

MacKenzie, Gordon H. (2018) *Minority language media, status planning & linguistic attitudes in Scotland: the sociolinguistic impact of the Gaelic television channel - BBC Alba*. MLitt(R) thesis.

<https://theses.gla.ac.uk/30737/>

Copyright and moral rights for this work are retained by the author

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge

This work cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Minority Language Media, Status Planning & Linguistic  
Attitudes in Scotland: the sociolinguistic impact of the  
Gaelic television channel - BBC Alba

Gòrdan Hamaltan MacCoinnich /

Gordon Hamilton MacKenzie

BA; MRes

Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Letters (MLitt)

School of Humanities

College of Arts

University of Glasgow

August 2018

## **Abstract**

### **Minority Language Media, Status Planning & Linguistic Attitudes in Scotland: the sociolinguistic impact of the Gaelic Television channel - BBC Alba**

This thesis mixes the disciplines of sociolinguistics, media and minority language studies. Over the past decade the availability and prominence of Gaelic television in Scotland has significantly increased through the launch of Scotland's first stand-alone Scottish Gaelic television channel – BBC Alba. The presence of Minority Language Media (MLM) is popularly considered as an important element of efforts at maintaining and revitalising minority languages, however the ways in which the language in question actually benefits is keenly debated but still largely unknown. Studies by Moriarty (2007) showed that is media impact upon minority language indirect and is mediated through language attitudes whilst De. Bres (2008) discovered that MLM normalises the language amongst the majority language dominated society through promotion of positive attitudes and behaviours. This study concentrates on viewers of BBC Alba, sampling a sports viewing population. The study deploys a mixed method approach of both qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative element revealed stronger correlations between attitudinal positivity and favourability towards Gaelic than had been previously discovered in other studies such as (West & Graham: 2011) and O' Hanlon & Paterson (2012). The qualitative element revealed strong connections to issues of identity and Gaelic, whilst the promotion of Gaelic services especially Gaelic-medium education were topics of repeated participant discussion. Analysis of the overall data concludes that exposure to Gaelic television by the majority language population raises the status of the language in wider society, promoting a healthy acceptance of bilingualism in Scottish society ultimately fostering an improved linguistic environment for Scottish Gaelic to be sustained for future generations.

## Table of Contents

Title Page .....	1
Abstract .....	2
<u>Buidheachas (Acknowledgements)</u> .....	7
Author's Declaration .....	8
Abbreviations.....	9
<b>Chapter 1 - Introduction</b> .....	<b>10</b>
1.1 Minority Language Media .....	10
1.2 – The Gaelic language in Scotland .....	11
1.2.1 - Gaelic maintenance and revitalisation in Scotland.....	11
1.2.2 - Scottish Gaelic Television, Reversing Language Shift (RLS) & Status Planning .....	14
1.3 – Specific Research Focus and Selected Cohort .....	16
1.4 - Aims and Objectives .....	18
1.5 - Choice of Research Cohort .....	18
1.6 - Thesis Outline.....	19
<b>Chapter 2 – Literature Review</b> .....	<b>22</b>
2.1 – Theoretical Framework - Attitudes & Identities .....	22
2.1.1 - Introduction .....	22
2.1.2 - Linguistic Attitudes.....	22
2.1.3 - Linguistic Status .....	25
2.1.4 - Attitudes towards Gaelic in Scotland .....	26
2.1.5 - Gaelic identities: Gaeldom, Gàidhealtachd & Scotland.....	29
2.2 - The role of the media in 'Reversing Language Shift' (RLS).....	31
2.2.1 - Introduction .....	31
2.2.2 - Media's contribution to RLS: competing standpoints .....	32
2.2.3 - Minority Language Media Research .....	33
2.2.4 - Minority language media & RLS - a transnational perspective .....	34
2.2.5 - Social impact research conducted on Gaelic television .....	38
2.2.6 - Dearth of research in the comparative Scottish Gaelic context .....	39
2.3 - Gaelic media in Scotland .....	41
2.3.1 - Background to Gaelic media .....	41

2.3.2 - Gaelic media - Foundations of BBC Alba .....	42
2.3.5 - Remit, Development, Structure, Governance, Funding & Audience.....	43
2.3.5.1 - Remit .....	43
2.3.5.2 - Audience .....	44
2.3.6 - Audio-visual Translation (Subtitling) and Dubbing .....	45
2.3.6.1 - Function of subtitling.....	46
2.3.6.2 - Audience Requirements: subtitling for whom? .....	47
2.3.6.3 - To what extent is the ‘Gaelic channel’ operating as a Gaelic language channel.....	48
2.3.7.1 - Governance .....	49
2.3.7.2 - Responsibilities of the Chief Executive BBC Alba & the MG Alba Board .....	50
2.3.7.3 - Collaboration agreement between MG Alba and the BBC in terms of management: the Joint Management Board ...	50
2.3.7.4 - Progress in governance: greater involvement of the public through the BBC Audience Council .....	51
2.4.1 - Minority Language Media in Scotland.....	51
2.4.2 - The Indirect Impact of Minority Language Television.....	53
2.4.3 - Language promotion through direct advertising .....	54
2.4.4 - A distinctly Scottish language salvage situation .....	55
2.4.5 - Is BBC Alba currently operating as quasi-national broadcaster? .....	56
2.4.6 - Status Impact .....	58
2.5 – Literature Review - Discussion & Conclusion .....	59
<b>Chapter 3 – The Quantitative Element – Survey Questionnaire .....</b>	<b>63</b>
3.1 - Introduction .....	63
3.2. - Research context .....	63
3.2.2 – Choice of method: Influencing studies .....	64
3.2.3 - Research design process .....	65
3.2.3.1 - Choice of participant.....	65
3.2.3.2 - Questionnaire Design .....	65

3.2.4 – Ethics .....	67
3.2.5 - Participant Enrolment.....	68
3.3 – Descriptive Data Analysis of the Survey Questionnaire .....	69-108
3.4 - Qualitative Survey Data.....	109
3.4.1 - Language learning .....	109
3.4.2 - Gaelic symbolic of Scottishness / Identity / Heritage .....	110
3.4.3 - Attitudes towards BBC Alba.....	110
3.5 - Survey Questionnaire Data Summary – key findings .....	112

## **Chapter 4 – The Qualitative Element – Survey Questionnaire**

4.1 Introduction .....	116
4.2 - Methodology.....	116
4.2.1 – Choice of method .....	117
4.2.2 – Influencing studies .....	117
4.2.3 - Research design process .....	118
4.2.3.1 – Ethics .....	118
4.2.3.2 - Choice of participant .....	119
4.2.3.3 – Interview design .....	119
4.2.3.4 - Participant Enrolment.....	120
4.2.4 – Interview experience .....	120
4.2.5 – Data Analysis Methods .....	121
4.2.5.1 – Transcription .....	121
4.2.5.2 - Coding .....	121
4.3 - Participant Background Information .....	122
4.4 - Data Analysis .....	123-147

## **Chapter 5 – Discussion & Conclusions.....148**

5.1 - Overview .....	148
5.2 – Summary of findings.....	148
5.2.1 - The Quantitative Element .....	149
5.2.2 - The Qualitative Element.....	149
5.3 - Policy Recommendations & Research Requirements .....	153

5.3.1 Future Research .....	154
5.3.2 - Concluding Comments.....	155
Appendices.....	157
Appendix 1 – Sample Interview Transcript .....	171
Appendix 2 - Interview Guide .....	164
Appendix 3 – Survey Questionnaire Qualitative Data .....	166
Bibliography	
References .....	171

### **Buidheachas (Acknowledgements)**

Bu mhath leam taing mhòr a thoirt an toiseach dha na stiùirichean agam – An t-Ollamh Mark Mac Conmhaoil agus an t-Àrd-ollamh Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh. Tha taing uamhasach fhèin mòr cuideachd a' dol dha Soillse agus Oilthigh Ghlaschu airson an taic maoineachaidh agus stiùiridh a fhuair mi air na bliadhnaichean a dh'fhalbh. Tha mi cuideachd taingeil dha mo phàrantan Dòmhnall is Susan airson sùil a thoirt air mo chuid sgrìobhaidh mus do chuir mi an tràchdas seo a-steach. Tha mi cuideachd buidheach dhaibhsan agus dha mo bhràthair Beathag airson mo bhrosnachadh fad bhliadhnaichean. Agus mu dheireadh thall, b' iad na daoine as cudromache - gach duine a ghabh pàirt sna h-agallamhan agus na suirbhidhean agam. Mòran taing dhuibh uile.



### Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature

A black rectangular box redacting the signature.

Printed name: GORDON MACKENZIE

## **Abbreviations**

GROS – General Register Office for Scotland

ML - Minority Language

MLM – Minority Language Media

NRS – National Records of Scotland

NLS – National Library of Scotland

RLS – Reversing Language Shift

SMG – Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig

SMO – Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

SSPCK – Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge

S4C - Sianel Pedwar Cymru

TG4 – Teilifís na Gaeilge

TPB – Theory of Planned Behaviour

## **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

### **Background and Research Context**

#### **1.1. – Minority Language Media**

Minority language media (MLM), as a distinct academic field, is both relatively new, and indeed small in terms of output. The field has, however, grown significantly in recent years with publications such as *Minority Language Media* (Cormack & Hourigan: 2007) and *Social Media and Minority Languages* (Gruffydd Jones & Uribe-Jongbloed: 2013), greatly enhancing the amount of published academic material. The study of minority languages itself was boosted by the publication of Joshua Fishman's *Reversing Language Shift* (1991). A decade later Fishman complemented his book with *Can Threatened Languages Be Saved?* a collection of essays by various authors. His influential interpretation of the 'Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale' has served as probably the most authoritative model for measuring language shift, providing a guidebook for language planners. Within this model Fishman placed much emphasis on the lived experience within the community rather than more abstract means such as the mass media and through the linguistic landscape. Fishman's writings have stimulated much other work in the field and have played no small part in helping develop minority language studies into more specific fields such as Minority Language Media (MLM) studies. Ironically, this has occurred in spite of Fishman's skepticism concerning the ability of the media to support the minority language if other more central needs are not met first (Cormack: 2007).

The provision of MLM in Europe has significantly increased since the ratification of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages in 1998 (Moriarty: 2007). Article 11, in particular, provides institutional support for the presence of minority languages in the media. One change which is especially apparent is the large increase of the presence of such languages on television. In turn, this has fueled a perception that such a growth of MLM has resulted in an improved position of the ML itself. However, although we often assume this is the case, there is a dearth of evidence to suggest that this is occurring. Mike Cormack argues that a direct link between media and its impact upon a language is notoriously difficult to measure. This is largely a result of the many variables that should be taken into account when attempting to

assess any impact of television upon a minority language. Cormack, writing in 2003, stated:

*The gap between this assumption of the media's role and lack of firm evidence concerning the media's effectiveness in reversing language shift will be obvious to anyone who reads the relevant literature* (Cormack: 2003, p1)

Indeed, although many commentators have suggested there could be a direct link between MLM and an improved position for minority languages, very few researchers have positively identified such a link, with Mairead Moriarty's (2007) doctoral thesis remaining the seminal example. Given this, Moriarty's findings represent a significant inspiration for this study and this is further discussed in this thesis within Chapter 2.

## **1.2 – The Gaelic language in Scotland**

Gaelic is a language indigenous to Scotland and despite a long unbroken linguistic history over much of the country for many centuries, there are now less than 60,000 speakers or 1.2% of the Scottish population, although there are some areas where Gaelic speakers represent a far greater proportion of the local population (NRS: 2013). Gaelic's steady decline has prompted the Scottish Government to describe the language as a 'critically ill patient on life support' (Chalmers: 2011, p128) and although the 2011 census revealed an overall plateau of the total number of speakers, and even a 0.1% increase of the number of speakers under twenty years of age, the prospects for the language in the last places where it can still be regarded as a community language are not so encouraging (Munro et al: 2011). In the face of ever encroaching cultural homogenisation and cultural and linguistic evaporation, there has occurred organised and sustained efforts to arrest Gaelic's decline and protect 'an enormously important part of Scottish cultural life' (as stated by then Scottish Secretary of State, Alasdair Carmichael (2013).

### **1.2.1 - Gaelic maintenance and revitalisation in Scotland**

The 'Gaelic revival' (Hutchison: 2005) is a phenomenon that is said to have begun in the 1960s, accelerating in the 1980s and marked by increasing interest in Gaelic language and culture and efforts at its maintenance and promotion. It is recognised as

a part of larger global interest in the maintenance and revitalisation of indigenous culture.

There have been various manifestations of this revival arguably the most important in terms of longevity was the opening of *Sabhal Mòr Ostaig* – Scotland's Gaelic college in 1973, supported by Iain Noble's ideological stance that revitalisation of the indigenous language will in turn assist indigenous communities prosper economically and socially. Based upon Noble's firsthand experience of the successful Faroese situation, he believed that language regeneration in Skye and Lochalsh would bring the confidence needed for social and economic renewal.

In popular culture musical bands such as *Runrig*, *Na h-Oganaich*, and later, *Capercaillie*, provided Gaels with role models succeeding in straddling contemporary popular culture with Gaelic lyrics. This illustrated that Gaelic culture need no longer be viewed as backward but rather could be seen as adaptable to modern pop culture. More recently, musicians such as Martyn Bennett and bands such as *Niteworks* have been part of the evolution of Gaelic music and culture, mixing cosmopolitan sounds with traditional Gaelic song.

Perhaps the best known manifestation of this 'revival' is Gaelic-medium education (GME). Beginning in the mid-eighties, the products of GME have undoubtedly assisted with the recent rise of under 20s recorded as 'Gaelic Speakers' in the 2011 census after generation upon generation of linguistic decline. It must be noted, however, that the long-term ability of GME to produce fluent and able Gaelic speakers has, yet, been unproven (MacKenzie: 2015 [April] & Dunmore: 2015 [October]). Specifically, in terms of the Scottish Gaelic situation, adult learners (non-native/L2 speakers) represent an increasing proportion of the overall number of Gaelic speakers, and if Gaelic is to survive for future generations then the language looks increasingly reliant on such people.

The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 was the first piece of legislation to give formal recognition to the language and aims to secure its status with 'equal respect' to the English language in Scotland. The Act led to the establishment of Bòrd na Gàidhlig (the national governmental organization responsible for Gaelic language development) as part of the framework of government

Also, a major part of this ‘Gaelic revival’ is the various forms of mass media which have developed over the course of the twentieth and into the twenty-first century. Before the 1990s, Gaelic television was sporadic, and funding for programme production was awarded on a case by case basis. Since 1990 there has been British legislative provision for financing of Gaelic language radio and television programmes. The BBC’s own commitment to Gaelic had long predated the 1990 Act, having a long history of Gaelic broadcasting dating back to 1923. The Broadcasting Act 1990 established a fund dedicated to Gaelic television, which was to be administered by MG Alba (the operating name of the Gaelic Media Service). The Broadcasting Act 1996, and then the Communications Act 2003, amended the powers of MG Alba and made other provisions in relation to Gaelic broadcasting, yet in spite of this policy support, there were significant blockages for Gaelic television until very recently. Users who wanted to view Gaelic television contended with irregular and inconvenient programming schedules and furthermore, these programmes were only available in Scotland on BBC Scotland and Scottish independent television channels.

Although popularly assumed, BBC Alba was not actually Scotland’s first dedicated Gaelic television channel, with *TeleG* – a digital only service (McIntyre: 1991) operating on Freeview channel 8 for one hour, per day, between 6 – 7pm. *TeleG* only ever broadcast repeated programmes which were previously shown on either the BBC, STV or Channel 4. *TeleG* operated on Freeview from 1999, and surprisingly continued broadcasting following the launch of BBC Alba. This came to an end in 2011 when BBC Alba was expanded onto Freeview and made *TeleG* completely redundant.

Ultimately, the Communications Act 2003 gave Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig (SMG) [Gaelic media services] a revised remit, and in 2005 the BBC and SMG (became MG Alba) agreed to a working partnership for Gaelic television that would, eventually, result in a collaboration agreement in 2007 and the launching of BBC Alba in 2008.

In Bòrd na Gàidhlig’s National Plan for Gaelic 2007-12 the benefits of the impending Gaelic media service were hailed:

*The new Gaelic Digital Service, which will combine television, radio and on-line services, is anticipated to have a positive impact at many levels including*

*increasing artistic and technical skills, extending economic opportunities, stimulating parents' interest in Gaelic education, appealing to and serving adult learners and strengthening Gaelic usage in extremely important media. It holds significant potential to assist with the development of positive attitudes to the acquisition and transmission of Gaelic* (Bòrd na Gàidhlig: 2007, p. 11).

