g. ‘s e) amongst young speakers and the need for teachers to focus on establishing this speech pattern from Early Level. Teacher A spoke of her experience of focussing on establishing use of the copula from P2 onwards, and the need to focus on this area at each stage in order to establish use.

- An over dependence on the substantive verb (i.e. tha, bha). The teachers spoke of the children’s over-reliance on the substantive verb rather than using the past tense of other verbs (e.g. choisich, chaidh) and the need to encourage the children to use a wider range of verbs, especially in oral speech.

- The influence of English language on Gaelic sentence construction. Common phrases are targeted by the teachers in order to ensure a correct Gaelic sentence construction, but the teachers reported that some children find it very difficult to adapt their language to the correct construction. An example given by Teacher A was the common phrase “Am faod mi dhol dhan taigh bheag?” (Can I go to the toilet?), with some children persistently using the construction “Am faod mi an taigh bheag” despite the teacher targeting and reinforcing this construction for a full academic year. Teacher B also spoke about the challenge when correcting children’s written work.

- The need for children to develop their use of Gaelic idioms “…mar beag air bheag, mean air mhean is ghabh mi eagal mo bheatha, theab mi tuiteam, air mo shocair – gnathsan càinnt, chan eil sin idir, idir aca.” (Teacher A) (“little by little, I got the fright of my life, I almost fell, I took my time – idioms, they don’t have these at all.”)

- Accurate use of the possessive ‘mo’ (my). Teacher B spoke of how some children have difficulty using this construction accurately and will use it in conjunction with a possessive pronoun, e.g. “Mo bhròg agam” (Teacher B) (my shoe my), and how children need to be reminded of how to use this construction accurately.

- The use of English vocabulary when speaking Gaelic. Teacher B spoke about the use of English words when speaking Gaelic and how the young speakers need encouragement to use the Gaelic vocabulary they have, particularly in oral speech, when children can be talking quickly and may substitute an English word for a Gaelic one. It was discussed how it can be a challenge when a child does not have a wide Gaelic vocabulary and the need to differentiate for such speakers, accepting that they do not have a sufficient Gaelic vocabulary and may need to substitute a Gaelic word for an English one. Teacher B spoke about young Gaelic speakers from Gaelic speaking families and how they often actively try to use a Gaelic word instead of substituting with an English one, but how they also can also be prone to using English words in fast-paced speech.

- The difference between the children’s Gaelic language skills and their English language skills. Teacher B perceives a significant difference between the children’s abilities in Gaelic writing and English writing, with their English writing being at a far more sophisticated level; “Nuair a choimheadas tu air an sgrìobhadh aca ann an Gàidhlig agus an am Beurla, tha beàrn mhòr eagallach ann.” (Teacher B) (“When you look at their
writing in Gaelic and in English, there’s a very big gap.”) This difference that Teacher B describes between children’s abilities in Gaelic writing and English writing has previously been identified (O’Hanlon et al, 2010).

The teachers spoke of the continual need to focus on the children’s language use and language accuracy in the above areas and discussed the challenge of ensuring that they deliver all aspects of the curriculum while at the same time ensuring that the children develop good, accurate and natural Gaelic.

Both teachers also spoke of the challenge involved in ensuring that their own use of Gaelic grammar is accurate and how this can be an issue for many Gaelic medium teachers. Both teachers – despite being fluent Gaelic speakers – spoke of their own lack of confidence in their knowledge and understanding of Gaelic grammar.

“Cha robh gràmar sam bith air a theagasg dhuinne, tha mi smaoineachadh gu bheil beàrn ann a shin...”
(Teacher B) (We were not taught grammar, I think there’s a gap there...)

Teacher B felt that this lack of direct grammar teaching in her own education impacts now upon her confidence in understanding Gaelic grammar, and felt this is an issue when trying to ensure that the children’s use of grammar is accurate. Teacher A, who is also involved in career-long professional learning with Gaelic medium teachers, spoke of being aware of many teachers who share the same lack of confidence.