### **1.2.2 – Scottish Gaelic Television, Reversing Language Shift (RLS) and Status Planning**

BBC Alba has now (2017) has now almost been running for a decade. Throughout this thesis it will sometimes referred to as ‘the Gaelic channel’. The channel is run as a collaboration of MG Alba (Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig [Gaelic media service]) and the BBC. BBC Alba broadcasts seven days a week, usually for around seven hours a day. 57,375 people in Scotland can speak Gaelic, according to the 2011 census, but a further 20,000 have various levels of understanding (NRS: 2013). BBC Alba’s purpose is first and foremost to serve Gaelic speakers – the group described as “the core-audience” (MG Alba: 2016). The BBC Trust’s (Governing body of the BBC until its dissolution on April 6th 2017) remit dictated that the channel should also serve “those learning the language, those who might wish to learn, and those interested in the language and culture” (BBC Trust: 2015; p. 2). Indeed, the BBC Trust’s original target of 250,000 viewers (while the channel was not yet available on Freeview) is several times the number that are either able to speak or understand the language. Despite a high target, by 2013 BBC Alba was reaching 17.6% of the Scottish audience equating to an average viewership of 751,000. This includes weekly reach of 74% amongst the “core” Gaelic-speaking audience (MG Alba: 2016), meaning that over 90% of the Gaelic channel’s weekly audience are non-Gaelic speaking. Such a dominance of the majority language speakers as a proportion of the audience for a minority language television station is unprecedented. There are several factors which can explain this phenomenon, discussed in Chapter 2.

From a language planning perspective, it was hoped that BBC Alba would be able to make a strong and tangible contribution towards the future of the Gaelic language in terms of maintenance, and even so called “revitalisation”. The ways in which BBC Alba can assist with such outcomes is greatly debated by language activists and academics, through to media practitioners and civil servants.

The traditional assumption suggests that the most efficient way in which to support a language using television is to produce and broadcast dedicated language learning programmes. This directly challenges the language planning problem and is the most straightforward answer to the complicated process of supporting a minoritised and endangered language. There are, nevertheless, a variety of others ways in which Gaelic television can support the language. In 2011, Milligan et al. pronounced different ‘impacts’ that BBC Alba may bring to support RLS (Reversing Language Shift). They divided these impacts into four categories: Usage Planning Impact; Acquisition Planning Impact; Corpus Planning Impact and Status Planning Impact. This thesis largely, but not wholly, focuses on the status impact.

Status planning is understood in a number of different ways. Indeed, the concept of language planning itself appears to have changed meaning over time. Before status planning was established as a unique aspect of language planning, Haugen (1959: 15) defined language planning to mean “the activity of preparing a normative orthography, grammar, and dictionary for the guidance of writers and speakers in a non-homogenous speech community” In 1969, Kloss expanded the definition of language planning beyond Haugen’s definition adding ‘status planning’ which was understood as government recognition of one language in relation to others (Cooper: 1996: 32). Cabarrubias & Fishman (1983) argue that status planning is concerned with language’s “*standing in respect to other languages... primarily interested in the status of the language, whether it is satisfactory as it is or whether it should be lowered or raised*” (p. 43). By 2006, Edwards describes status planning as “perceptions of its concomitant features: status, prestige economic clout, cultural dominance...” (p. 5). By 1996, Cooper broadened conceptualisations of status planning to mean “the allocation of languages or language varieties to given functions” (Musk: 2008: 5)

A number of researchers and commentators have repeated the claim that the media can assist with ‘linguistic normalisation’ of a minority language; however only few have substantiated this link with empirical evidence. Mairead Moriarty’s (2007) doctoral thesis study with L2 Irish speaking university students found a clear identifiable change in the way they perceive the language as a result of television exposure. She argues that the *‘impact the presence of minority languages on the media has on actual language practices is indirect and is mediated through language*



*attitudes*' (p. 38). On this basis Moriarty concludes that the availability of media in minority languages is of benefit to language revitalisation particularly from the point of view of encouraging linguistic normalisation.

Returning to Scotland, writers also suggest that Gaelic television may have significant positive effects for the health of Gaelic in Scotland. Lang (2010) argues that BBC Alba aspires to 'normalise' Gaelic in Scottish society. In MG Alba's annual report 2011-12 it was claimed that Gaelic television 'strengthened the profile and use of the Gaelic language' and 'plays a key role in promoting the Gaelic' (p. 6). Chalmers et al (2013) describes how BBC Alba 'hopes to foster more positive attitudes towards Gaelic, among both Gaelic and non-Gaelic speakers' (p. 217).

It has been claimed that the success of minority language policy initiatives may only be achievable if at least some degree of 'tolerability' of these initiatives is secured among majority language speakers (de Bres: 2010). As far back as 1984, Trudgill described 'softening-up' the majority language community by exposure to the minority language. Until recently, there has been little consideration in language planning literature of what practical approaches might be used to influence the attitudes of majority language speakers towards minority languages, in other words 'plan for tolerability' (de.Bres: 2010). Television, however, potentially provides opportunities for such.

It is this understanding of 'status planning' which encompasses a number of influences and considers that the position of the minority language can be improved by raising its status and prestige in society to which this thesis and associated research generally adheres.

### **1.3 – Specific Research Focus and Selected Cohort**

After consideration of the different possible effects of the media upon minority language, Milligan et al (2011) highlights a dearth in research: "*whether such media has had a positive effect on the attitudes of non-speakers to Gaelic has not been evidenced*" (p. 354) and recommends that "*BBC Alba actively commission research on the effect of its programming on attitudes towards Gaelic in both Gaelic-speaking and non-Gaelic-speaking audiences*" (p. 358). The writings of Chalmers, Danson, Lang and Milligan respectively and collaboratively were of significant inspiration to the premise of this thesis, which includes, but not exclusive to Chalmers & Danson

(2010), Milligan (2010), Milligan, Chalmers, Danson, Lang, (2011), and Chalmers, Danson, Lang & Milligan (2013).

The impact of having Gaelic television broadcast to large swathes of non-Gaelic speaking Scottish society is the fundamental topic with which this thesis and associated research is concerned. For this thesis, the overall viewing population was therefore selected as the research cohort, regardless of Gaelic ability or connection.

In recent years, the amount of sports broadcast on BBC Alba has been criticised by some Gaelic language campaigners. Those representing ‘Craoladh Gàidhlig’ – a pressure group campaigning for more Gaelic language on BBC Alba have been especially vocal and critical of MG Alba output on BBC Alba. There appears to be a number of reasons why MG Alba chooses to broadcast a high amount of sports programming and there is discussion of this in Chapter 4. However, from a language planning perspective it can be conversely argued that the inclusion of sports can indeed have a positive minority language impact. This has been articulated by Milligan et al:

*“The importance of coverage of sporting activities on BBC Alba should not be ignored in its fostering of the wider acceptance of the language, especially as it broadcasts more Scottish sport than any other channel, with over three hours a week of football, rugby, and shinty”* Milligan et al (2011; pp 356).

With the addition of BBC Alba to the Freeview platform in May 2011, this extended the weekly reach from 220,000 to 530,000 (BBC Trust: 2011). By 2013, viewing figures had risen to 751,000 (MG Alba: 2013), potentially boosted by the liquidation and relegation of Rangers Football Club to the fourth tier of Scottish professional football in 2012, resulting in BBC Alba unexpectedly having rights to cover a number of games to one of the best followed sports clubs in the UK. Furthermore, the extension of BBC Alba on iPlayer in 2011 again boosted its audience by 5.3 million ‘views’ (not to be confused with unique viewers) according to the most recent data (MG Alba: 2016). All-in-all, the presence of BBC Alba over different platforms and due, no small part, to its sports coverage has extended the influence of the channel in terms of its impact on the status of the Gaelic language in Scotland. With such a wide reach beyond the ‘core’ Gaelic audience it is likely that more people than ever in Scotland, in modern times, will be encountering Gaelic in their daily lives. It could be

argued that those watching BBC are only watching snippets of the channel while looking for other programming. Indeed, Milligan et al (2011) suggest that “they [non-Gaelic speaking viewers] may only view the channel briefly while seeking English-language entertainment”, however data gathered by MG Alba suggests that the average weekly viewing time increased from 1.7 hours to 1.8 hours from 2015 to 2016 (MG Alba: 2016).

#### **1.4 - Aims and Objectives**

While often the focus of language planning research is to measuring the health of a language, namely concentrating on minority language speakers, the focus of this study is to investigate the media’s impact upon society as whole. Rather than try and assess some sort of rise in the number speakers from certain stimuli, this study seeks to discover if television can operate an effective mechanism of language policy through raising the status of Gaelic in society in whole, and in turn, the knock on effects this may bring for the Gaelic language as whole.