Teacher A discussed recommendations she would make in order to develop accurate Gaelic language amongst children and staff, recommendations which she has implemented in her own school, where the whole class work together for a short time period every day on grammatical problems.

“...B’urrainn dhan tidsear a chleachdadh còig mionaidean a h-uile latha, bho sgol-àrach suas gu clas a seachd, tha thu ga chur air a’ bhòrd gheal agus tha thu a’ déanamh seo a h-uile latha. Puin ma gheibh thu ceart e... bhiodh an clas ag ionnsachadh còmhla is cuideachd an tidsear ag ionnsachadh.” (Teacher A)

(“The teacher could use five minutes every day, from nursery to primary seven, it would be on the white board and you would do it every day. You get a point every time you are correct... the class would learn together and the teacher would also learn too.”)

Teacher A also spoke of a lack of resources for teaching grammar in the primary school and the real need for a grammar and language scheme that is suitable for all stages in primary. It was suggested that a resource is required that could be used interactively on a smartboard, with teachers focussing on direct language teaching for a short time each day. The teachers both recommended the Stòrlann resource Mìrean as a good resource for grammar teaching, though currently the resource is not an interactive resource.

It was also commented upon that some schemes and resources for teachers that are used in Gaelic medium classes have been translated into Gaelic but have not actually been developed with Gaelic medium teaching in mind. Teacher A discussed a resource used commonly in the local authority which has been translated into Gaelic but in her view gives teachers no specific advice or direction when teaching Gaelic language.

“...tha leughadh Gàidhlig eadar-dhealaichte uile gu lèir bho leughadh Beurla. Agus chaidh stiùireadh a thoirt dhùinn is feumaidh mi ràdh; cha do lean mi pàirt dheth idir oir bha fios agam gun dèanadh e barrachd cron na dhèanadh e de dh’fheum...” (Teacher A)

(“Gaelic reading is completely different from English reading. And advice was given to us, and I have to say; I didn’t follow part of it at all because I knew that it would do more harm than good...”)

Teacher A felt that it needed to be recognised that Gaelic medium teaching is different to English medium teaching, with different points of focus and different time-scales. The teacher also felt that many teacher resources translated into Gaelic do not take account of this pedagogical difference. Teacher A felt that more guidance was required when planning for language acquisition and progression across all primary stages, with a real need for more language
related guidance, not only at a local authority level but also at a national level: “...gu nàiseanta chan eil stiùireadh idir idir.” (“...nationally there is no guidance at all.”)

It is clear that these two teachers feel there is a lack of national guidance in terms of language acquisition and progression. Education Scotland/Foghlam Alba is currently developing a professional learning resource ‘Assessing Progress and Achievement in Literacy and Gàidhlig’, which is hoped will provide teachers with further explanation and examples of linguistic performance at each level. It is possible that this resource may provide teachers with necessary support when planning for and assessing children’s language development.

GME is still a relatively new form of education, and it is accepted that teachers need support and guidance when planning the Gaelic medium curriculum. In terms of immersion practices, Foghlam Alba have more clearly defined how total immersion takes place seen an improvement in teachers’ and schools’ awareness surrounding the need for total immersion until Primary 3 or 4. It is indicated that this is due to the issue being highlighted in HMIE’s 2011 publication Gaelic Education: Building on the Successes, Addressing the Barriers, with clear guidance in regard to immersion provided for practitioners. Education Scotland/Foghlam Alba feel that through time, this will impact positively on levels of fluency in Gaelic language, indicating the possible positive impact that clear advice and guidance for teachers can have on children’s levels of fluency in the language.