**Primary research question:** What attitudinal impact (if any) is Gaelic broadcasting, specifically BBC Alba, having upon its audiences, and ultimately, what impact is this likely to have upon efforts to maintain and revitalise Gaelic language in Scotland?

#### **Sub-research questions:**

- To assess the attitudes of BBC Alba audiences towards the Gaelic language revitalisation and maintenance in Scotland
- To investigate any impact Gaelic television may be having upon the status and usage of Gaelic language in Scotland
- To scrutinise public and corporate policy and theoretical justifications for the use of the media for ‘Status’ and ‘Usage’ planning in Scotland.

#### **1.5 - Choice of Research Cohort**

The empirical data generated for this thesis will be obtained by researching attitudes amongst BBC Alba viewers, regardless of Gaelic language abilities or any prior connection to Gaelic culture. This study will deploy a mixed methods approach with

a survey questionnaire stage followed by semi-structured interviews. With Mairead Moriarty's (2007) research being the seminal example identifying a direct link between MLM and an improved position for the minority language, the methodology deployed by Moriarty will be a significant inspiration for this research study. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, indeed a variation on Moriarty's mixed methods approach – in order to increase both reliability and validity, providing tangible evidence identifying or dismissing Gaelic television influence upon the general population.

It was decided to recruit participants based on a sample most representative of the BBC Alba audience. According to BBC Alba's Performance Report (2014) 'Football was the most watched genre on BBC Alba in Q1 2014, reaching around half of all viewers.' *Traditional Music* is the next most popular genre attracting around 24% of viewers, followed in popularity by *Factual/Documentary*, and *Rugby*. Considering such audience data, it was decided to collect data from viewers of sports programmes, viewers of music programmes and a general population sample. Due to perceived difficulties of participant recruitment and conversely the ease of recruitment from viewers of sports programming it was decided to recruit from BBC Alba sports programme audiences. Participant recruitment involved distribution of flyers at sports events and also using online methods such as fan forums and message boards. Further discussion on methodology for both the survey-questionnaire and interviews will be found in their respective chapters.

## **1.6 - Thesis Outline**

The thesis comprises five chapters. This chapter (Chapter 1 – Introduction), serves to provide a brief background to Minority Language, Minority Language Media and Scottish Gaelic Studies. It also includes the aims and objectives of the present research and how these are going to be achieved.

Chapter Two serves to review relevant and associated literature in order to contextualise the research project within both historical and contemporary contexts. Although this thesis largely draws from minority language studies, there is much overlap with other distinct fields such as, but not inclusive to: sociology, sociolinguistics, psychology, media studies, and Scottish Gaelic Studies. The relationship between media, language and society is fundamental to this project and

this chapter attempts to emphasise this relationship. Chapter 2 also attempts to define or indeed redefine certain concepts and place the research within certain theoretical frameworks.

Chapter 3 focuses on the quantitative element of this research project. Essentially, a survey questionnaire represented one of two main research phases. The survey was largely organised in multiple choice format, however at various stages opportunity for qualitative feedback was permitted. The questionnaire was hosted online using the survey collector website “Survey Monkey” with 275 participants taking part overall. However, the first run was considered as a pilot stage, with modifications made to the survey following the collection of 91 surveys. Following amendments, 186 individuals undertook the final run of the survey, and it is this collection of questionnaires which have been presented for analysis in this thesis. This chapter will firstly detail the methodological process followed by an examination of the data gathered in a results section. The results section will itself comprise two sections: the first will look systematically at the data in the form of a descriptive analysis. This is followed by statistical analysis exploring data in terms of significant correlations. Finally, this chapter will be summarised with a conclusions section detailing significant findings.

Chapter 4 focuses on the qualitative element of this research project. The second of two research phases comprises semi-structured interviews with a small group of interviewees. The interviewees were sampled using the same methods as the survey cohort, with a number participating in both studies. All interviews were conducted by the author and were conducted in a variety of locations across Scotland. Following a pilot stage, ten individuals were interviewed and it is the data obtained from this group which are presented for analysis in this thesis. This chapter will firstly detail the methodological process followed by an examination of the data gathered in a data analysis section. The data analysis section will comprise the thematically analysed data supported by relevant literature. The chapter concludes with summarisations and details significant findings from the qualitative study.

Chapter 5 (Conclusions) is the final chapter which brings all content together and details what has been discovered from the research conducted for this thesis supported by previous investigation and literature. Combining both elements of research the

chapter will develop and focus on analysis already described in chapters three and four and together with other ideas will detail overall conclusions drawn. Overall, this chapter will draw together what has been discovered and specifically in what ways Gaelic broadcasting, namely BBC Alba, can be considered as affecting Gaelic language ideologies and attitudes amongst overall audiences, and indeed how this may-in-turn be assisting with language maintenance and revitalisation. Finally, it will be suggested that the contributions of this research will be capable of influencing current language policy, and while recognising the project's limitations, this chapter will outline potential future research possibilities unlocked through this project.

## **Chapter 2 – Literature Review**

### **2.1 – Theoretical Framework - Attitudes & Identities**

#### **2.1.1 - Introduction**

This thesis is grounded in well-established theory which dictates that societal attitudes towards language fundamentally impacts the strength or weakness of the language in question. The attitudes of non-speakers of a minority language and how speakers negotiate their identities in relation to a language has a strong bearing on its chances of maintenance and potential revitalisation. This chapter will identify such sociological processes and validate these with previous academic studies or the assertions of sociology of language and sociolinguistic commentators. The chapter will demonstrate the profound effect that societal attitudes ultimately have upon language, will examine what is known about attitudes to minority languages, with particular interest in Gaelic in Scotland, and will also illustrate the media's ability to affect and even shape attitudes towards a particular language.

In recent years, in terms of language attitudes amongst a general population, two studies have examined at the Gaelic language in Scotland with samples over one thousand. These are West & Graham (2011) and then O' Hanlon & Paterson (2012). The former was part of a larger social attitudes study, and the latter specifically focused upon attitudes towards Gaelic. The latter is the largest (in terms of the size of the sample) attitudinal survey conducted concerning Gaelic thus far. Both studies are entirely survey-questionnaire based and a number of questions focused on Gaelic media. Both studies provide a small snapshot of how Gaelic media is perceived by the general population in Scotland. Attitudinal data on this level is useful in some regard; however, such studies are limited as to what it can reveal about actual media impact. It could be argued that studies of deploying such a methodology only tell us very little about the how media is experienced, and how the mass media has impacted or continues to impact those who consume it.

#### **2.1.2 - Linguistic Attitudes**

Before embarking on a discussion of the Gaelic language attitude research, it is necessary to explain what is being understood as an 'attitude' in the context of such research. It is often assumed that an 'attitude' is a straightforward notion to define.

The concept of attitudes as an academic study, though, is a cornerstone of traditional social psychology; however, it is not something that has universal agreement. At a general level, nevertheless, an attitude may be understood as a disposition to react favourably or unfavourably to a class of objects (Edwards: 2009). Using a regularly deployed social-psychology model, an ‘attitude’ can be divided into three components of feelings (the affective element), thoughts (cognitive) and following this - the predispositions to behave in a particular way (behavioural element) (ibid). This model dictates that one who believes something or has an emotional reaction to a stimulus, is therefore believed to act upon this basis. However, it is also widely recognised in social-psychology that there are frequent inconsistencies between attitudes and the (Ajzen: 1991) [see 3.3.11 for the Theory of Planned Behaviour].