Teacher B spoke very positively about the children’s determination to be successful in their language learning; “Tha mi a’ smaointean gu bheil clann, ann am foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig co-dhiù, tha iad ag iarraidh adhartas a dhèanamh, tha iad ag iarraidh a bhith cho math ‘s as urrainn dhaibh.” (Teacher B) (“I think children, in Gaelic medium education anyway, they want to progress, they want to do as well as they can.”) She spoke of the children’s perception that they were lucky due to the bilingual nature of their education, and the friendly competition the Gaelic medium children saw between themselves and the English medium children.

Education Scotland/Foghlam Alba place importance on a continuum of learning in Gaelic being part of children’s curriculum for ages 3-18, in order to allow the children’s linguistic skills to fully develop, and this is in line with Curriculum for Excellence. The lack of continuity in some areas due to a shortage of Gaelic medium teachers, particularly in secondary education, is then likely to impact upon the children’s ability to fully develop their linguistic expertise in Gaelic.

8.3 Developing Accurate Language Use While Delivering the Full Primary Curriculum

Both teachers spoke of the challenge in ensuring that the children’s language use is accurate whilst also ensuring the delivery of the full curriculum, particularly in the upper stages of primary. They spoke of the conflict they feel is sometimes there between the two and how they can experience tensions between focussing on meaning and focussing on form according to the subject content.

“Ach mun àm a thèid iad suas gu clasaichean cóig, sia agus seachd, feumaidh tòrr a bhith air a sgriobhadh agus tha saidheans a’ tighinn a-steach, tha cruinn-eòlas a’ tighinn a-steach agus tha thu feuchainn ri rudan eile ionnsachadh dhaibh tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig agus tha thu ag ràdh riut fhèin, uill, dè as cudromaiche an seo, an e na th’againn ri ionnsachadh dhaibh a thaobh cuspair neo a bhith a’ ceartachadh a’ ghràmair?” (Teacher A)

(“But by the time they go up to primary five, six and seven, there’s a lot of written work including science and geography and other areas through the medium of Gaelic and you say to yourself, well, what’s most important here, is it what I have to teach them or is it to be correcting grammar?”)

It is clear that both teachers see it as a challenge to cover all curricular areas in sufficient depth while also developing the children’s language abilities. Teacher A spoke about ensuring that the children’s Gaelic language is of a sufficient standard while, at the same time, ensuring that they develop the required skills, knowledge and understanding in
the full range of curricular areas. Teacher A also spoke about her awareness that children in Gaelic medium education should not experience a more limited curriculum or a curriculum of insufficient depth. She suggested that it is, in fact, the children’s language development which can suffer at the expense of the children gaining a broad knowledge and understanding of the full curriculum.

“…tha thu ag iarraidh gum bi a’ chlann anns a’ Ghàidhlig a’ faighinn na h-aon chothroman ann an saidheans, ann am Beurla ‘s a tha luchd na Beurla. Is tha iad a’ faighinn sin ach saoilidh mi an rud nach eil sinn a’ déanamh gu cunbhalach, ‘s e sin a bhith a’ cumail a’ dol leis a’ ghràmair.” (Teacher A)

(“...you want the children in Gaelic medium to get the same opportunities in science, in English as the children in English medium. And they do get that but I think the thing that we’re not regularly doing is keeping going with grammar.”)

Teacher A also spoke about seeing a real need for a greater focus on Gaelic grammar in the primary school, with particular emphasis placed on developing language in the total immersion phase at Early and First levels; “...tha mi smaoinachadh gum bu chóir dhuinn barrachd cuideam a chur air cànain aig ceann shios na sgoile.” (Teacher A) (“I think we should place more emphasis on language in the Early Stages.)

Although both teachers find it a challenge to develop both the children’s accurate Gaelic language use and wide curricular knowledge, Curriculum for Excellence was viewed positively by both teachers as allowing for more flexibility and “openness” (Teacher B) in managing the challenge of developing children’s language and curricular knowledge. However, Teacher A felt that Curriculum for Excellence did not provide enough specific guidance to Gaelic medium practitioners. It is clear though this discussion that the teachers feel that it is important that the children continue to have access to the full curriculum, but have found it challenging to ensure the children have adequate grammatical instruction, with Curriculum for Excellence unable to provide them with the specific guidance they are seeking.

8.4 Providing Opportunities for Children to Speak Gaelic and Listen to other Gaelic Speakers

The children need to speak Gaelic as the main language in class and both teachers spoke of the need to continually encourage children to do so. Teacher B discussed a successful strategy that has been introduced in order to ensure the children take responsibility for the language they use in class.

Both teachers spoke of the need to ensure that children hear Gaelic speakers other than their teachers and the other Gaelic speakers in the school. Although this school is placed in a traditionally Gaelic speaking area, both teachers spoke of the difficulty in ensuring that local Gaelic speakers come into the classroom to speak to the children. Teacher B suggested that local Gaelic speakers can worry about speaking to a large group of children if they are not experienced at doing so or worry that their Gaelic is not good enough to come into the school to speak with the children. Both teachers expressed concern at the lack of opportunity many children get to speak Gaelic outwith school hours:

“Tha e doirbh, gu h-àiridh nuair nach eil iad a’ cluinntinn tòrr Gàidhlig ann an tòrr àite...[agus]...tha iad a’ bruaidhinn Gàidhlig, can, bho chairteal an dèidh naoi gu cairteal an dèidh tri le dinnear is a h-ùile càil eile, shin agad na h-aca. Tha Sradagan aca ach ma tha sin caran un-cool, cha tèid iad ann)... (Teacher A)

(“It’s hard, especially when they don’t hear much Gaelic in many places...[and]... they speak Gaelic from quarter past nine to quarter past three with dinner and everything, that’s all they get. They have Sradagan but that’s a bit un-cool so they don’t go.”) (Teacher A)

The teachers are concerned that for many of the children, Gaelic is a school-based language only and they are not getting sufficient opportunity to speak Gaelic in their home community, opportunities which they feel could impact positively on the children’s Gaelic language development. Sradagan, a Gaelic medium community group for children
aged 5-12, is an opportunity for children to speak Gaelic out of the school setting, but as indicated by Teacher A in the above quote, children may not attend if they perceive the group to be unpopular amongst their peers. This issue has been explored by O’Hanlon et al (2012), which indicates the dominance of the classroom as the main area where Gaelic medium children converse in Gaelic.

Teacher B spoke of how classroom assistants and language assistants were a valuable resource in the Gaelic medium classroom, not only in being able to provide the children with support in regard to language and the curriculum, but they also allowed the children to listen to a Gaelic speaker other than their main teacher. However, Teacher B spoke about how their replacement with Pupil Support Assistants has been detrimental to the support in the classroom as they are placed with children requiring specific support and are seen less as a general support for the Gaelic medium classroom; “...bhiodh iad a-staigh anns a’ chlas agad, a’ dol timcheall is a’ bruidhinn ri daoine a bha ag iarraidh taic sam bith is bha iad an-còmhnaidh, dòighen diofarachd aca airson rudan a ràdh na bh’ agadsa agus dh’ionnsaicheadh a’ chlann, chan eil sin agad a-nise...” (Teacher B) (“...they would be in your class, going round and speaking with those who were needing any support and they were always, they had different ways of saying things and the children would learn, we don’t have that anymore.”)

It is clear that these two teachers see importance in creating opportunities in class for the children to hear a variety of Gaelic speakers in addition to the class teacher, although it can be a challenge at times to find local Gaelic speakers who are willing to come in to speak with the children. They also see the importance of ensuring that the young speakers’ experience of speaking Gaelic and hearing Gaelic being spoken extends beyond school hours only, with community Gaelic being seen as a potentially important support for the children’s Gaelic language development.