When attitudes are considered in the context of sociolinguistics a more refined definition can prove helpful. Such theory can be described using anecdote from a language choice situation where an attitude does not result in direct behaviour. An example that might be applicable in a Gaelic context is of vociferous proponents of Gaelic language and culture choosing to speak English at the *Royal National Mòd* (with no insinuation being made that this actually occurs). Despite the said proponent possessing strong ideologies regarding the promotion and perpetuation of Gaelic language and culture he or she may prefer to converse in English during social interactions, even when all present are indeed Gaelic speakers. Despite the favouring of Gaelic and use in formal settings, for one reason or another, linguistic preference in social setting tends to revert to English. This may be a result of a number of factors, including the lack of linguistic confidence in the ability to express oneself or conversely the notion that somehow using Gaelic may be perceived as showing off. This attitude can be exemplified utilising the comments of a reader of the *Scotsman* newspaper who was unimpressed by the suggestion of kilted uniforms for Edinburgh’s new Gaelic School – *Taobh na Pàirce*:

*I was born and bred in a run-down housing estate in Edinburgh but I was well educated at Niddrie Marischal Secondary. Speaking Gaelic and wearing kilts were alien to us - something that the posh Edinburgh people from Morningside and the private schools did too (sic) show off (“Sedov”, The Scotsman Online, 20/08/2013)*



The attitude to language shown by the contributor is one which associates “speaking Gaelic” with “posh” people who use the language to “show off”. An amount of disdain is shown towards Gaelic. However, more interesting is the presumption that Gaelic speakers do so in order to impress others reveals an interesting understanding that Gaelic is a language of status aka a “high prestige language” rather than one that lacks respect in the majority community. Speakers holding high socio-economic status are the ones believed to speak “good language” whereas the dialects of stigmatized groups are perceived as undesirable. This is a complete reversal of the historical conceptions of Gaelic speakers in the Lowlands. As a minority language – Gaelic - in Edinburgh in accordance with most lesser used language situations has been a language of low prestige, and indeed this is how Gaelic and its people the “Gaels” have been perceived for generations. Gaels have been stigmatised with labels such as the moniker “teuchter”, or the Glasgow Central Station Bridge as a Highland refuge from the elements afforded the nickname ‘The Hielanman's Umbrella’ as meeting place used by Gaelic speaking Highland immigrants who struggled to afford an indoor meeting place. However, such associations are now trivialised, possible largely as a result of newly established social-economic position and the cultural assimilation of Gaels in modern Scotland, following the so-called ‘Gaelic renaissance’ (Oliver: 2002) or ‘revival’ (Hutchison: 2005) and its repositioning of Gaelic in modern Scotland as something desirable, adopted also by urban-dwelling middle-class society, often with minimal previous connection to traditional Gàidhealtachd communities.

Language attitudes, the associations of certain types of language with certain peoples, traits, and behaviours are inherently connected are far from a new phenomenon as can evidence overtly in recorded literature. 180 years ago parish reports from the minister of Loch Carrann (Lochcarron) in Wester Ross reveal a language attitude position towards the encroachment of English in the everyday speech of the Gaels in his parish:

*The language generally spoken is the Gaelic; but English is spoken by a great proportion of the younger people. Gaelic cannot be said to have lost ground for the last forty years; but it has been much corrupted by our frequent intercourse with the south, and the silly vanity of persons, who wish it to be understood, that they know something of another language*

Reverend J. MacKenzie, (1836), *The New Statistical Account of Scotland* (1831-1845), Vol. 15 (Inverness-Shire Ross and Cromarty), p. 111

An extract which contrasts with *The Scotsman* contributor in terms of hierarchy of the particular language, but shows agreement in terms of the motivation of language choice, providing an insight into the contextual nature of language attitudes. On this occasion, it is the Gaels facing condemnation for wishing to understand English, with ‘silly vanity’ the suggested motivation. Their desire to learn English is not deemed appropriate by the minister as Gaelic is their tongue. In other words, their wish to learn a language of higher prestige is dominated by their wish to ‘show off’, not for any functional advantage.

### **2.1.3 - Linguistic Status**

In terms of approaching minority language planning, attitudinal improvement is recognised as a significant aspect of the process (Baker: 1991; de Bres: 2008; Garret: 2010). Indeed, Baker states that ‘attitudes to that language appear to be important in language restoration, preservation, decay, or death. Baker argues that when languages are in danger of decline or extinction, or when cultures and languages are overtly being conserved by, for example educational policies, changing attitudes are often prominently on the agenda. He states that “It is usually accepted that whatever the language policy, planning or provision, the favourability or un-favourability of attitudes in the population fundamentally affects the success or otherwise of language preservation. Thus changing attitudes are often a major part of the formal or hidden agenda of language planning” (Baker: 1992).

History has shown to expect opposition to any minority language or culture. Indeed, not only because those outwith the speech community are ‘out-group’ rather than ‘in-group’ social actors, but also because any cultural spend is scrutinised because the direct economic advantages are not immediately clear. Often there can be strong negative attitudes held about some languages whilst other languages are held in prestige – usually the majority languages or the languages used by those in the higher strata of societies. The power of perceptions creates its own reality and languages are viewed as inferior are for all practical intents and purposes, inferior (Edwards: 2009). Some languages are considered to have little grammar, or for one reason or not, incapable of fulfilling a wide range of functions such as for writing creative literature,

conducting official affairs or for science (Garrett: 2002). Where languages are in competition negative attitudes are often directed towards the minority language, and can often dictate if languages survive, flourish, or whether they succumb to language shift, as successive generations come admire another language or culture to the detriment of their own. For Gaelic in Scotland, this can be evidenced as greatly contributing to language shift towards English, with Gaelic considered the ‘backward’ language of the rural unsophisticated hinterland (McEwan: 2006), whilst English is looked upon as the language of ‘progress’, ‘improvement’ and ‘success’. Given this, there is an ironic element to the increasing dominant urban nature of the ‘Gaelic renaissance/revival’ of the 20th century, i.e. the growth of broadcasting and GME in the cities.

Attitude surveys provide an indicator of current ‘community’ thoughts and beliefs, preferences and desires. Surveys provide social indicators of changing beliefs and the chances of success in policy implementation. In terms of minority languages, censuses provide a measure of the health of the language, but are limited in what they can reveal about attitudes. The most common deployed method in attitudes research seems to be the ‘direct approach’ (Garrett: 2002) where the participants are aware of what is being researched i.e. asking questions directly to the subject under scrutiny. Surveys and questionnaires exemplify this approach to studying language attitudes. Typically, people are simply asked questions concerning language evaluation, preference and how they view the language and its various understandings and uses. It is an approach that depends on overt articulations of attitudes, and therefore is susceptible to criticism, but is the most common used when studying languages, including within Scottish contexts.

#### **2.1.4 - Attitudes towards Gaelic in Scotland**

Within Scotland, the national census provides us with a number of details about the situation of the Gaelic language - namely the ages and distributions of Gaelic speakers and of a number of (reported) abilities (speech, understanding, reading and writing). The census, however cannot reveal a number of important aspects about Gaelic usage and language attitudes, including insightful attitudinal data such as how people perceive their own language, perceive others and language politics in the community or national sphere.

In Scotland, this void has been addressed to an extent with a number of survey based studies revealing attitudes towards Gaelic. To date there have only been a small number of major studies of public opinion in Scotland on the Gaelic language and related issues.

The first large scale survey was undertaken for An Comunn Gaidhealach in 1980/81 by Kenneth MacKinnon (1981) in Skye, na h-Eileanan Siar, Highland and Lowland regions with over 1,100 participants. The survey deployed both a paper questionnaire and the use of interviews. The results overall, when summarized, showed that between 40 and 50 percent of the sample were generally positive towards the language, whilst the remainder were either neutral or negative.

Between 1994 and 1995, MacKinnon also conducted a study of Gaelic speakers in Scotland with the sub-sample being Gaelic speakers from only the Western Isles exploring the attitudes concerning a number of issues related to the language itself. In 1997, MacKinnon describes some of the findings:

*Gaelic was perceived very strongly as essential to a sense of Highland and Island identity, and there was a widespread measure of support for pro-Gaelic policies in local administration and education, however views regarding the viability of Gaelic were on the whole realistic – but its fitness and propriety for modern life were well upheld...Instrumental attitudes towards the language in promotion and career advancement were evident, bearing witness to low status perceptions, and perhaps unawareness too of the very real advancement in Gaelic-linked employment opportunities (MacKinnon: 1997 [unpublished article available online at [www.sgrud.org.uk](http://www.sgrud.org.uk)])*

More recently, and in terms of sample size, one of the largest attitudinal studies conducted in relation to the Gaelic language attitudes was as part of the Scottish Opinion Survey (2011). Commissioned by Bòrd na Gàidhlig and authored by Catriona West & Alasdair Graham this research sampled 1,009 people in order “to obtain views of adults in Scotland towards Gaelic, including awareness of its use and its value as a language in Scotland today” for the Scottish Government’s Culture, External Affairs and Tourism Analytical Unit in conjunction with Bòrd na Gàidhlig (TNS-BMRB 2011). Some of the main findings include:

- Overall, four fifths (80%) of the Scottish population were aware of Gaelic being used in Scotland, with the majority being made aware of Gaelic through the media, but also as result of Gaelic music, arts, and as a subject (not to be confused with a medium of instruction) in schools. Significantly, especially in terms of interest to this thesis – “The media and television in particular, was also the main way in which a substantial minority of people came into contact with Gaelic” (p. 52)”.
- Other findings include around half (51%) were in favour of the usage of Gaelic in Scotland, despite only “very small numbers claiming to have any fluent Gaelic” (p. 53).
- Interest in learning and using the language was more clearly linked to current level of knowledge. The “most mentioned factor’ that would motivate greater learning would be ‘other people speaking it’ (p. 19), highlighting the importance of ‘social-norming’ (p. 53) in improving the status of the language.
- Two fifths of the total sample stated that Gaelic was important to their sense of national identity and 86% thought Gaelic should be available as a subject taught in school.

However, arguably the most comprehensive study involved 1,229 randomly selected people aged 18 was conducted by O’ Hanlon & Paterson (2012) as part of a Soillse funded project, again in conjunction with the Scottish Attitudes Survey (2012).

Some of the findings in relation to attitudes towards Gaelic were particularly interesting, having not been researched before. For example, in the context of a time of austerity, following the worldwide banking crisis of 2008-09, and with a national fear for jobs and finance - 61% of those questioned thought the amount of money spent on Gaelic was either ‘about right’ (45%), or indeed ‘too little’ (16%). Also revealed was strong support for Gaelic education with 91% agreeing when asked if parents in Gaelic-speaking areas should have that right, with 48% in other parts of the country, though still a significant minority.

In particular interest to this thesis, it is significant to note that although only 4% of the sample had heard Gaelic spoken in their own home by family members or visitors, 70% had heard Gaelic in their own homes by means of the media.

It can therefore be suggested that, in terms of empirical research, the Gaelic language, appears to maintain a high-level of good public goodwill as well as institutional and political cross-party support. Despite the poor socio-linguistic situation in which Gaelic in Scotland finds itself in, in terms of recorded public attitudes amongst the monolingual English-speaking population and also in terms of political support, the situation of the language is favourable. It could be argued that the situation of Gaelic in Scotland as a minority language within a largely monolingual state may be envied by other minority language communities.

However, how has this position come about, and what influence can the media, specifically television wield upon this position?

#### **2.1.5 - Gaelic identities: Gaeldom, Gàidhealtachd & Scotland**

The idea of the nation-state, which is a neatly bounded culturally homogenous zone, has existed for at least 300 years, and is still very much at the front of common international cultural thought. However, most contemporary states constructed along these principles contain a number of minority groups who maintain separate languages and cultures. These groups are often viewed with disdain and suspicion as out-groups.

Gaelic and the Gaels within Scotland are no different and have experienced persecution and ill-treatment in their own lands, but more recently in Lowland towns and cities. As economic and social influences have driven the Gaels from their Highland and Island homelands for hundreds of years they have not always been so welcome in Lowland areas. Ironically, however Gaelic has never been alien to cities such as Glasgow and Edinburgh - being the founding language of the nation of Alba, and the language which has given the nation most of its place names from the Mull of Kintyre (Maol Chinn Tìre) to Dunnet Head (Ceann Dhùnaid). Despite this, the language and the people were viewed as outsiders – their culture considered very much foreign, and perceived as inferior by those with English, and with often suspicion and resentment by working-class Scots speakers.

However, as the Gaels have integrated into mainstream Scottish society and the cultural difference between the Lowlands and Highlands have diminished, Gaelic has started to be reclaimed as the/a national language, politicized, emerging as moreculturally appropriate (Chapman: 1978). Despite the traditional Highland (Gaelic) –Lowland (Scots/Scottish English) linguistic divide, the language has perhaps never been so visible in the overall Scottish ‘linguistic landscape’ (Puzey: 2012).

As part the contemporary promotion of Gaelic, the television channel BBC AlbaAlba appears to be promoting the language as an integral thread in the national fabric of the Scotland. At the moment, BBC Alba is Scotland’s only dedicated TV channel, and with an estimated 15% of the population watching the channel on a weekly basis. Almost by accident, in the absence of an English-language Scottish television channel, the channel serves as a quasi-national television broadcaster, despite only 1-2% of the population able to understand the language.

Given this arrangement of circumstances, it raises questions such as, who does Gaelic belong to? (Oliver: 2005), and what impact is the television channel having in terms of normalising the language (as a/the national language) in Scotland? To a degree, then, the Gaelic language has been symbolically appropriated at a national level. There is now some ambiguity regarding Gaelic’s place in contemporary Scotland, especially as the language is now promoted as Scotland’s language, whereas it was once considered bound by the domain of the Highlands, rather than all of Scotland. While Gaelic was long considered the language of the Gael, Highlander and the Hebridean: those of the Gàidhealtachd; it now represents a much more diverse group. Although the Highland Gaelic identity has not yet disappeared, this quasi-ethnic concept of the Gael has perhaps ironically weakened during the period of the ‘Gaelic renaissance’ in Scotland as a whole. Partly because of a nationalising of the language but also because most of those who now occupy the traditional ‘Gàidhealtachd’ simply no longer speak Gaelic. In light of the changing linguistic make of Scotland this raises a number of questions:

- Who is prescribed and who proclaim themselves as the ‘insiders’ and the ‘outsiders’?

- Are Scots, including the dominant Lowland population, beginning to view Gaelic as part of “us” again, after hundreds of years of thinking of the Gaelic language as that which belongs to “them”?
- Deriving from a psychological and sociological standpoint, using models of attachment and belonging theory lays the justification for research: the examination of what indeed Gaelic means to people, what impact is the media having, and what is BBC Alba’s contribution to normalising the language in Scotland?

## **2. 2 - The role of the media in ‘Reversing Language Shift’ (RLS)**

### **2.2.1 - Introduction**

When researching the state of minority languages and efforts to revitalise their use, it is the understanding of linguistic attitudes and the social-economic position of speakers which can, almost, wholly explain their respective ‘health’ according to commentators such as Baker (1992) and Garrett (2002). It is individual choices which lead to ‘language death’: the decision to stop speaking a language variety or to pass your mother tongue to your contemporaries and descendants; however individual choices never occur within a vacuum. Although there exist many anecdotal exceptions, language choices are largely dictated by social pressures. Language prestige and the social and economic opportunities associated with a variety results in its use or neglect.

It is popularly thought the media’s role in supporting minority languages and cultures is obvious. This view is certainly taken by media practitioners involved in this area such as Mike Cormack (2007). Indeed, in the Scottish situation - MG Alba’s annual reports regularly assert that BBC Alba is assisting with overall wellbeing of the Gaelic language. In 2012, MG Alba stated that BBC Alba had ‘strengthened the profile and use of the Gaelic language’. The BBC Trust’s 2010 report regarding the performance of BBC Alba made several assertions:

*‘...the success of the channel in different spheres: strong service provision to Gaelic speakers; usefulness to many who are not Gaelic speakers; strong progress in attracting new speakers to the Gaelic language’ (BBC Trust: 2010)*



Such a statement shows strong endorsement for BBC Alba beyond the usual measures of success for a television channel, although there is no mention of how the channel is actually achieving the stated impact and indeed little research has been conducted to prove or disprove such a statement. The stance of minority language commentators varies as to the ability of the media to impact language attitudes or indeed even language practices. Much doubt has been expressed about the ability of media to be a successful tool for language maintenance and revitalisation, and without research providing academic rigour to the debate neither has much validation.

### **2.2.2 - Media's contribution to RLS: competing standpoints**

Most prominently, celebrated sociolinguist – Joshua Fishman - often regarded as the most foremost authority on language regeneration, deems that mass media can only have minimal impact for ‘Reversing Language Shift’ [RLS] (1991) and only if more important transmission needs are sufficiently satisfied. His Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) for language regeneration published in 1991 placed mass media within the second last stage of the eight stages of language revitalisation (the stages should occur chronologically and in sync with one another). Mass media should only be considered valuable at maintaining and revitalising language once other community orientated goals are met first. In other words, if fundamental language transmission needs (i.e. used within family, community, education), are not fulfilled, there is little point focusing efforts upon mass media, considering such efforts in isolation as superficial and unsustainable. Later comments from Fishman (2001) describe the ‘mass media fetish’ of some language activists. Within his 2001 publication ‘*Can threatened languages be saved?*’ – a compilation of sixteen essays, there is little provision for discourse on the media’s influence upon language. Fishman’s overall stance regarding the mass media and language maintenance could be described as dismissive at best and completely indifferent. Resources given to mass media could be channeled elsewhere, with greater impact. Despite Fishman’s authoritative position as a minority language commentator, his hierarchy of needs (1991) and latter collection of essays are not immune to critique, however.

Each minority language situation is a unique in character with different set of socio-economic, political and geographical circumstances. It may well be that the answers for one linguistic situation may be very different from those required in another

situation. Scottish Gaelic as a community language is in a critical state and the models suggested by Fishman in 1991 may not be most applicable in certain contemporary situations.