8.5 Summary

Both teachers spoke of how successful they feel Gaelic medium education has been and how they encourage the children to have a sense of pride in their language and culture. An importance is placed on the language and the teachers spoke of their desire to convey this to the children in their class in order for them to view the language positively, as Teacher A commented, she is, “a’ feuchainn fad na tide ri inbhe na Gàidhlig a thogail” (“Continually trying to raise the status of Gaelic...”)

The teachers also spoke about the fact that they see GME as working very well, but that it should be recognised that improvements need to be made:

“Cuiridh sinn creidsinn ann na rudan a tha ag obrachadh ach aig an aon àm a bhith ag aideachadh: chan eil cho math is a b’urrainn... Tha feuimalachdann.” (Teacher A)

We believe in the things that work well but, at the same time, realise that it’s not as good as it could be... That there are needs.”

It is clear that teacher confidence and ability with Gaelic grammar is important in targeting the issues that arise in ensuring accurate grammar and language use in the Gaelic medium classroom. It is also clear that even very fluent speakers, like the two teachers interviewed, can lack confidence in their own abilities in regard to their accurate use of Gaelic grammar.

The teachers were of the opinion that it is a challenge to ensure that the young speakers develop the necessary accurate Gaelic language skills, while at the same time covering the full primary curriculum and ensuring that the children’s knowledge, understanding and skills develop in all areas of the curriculum. As indicated by HMIE (2011), it would be helpful to practitioners to have more formal advice, perhaps in the form of a school or local authority policy, on how best to deal with language errors and which areas of Gaelic language should be a specific focus for
particular stages. There is also a clear role required of initial teacher education courses and career-long professional learning in having a significant focus on developing children’s skills and knowledge in grammar and specialist vocabulary across the curriculum, as well as developing the teachers’ own skills and knowledge in grammar.

These two teachers felt that many Gaelic resources, particularly resources specifically targeting the total immersion period of pre-school and P1-3, are tailored specifically for Gaelic medium education, with the appropriate pedagogy guiding their design. However, they also discussed resources which they had encountered which did not have the same Gaelic medium related pedagogy guiding their design and were less appropriate for use in the immersion phase of Gaelic medium education. As indicated by Teacher A, many years of experience in the Gaelic medium sector enables her to identify any problems which may arise when using a resource not specifically developed for use in the Gaelic medium total immersion period, something which may not be so easily identified by a less experienced teacher. This is clearly an issue with regard to the resources used at this stage.

As discussed, Teacher A felt that it needed to be recognised that Gaelic medium teaching is different to English medium teaching, with different points of focus and different time-scales and that more guidance is required, not only at a local authority level, but also at a national level. This is an issue identified by HMIE, “there is no written national guidance for Gaelic Medium Education which defines best practice in delivering Gaelic medium provision” (HMIE, 2011), and is an issue still needing to be addressed.

Despite this school setting being in a traditionally Gaelic speaking area, teachers find it challenging to ensure that the children have an opportunity to hear other Gaelic speakers other than the school staff. They also highlighted the limited opportunity many children have of speaking the language or hearing the language being spoken in the local community, an issue they feel is limiting the young speakers’ experience of the language and their Gaelic language development.

The two practitioners interviewed undoubtedly demonstrate a confidence in Gaelic medium education and recognise the positive impact is has on the children they educate. However, as both teachers identify, there are clearly challenges for Gaelic medium educators in the area of Gaelic language development. It is important that these challenges are recognised and that national, local authority and school policies begin to provide teachers with further support in order to ensure that young speakers develop the necessary Gaelic language skills in addition to the other areas of curricular learning.

9 Ways Forward

This small-scale study departed from previous research on Gaelic attainment and use by capturing children’s language practices in a class-room setting. In doing so, it has successfully piloted language elicitation tools on which to base detailed analysis of children’s language practices in the classroom domain, and which are enriched by visual data. The spoken corpus includes naturalistic spoken language data from peer-to-peer activities as well as performed spoken data for investigating Gaelic language structure and use and bilingual talk. The study has examined the results through description, rather than in quantifiable analyses, to reflect the exploratory nature of the research design.

The use of a multi-perspectival approach to study the Gaelic-medium classroom, involving linguistic analysis, attitudinal analysis and teacher’s perceptions of pedagogical practice, has enabled us to gain a greater understanding of the Gaelic medium classroom, and the relationships between language performance, language attitudes and language learning. Rather than generate generalisable findings, this small-scale research study has highlighted the individual and contextual factors which are important in developing pupils' Gaelic language competencies in the classroom, which merit further investigation. These include:
- Gaelic language input outside of the classroom
- Practices for teaching Gaelic grammar and language structures within the classroom
- Teacher strategies for correction and for cultivating ‘good’ language practices
- Language socialisation experiences in the home and in other social networks.

The key features of children’s language structures and form described in Section 5 may re-occur in other social situations and other classrooms amongst children of the same age group. Extending this research through a cross-section of school communities and age groups would generate a data-set from which patterns of language development could be inferred and generalised. The research could also be extended in the following ways:

- The study of literacy skills
- The study of pupil-teacher interactions
- Longitudinal analysis of pupils’ Gaelic language skills from primary to upper secondary level.

9.1 Methodological Implications

Our language-elicitation methodology, which utilised the research teams’ expertise in Gaelic-English bilingual primary teaching, has the advantage of giving the researcher control over language tasks (and therefore language forms under investigation). On the other hand, a researcher-led lesson does not capture natural teacher-pupil interactions, which are known to be important for the development of bilingual competencies. As such, we are currently exploring alternative methods for capturing class-room performance, including the potential use of web-cam video techniques, through the recently established Technology Enhanced Professional Learning (TePL) project in the University of Aberdeen’s School of Education ‘learning observatory’. Participative methodologies, which involve children as active researchers, would further strengthen future research on children’s bilingual competencies.

9.2 Policy Relevance

The results of this study are of relevance to teacher and policy practitioners. They highlight the practical challenges of teaching a language for which there is no official standard, and for which there is currently no national framework of proficiency that teachers and learners can gauge progress and ability. In relation to this, the study has highlighted the scope for developing better guidelines on strategies for corrective feedback in the classroom and has drawn attention to the value of career long professional learning for teachers to maintain and develop their own Gaelic language skills.

The authors will actively build on this study through research partnerships with Soillse partners and knowledge exchange and collaborations with teachers and policy practitioners.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Dè do bheachd?
Bu toil leinn na beachdan agad fhaighinn mun a’ Ghàidhlig.
Leugh gach ceist agus lean an stiùireadh. Mura h-eil freagairt agad, fâg e.
A bheil thu deònach a bhith a’ lionadh am foirm seo a-mach? *Cuir ✓*

**Pàirt A: Mu do dheidhinn:**


A2. Có aig a tha a’ Ghàidhlig san dachaigh agad? *Cuir ✓*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Màthair</th>
<th>Chan eil</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tha</td>
<td>Chan eil</td>
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<tr>
<th>Athair</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tha</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daoine eile m.e. piuthar</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tha</td>
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</table>

A3. A’ smaoineachad air an t-seachdain seo chaidh, a bheil thu air a bhith a’ bruidhinn Gàidhlig ri na daoine seo taobh a-muigh na sgoile? *Cuir ✓*