Another distinguished minority language commentator – David Crystal - suggested in his 2000 publication *Language Death* that a number of interrelated factors will assist with the maintenance and revival of minority languages. Crystal suggests amongst other factors that to ‘increase their prestige within the dominant community’, ‘increase their wealth’ and ‘increase their legitimate power in the eyes of the dominant community’ (Crystal 2000, in Baker 2006 p. 47) are all significant aspects of language planning and which all could be related directly to attitudinal factors, and influenced by mass media.

### **2.2.3 - Minority Language Media Research**

There is consensus amongst Minority Language Media (MLM) commentators that although identifying a direct link between the media (broadcast/print etc.) and language use (speaker numbers, linguistic variety and frequency) would be highly desirable, it is also widely agreed that this would be notoriously difficult to achieve and problematic to validate. The question of media impact should therefore not ‘obsess’ on a direct link between television broadcasts and language behaviour but rather the debate should focus on others ways in which languages may be influenced. According to Uribe-Jongbloed, (2014) Mike Cormack (Sabhal Mòr Ostaig) remains fixed in trying to find a direct link between language output in media and language use by the audience. However, Cormack (2007, pp 64) himself stated that we should “abandon the idea that a straightforward media–language link can be found”.

Such a gross cause-and-effect simplification would lead to distortion of the situation, and research pertaining this would prove of limited value. Researching a specific aspect of media effect can restore the complexity to the media situation and avoid a simplistic perception of the audience as consumers of media acting directly upon viewing behaviour. It should be recognised that media use takes place in a complex behavioural environment. The idea of language ecology recognises such complexity and the relationship between Gaelic, culture and identity is discussed in 2.1.4

Mastro (2009: 333), looking specifically at racial stereotyping in the media suggests that “even a single exposure to racial/ethnic stereotypes in the media can at least in the short term, influence real world evaluations of minorities [...] provoke stereotypic responses [...] and guide intergroup outcomes [...]. Although ‘racial’ or ‘ethnic’ differentiation in the Gaelic context is arguably more contentious than the ethnicities in which Mastro largely refers to, stereotyping of *Gaelicisms* occurs regularly in other media streams and appropriating the principles to which Mastro suggests would cause audiences to make ‘real world evaluations’ of Gaelic speakers based upon such output. Therefore, it could conversely be argued that BBC Alba has the opportunity to showcase the contemporary relevance and presence of Gaelic (Chalmers: 2013).

Other authors such as Moriarty (2009) have argued that media output availability makes languages visible and that its impact is indirect and mediated. Following research conducted with both Basque and Irish students she concluded ‘television is a hugely important tool in language revival’ (p1.; abstract).

Research focussing on the impact of media upon minority languages amongst wider society, that is, the larger majority language community has been conducted in a number of situations, including within the Basque (Amorrortu: 2006), and Maori (de Bres: 2008) examples, with both discovering positive correlations in their respective situations, as discussed below (2.2.4).

Given such findings, there exists a strong case for researching impact of the media upon linguistic attitudes. This may be especially important in the case of Scottish Gaelic which faces even greater challenges than many minority languages under revival. There is now increased political will for Gaelic broadcasting, and the financial commitment from central government(s) is perhaps slowly improving. Adding academic rigour to the cultural-linguistic spending contributes not only to the academic understandings, but also can contribute to increased state funding and ultimately assist with the perpetuation of Gaelic as a spoken, everyday vernacular.

#### **2.2.4 - Minority language media & Reversing Language Shift – a transnational perspective**

The relationship between television viewership and language change is largely dismissed by the traditional sociolinguistic school. The potential impact of television

upon language is found clearly formulated in the work of distinguished sociolinguist Peter Trudgill. He argues that a key process of language change is ‘diffusion’ (1984). Diffusion is said to occur in the human linguistic process of accommodation – a process in which speakers may alter their speech in response to those with whom they are talking. Therefore, diffusion is the transmission of linguistic features as a result of socio-psychological interaction between speakers. Based upon this model, television does not fit into process, as we cannot interact with characters on television in such a way that accommodation can take place, and so television cannot be directly involved in processes of diffusion. Trudgill, however does argue that television may act as a source of new linguistic features, but this also requires the speakers to construct a model for acquiring such features, and therefore acts more like a conscious learning tool rather than processes of language change through osmosis.

Trudgill’s model remains the sociolinguistic consensus, however there is a seminal research example which claims to dispute the unanimous assumption of no-affect from television upon everyday speech. Jane Stuart-Smith et al. *Television can also be a factor in language change: evidence from an urban dialect* (2013) research and subsequent publication discovered that television had an overt effect upon the speech of some television viewers. Specifically, they had found that viewers of Eastenders in Glasgow had adopted some of the speech features commonly heard amongst London working class accents. For example, the ‘TH-fronting’ (p. 1) commonly associated with London accents, was being adopted by viewers of Eastenders in Glasgow working class populations that have little recorded association of this speech feature.

MG Alba asserts in its annual performance report (2011-12) that BBC Alba has ‘strengthened the profile and use of the Gaelic language’ and ‘plays a key role in promoting the Gaelic language’. Anecdotal evidence may well suggest that BBC Alba is indeed raising awareness, and promoting a progressive image of the language. More precisely – ‘linguistic normalisation’ is constantly occurring due to more Gaelic being broadcast at regular intervals. This is likely to be especially true when Gaelic is broadcast during prime time - programming which attracts a greater than normal audience.

Although the relationship between minority language media (MLM) and increased language use is often assumed, Mike Cormack – one of Scotland’s most prominent

MLM academics - argues that it is notoriously difficult to measure the impact of television upon languages. Reflecting on the experience of other commentators, there appears to be a number of methodological hurdles when trying to measure the effect of television upon language (attitudes or use). Difficulty largely stems from the numerous variables that affect language use and attitudes, and the difficulty in tracing change to a specific cause. Given the number of variables, attempting to assess the impact of television upon minority language remains a conundrum.

According to Cormack (2007) – the study of ‘minority language media’ as a unique field of interest can be traced to Riggins 1992 publication *Ethnic Minority Media: An International perspective*. The release of this collection of essays did not specifically focus on minority language media; however, it was a major step in the path of developing a distinct research capacity. Following this, the next landmark publication was Donald Browne’s *Electronic Media and Indigenous Peoples* (1996) which stated:

*There is virtually no “hard” (scientific) evidence to indicate that the initiation of an indigenous language media service helps to restore or revive its usage, but all stations broadcasting substantial amounts of such language certainly have that hope and expectation*

Joshua Fishman has dismissed media in both 1991 and 2000 as an effective mechanism for RLS. Fishman’s dismissal of media as a language planning tool is not devoid of criticism, however. Fishman’s argues that the language we use at home is our basic and first means of communication. Therefore, it is our smallest community units that are by far the most important indicators of language health. This is unanimously accepted; however, there appears to be a reluctance to recognise that the media can make a significant contribution when these language needs are not already fulfilled in the order Fishman demands. Within contemporary Scottish society there are those who have learned Gaelic and continue to learn Gaelic with little connection to traditional Gaelic culture (MacCaluim: 2007). This group are an increasingly important part of the Gaelic language ‘community’. Even outwith this speech community, it is important that non-speakers are ‘tolerant’ of the minority language in question. Some commentators, such as de Bres (2008, pp 50) argue that we also must focus on revitalising larger society, rather than just the ML speakers themselves. Minority language-speaking communities must appeal to majority language

populations for support and co-operation to sustain minority languages and cultures as living entities, but it is also argued that language endangerment is generally a non-issue in majority language societies. Therefore, it is argued that we must attempt to raise the profile of the language and the media can help ML speakers ‘communicate’ with wider society, raising the profile of the language amongst the majority language community. This kind of social engineering has been deployed in other ML situations. For example, in the BAC (Basque Autonomous Community) the Parliament approved the ‘Act of Normalisation of the Basque Language’ which positioned television as one of the main methods towards the goal of raising the linguistic profile of Basque language across Basque society. Indeed, minority language media (MLM) not only helps with the problem of linguistic marginalisation but also increased MLM output. It is indeed a sign of a healthier linguistic environment in itself, and therefore is somewhat self-perpetuating. Although, the measurement of any precise impact of the media upon the entire population is a considerable challenge to achieve, using small cohort/sample research can assist our understanding of its impact on society as a whole.