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<th>Màthair</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tha</td>
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<tr>
<th>Athair</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Tha</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bràithrean</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tha</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peathraichean</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tha</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caraidean</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tha</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nàbaidhean</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tha</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A4. A’ smaoineachad air na rudan diofraichte a bhios tu a’ dèanamh aig an sgoil, ciamar a bhios tu a’ faireachdainn mu dheidhinn:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gu tur mi-thoilichte</th>
<th>Beagan mi-thoilichte</th>
<th>Coma</th>
<th>Toilichte gu leòr</th>
<th>Gu tur toilichte</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sgrìobhadh sa Ghàidhlig?</td>
<td>☺</td>
<td>☺</td>
<td>☺</td>
<td>☺</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sgrìobhadh sa Bheurla?</td>
<td>☺</td>
<td>☺</td>
<td>☺</td>
<td>☺</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Leughadh sa Ghàidhlig?</td>
<td>☺</td>
<td>☺</td>
<td>☺</td>
<td>☺</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Leughadh sa Bheurla?</td>
<td>☺</td>
<td>☺</td>
<td>☺</td>
<td>☺</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Litreachadh sa Ghàidhlig?</td>
<td>☺</td>
<td>☺</td>
<td>☺</td>
<td>☺</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Litreachadh sa Bheurla?</td>
<td>☺</td>
<td>☺</td>
<td>☺</td>
<td>☺</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bruidhinn sa Ghàidhlig?</td>
<td>☺</td>
<td>☺</td>
<td>☺</td>
<td>☺</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bruidhinn sa Bheurla?</td>
<td>☺</td>
<td>☺</td>
<td>☺</td>
<td>☺</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Pàirt B: Na Beachdan Agad**

*Leugh gach cunntas is cuir ✓ anns a’ bhogsa a tha as freagarraiche dhutsa. Chan eil freagair ceàrr no ceart ann.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chan eil mi ag aontachadh idir</th>
<th>Chan eil mi ag aontachadh</th>
<th>Coma</th>
<th>Aontachadh</th>
<th>Aontachadh gu làidir</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Is toil leam bruidhinn Gàidhlig</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bidh sgoilearan Beurla a’ magadh orm seach gu bheil Gàidhlig agam</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tha mi ag iarraidh Gàidhlig a dhèanamh san Àrd Sgoil</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bidh Gàidhlig cudromach dhomh nuair a tha mi a’ sireadh obair</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tha e a’ còrdadh rium gu bheil dà chànan agam</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cha toil leam cleachdadh na Gàidhlig taobh a-muigh na sgoile</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Tha mo phàrantan ag iarraidh orm Gàidhlig a dhèanamh san Àrd Sgoil</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bruidhniadh mi a’ Ghàidhlig fad mo bheatha</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Tha e nas fhèarr dà chànan a bhith agad na aon chànan</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Bidh mi a’ measgachadh Gàidhlig is Beurla nuair a tha mi a’ bruidhinn</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Bidh sgoilearan Beurla farmadach orm seach gu bheil Gàidhlig agam</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Tapadh leat airson na ceistean a fhreagairt!**
**Appendix 2: Lesson Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Cuspair:</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eileanan</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Curraicealam airson Sàr Mhathais:</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tha an leasan seo a’ buadh gu mòr air:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Litearrachd agus Gàidhlig: Èisteachd agus Labhairt</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**LIT 2-09a**

*Nuair a bhios mi ag èisteachd agus a’ bruidhinn ri daoine eile airson diofar adhbharan, is urrainn dhomh:*

- fiosrachadh, eòlasan is beachdan innse
- pròiseasan agus beachdan a mhineachadh
- na cùisean a thèid a thogail aithneachadh agus geàrr-chunntas a dhèanamh air na priomh phuingean agus cho-dhùnaidhean
- puingean a shoilleireachadh le bhith a’ faighneachd cheistean no le bhith ag iarraidh air daoine tuilleadh a ràdh.

**LIT 2-10a / LIT 3-10a**

*Tha mi a’ faighinn misneachd nuair a tha mi a’ dheilgeadh ri daoine eile an taobh a-staigh agus an taobh a-muigh m’ àite ionnsachaidh. ’S urrainn dhomh rudan a chr an cèill ann an dòigh shoillear, bheothail agus tha mi ag ionnsachadh goireasan freagarrach a thagadh agus an cur ann an òrdugh gu neo-eisimeileach.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Priomh amas:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cothrom a thoirt don chloinn cómhradh nàdarr a dhèanamh agus ceistean a chur air a chèile agus am freagairt. Thèid na cómhraidhean aca a chlåradh.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Gniomhan:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A’ cur an aithne – cò sinn, cò às a tha sinn is carson a tha sinn anns a’ chlas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Cruinn còmhla:**

   Taisbeanadh PP - dealbhan dhen Eilean Sgitheanach
A' smaoineachadh mun eilean: cò ris a tha e coltach, cò bhios a’ fuireach ann, dè an obair a th’ aca msaa

A’ bruidhinn ann an dithisean – smaoinich air 3 faclan a tha ag innse cò ris a tha an t-eilean coltach

Sgriobh na faclan air a’ bhòrd

2. Cruinn còmhla: Eileanan an t-saoghail
Taisbeanadh PP – cò ris a tha na h-eileanan seo coltach?

3. Dithisean: Dèan an àirde eilean agad fhèin (innealan clàraidh)
Cò ris a bhios e coltach?

Càite bheil e?

Cò bhios a’ fuireach ann?

Dè an t-ainm a tha air an eilean?

Smaointich mu dheidhinn beannatan, lochan, craobhan, togalaichean, bailtean, àrainneachd msa

Dithisean - Dèan dealbh dheth (pàipear mòr)

Priomh amas: bruidhinn riutha mu dheidhinn a bhith ag obair còmhla is bruidhinn ri chèile

4. Cruinn còmhla: a’ beachdachadh air na diofar eileanan
Bruidhinn ris a’ chlas mu dheidhinn nan eileanan aca

Thoir cothrom dhaibh beagan obair eile a dhèanamh orra

5. Ag aithris – agallamhan (flip cams)
Bruidhinn mu dheidhinn luchd naidheachd is an obair aca

Dè na ceistean a bhiodh iad airson faighneachd do bhuidhnean eile?

Dithisean – sgriobh sios 4 ceistean a dh’fhaodadh iad faighneachd

Cuir na ceistean sin air neach bho bhuidheann eile – aon duine a’ clàradh agus a’ cur cheistean agus aon duine a’ freagairt nan ceistean

Cò-dhùnadh: beachdaich air mar a chaidh dhaibh

Ma bhios ùine ann:

6. Sgriobhadh – dèan an àirde bileag fiosrachaidh mun eilean (seall dhaibh eisimpleirean de bhileagan fiosrachaidh)
Appendix 3: Transcription Symbols

Transcription symbols (based on the Jefferson Transcription System)

[ ] Square brackets mark the start and end of overlapping speech. They are aligned to mark the precise position of overlap as in the example below.

↑↓ Vertical arrows precede marked pitch movement, over and above normal rhythms of speech. They are used for notable changes in pitch beyond those represented by stops, commas and question marks.

Underlining indicates emphasis; the extent of underlining within individual words locates emphasis and also indicates how heavy it is.

‘↑↓I know it,’ ‘degree’ signs enclose hearably quieter speech.

(0.4) Numbers in round brackets measure pauses in seconds (in this case, 4 tenths of a second). If they are not part of a particular speaker’s talk they should be on a new line. If in doubt use a new line.

(.) A micropause, hearable but too short to measure.

((stoccato)) Additional comments from the transcriber, e.g. about features of context or delivery.

she wa::nted Colons show degrees of elongation of the prior sound; the more colons, the more elongation.

Yeh, ‘Continuation’ marker, speaker has not finished; marked by fall-rise or weak rising intonation, as when delivering a list.

y’know? Question marks signal stronger, ‘questioning’ intonation, irrespective of grammar.

Yeh. Full stops mark falling, stopping intonation (‘final contour’), irrespective of grammar, and not necessarily followed by a pause.
Bibliography


Harris, J. 2009. Late-stage refocusing of Irish-language programme evaluation: Maximizing the potential for productive debate and remediation’, *Language Teaching Research*, 13(1) 55–76.