Julia de Bres’s (2008) PhD research focused on the Māori situation and the impact of a number of influencing factors, which have been deployed to encourage linguistic normalisation of the Māori language in New Zealand. Her investigation focuses on the effectiveness of promoting positive attitudes and behaviours towards the Māori language among non-Māori New Zealanders as a contributing factor in Māori language regeneration. She describes this model as ‘planning for tolerability’. Although the situation from each respective minority language varies considerably there are numerous parallels between the Māori situation and the Scottish Gaelic equivalent. For example, the struggle Gaelic has, and continues to face, in the Scottish psyche as a result of a lack of consensus for Gaelic being *the/a* national language. Looking at this particular example - positive attitudes must be encouraged amongst the both speakers and non-speakers if the regeneration is to be successful. De Bres has advanced our understanding of this rarely discussed area of language regeneration planning: minority language planning targeting the attitudes and behaviours of majority language speakers, which is indeed the focus of this research.

Mairead Moriarty’s (2007) PhD thesis research discovered a direct link between Irish university students and television – this relationship is a direct result of viewing TG4.

A similar study was then conducted with the Basque example. A follow-up published article (Moriarty: 2009) described using both qualitative and quantitative methods, and found that ‘there is a clear identifiable change in the way they perceive the language’ as a result of watching TG4, amongst a number of other beneficial links between MLM and minority languages. On the evidence gathered from her study, she concludes that the ‘availability of media in minority languages is of benefit to the [sic] language revitalisation, particularly from the point of view of encouraging linguistic normalisation.’

Moriarty’s methodological approach largely influenced the mixed methods approach deployed for this thesis. Both survey-questionnaires and interviews have been successfully deployed within the fields of sociology (of language), sociolinguistics and media studies, however, it should be explicitly acknowledged that the combination of methods deployed by Moriarty in a similar sociolinguistic context. Of course, there are indeed numerous advantages to adopting a combination of approaches. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005: p. 379) describe mono-method research as ‘the biggest threat to the social sciences’. By increasing the number of methods the ‘research becomes more reliable’ because the researcher is constantly comparing and contrasting the data derived by different means and different times. However, it is important to recognise that the importance of deploying more than one type of method comes from the attempt to relate them in order to counteract the threats to validity.

#### **2.2.5 - Social impact research conducted on Gaelic television**

Research commissioned by the Scottish Government on attitudes towards broadcasting in Scotland showed that people want more Scottish content (TNS-BMRB: 2009), and in the absence of a dedicated Scottish based English-language channel may explain, in part, the popularity of BBC Alba. An article in the *Scotsman* on the 11th of January 2013 echoes this sentiment. Brian Jamieson describes how ‘In recent months there has been a curious change in my television viewing habits. I find myself watching BBC Alba more often. I don’t speak a word of Gaelic [...] For reasons I find hard to put in words, I feel more engaged and more at home than I do with much of the output on the institution’s mainstream channels’.

A lack of a dedicated English-language based Scottish television channel may have resulted in a void for those wishing to Scottish based content, and a significant cohort may be choosing to consume BBC Alba instead. Therefore, despite the language barrier, with the channel broadcasting much distinct Scottish content, a number of Scots may feel more at association with Gaelic language Scottish content, than with a language they can understand. This phenomenon in turn is may be contributing to increased Gaelic language positivity.

Although this seems plausible, Baker (1992) argues that although popular belief holds that mass media affects attitudes in an influential manner, overall research suggests that mass media does not have a large effect on public attitudes. Research further analysed by Baker in the mid-1980s concluded this assertion, discovering that the effect of mass media on language attitudes was small – ‘unexpectedly so’ (Baker: 1992, pp 110). Despite, the long viewing hours of some, and despite its presentation of social values, it is the suggestion of research by Baker & Waddon in 1990 (Baker: 1992: p. 111) that we too easily over emphasise the effect of mass media:

*Being such an obvious and ever-present article of daily life may lead to the exaggeration of the actual influence of mass media on language attitudes. Nevertheless, some influence must be assumed*

#### **2.2.6 – Dearth of research in the comparative Scottish Gaelic context**

The Lèirsinn Research Centre based at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, headed by Dr Mike Cormack had been conducting audience surveys among Gaelic listeners and viewers since 1992. In 2016 Lèirsinn was succeeded by PRAEG (Pannal Rannsachaidh Amhairc & Èisteachd na Gàidhlig) at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig which is an on-going monitoring of Gaelic media use, such as data on viewers/listeners, levels of satisfaction with different genres of programming, and so forth. Research is primarily based upon levels of satisfaction (including audience viewing duration) with BBC Alba and Radio nan Gàidheal broadcasting, however there has been little research conducted regarding the effect of programming on attitudes towards the and also on the impact of Gaelic media on actual patterns of Gaelic language use (language behaviour). In light of this dearth of research concerning media, audience attitudes and language behaviour there is a significant opportunity to conduct a valuable and meaningful social study. Indeed, Milligan et al (2011, p. 358) recommended that



‘BBC Alba actively commission research on the effect of its programming on attitudes towards Gaelic in both Gaelic-speaking and non-Gaelic-speaking audiences.’

With little or no research conducted on this specific aspect, the influence of Gaelic broadcast media, namely television on the Scottish population is at the moment wholly unknown, and this research will begin to address this void. In terms of other minority and lesser-used languages there have been several studies conducted with various outcomes. In terms of Irish - one study to date - Moriarty (2009) has looked at how TG4 has altered language behaviour and attitudes. Conducted amongst a specific cohort: namely university students who are not L1 Irish Speakers this study found that a limited percentage of the participants reported a direct increase in their Irish language use as a direct result of watching TG4, and there is a ‘clear identifiable change in the way they perceive the language’ (p. 137). It is argued that the ‘impact the presence of MLs on the media has on actual language practices is indirect and is mediated through language attitudes’ (p. 147). On this basis the article concludes that the ‘availability of the media in minority languages is of benefit to the language revitalisation, particularly from the point of view of encouraging linguistic normalisation’ (p. 137) if this could be applied generally this study it could be considered that there has been discovered direct correlation between ML media, attitudes and linguistic behaviour.

In terms of attitudes amongst non-speakers, Ortega and Amorrutu's (2010) research based upon the Basque experience suggests the attitudes of non-speakers are 'vital' in terms of revitalizing the language. They argue that in the Basque situation, that the co-operation and support of those who don't speak the minority language are 'essential' for its revitalization. The Gaelic example is markedly different from the Basque example in many respects. Most profoundly, is the difference in the proportion of speakers in each respective minority language area, with 27% of the Basque population speaking the language compared with around 5% of the Highland population and 1.2% of Scots (GROS: 2003). The proportion of those without the language is far greater in the Scottish context and the attitudes of those without the language in all probability has greater importance and influence. It could therefore, be argued that Gaelic relies much more heavily on the support of non-speakers for its maintenance and revival than other minority languages, from which we draw many comparisons. Knowing the attitudes, prejudices, opinions and beliefs of those who

don't speak the language is strategic, and in particular what non-speakers are ready to do to support the language. A clear diagnosis of these aspects could then inform policy makers and attitudinal campaigns, which is part of what de Bres (2008) describes as 'planning for tolerability' positively influencing the views of the majority language community towards the minority language group.

This review section has demonstrated the importance of linguistic attitudes of, not just the speaker population, but amongst the overall population in terms of its influence upon the viability of any given language variety, especially minority or marginalized languages. The media, which is the focus of this thesis, has been evidenced as influencing the linguistic attitudes of a given population in other contexts, but this has not yet been discovered in the Scottish context. Although many parallels can be drawn with other minority languages the following review of Scottish Gaelic media will contextualize the distinctive situation in Scotland.

## **2.3 - Gaelic media in Scotland**

### **2.3.1 - Background to Gaelic media**

#### ***The Gaelic revival: a long road towards a fully operational Gaelic television Channel***

In the face of ever encroaching cultural homogenisation and cultural and linguistic evaporation, a revitalisation and maintenance movement has gathered momentum in order to arrest Gaelic's decline and protect 'an enormously important part of Scottish cultural life' (Then Scottish Secretary, Alasdair Carmichael: 2013). This movement has been variously described as the 'Gaelic revival/renaissance' and there have been numerous manifestations of the movement since the beginning of the twentieth century and particularly the second half are those which are regularly recognised. Notable milestones of the 'Gaelic revival':

- 1950s: Gaelic taught as a subject at High Schools in Oban, Glasgow and Plockton
- 1973: Sabhal Mòr Ostaig founded, providing Gaelic-medium courses at tertiary level
- 1975: Comhairle nan Eilean Siar established and officially adopted a bilingual policy

- 1984: Comunn na Gàidhlig was founded by the Scottish Office to co-ordinate new developments in Gaelic language policy
- 1985: The first Gaelic-medium education units were opened in Glasgow and Inverness
- 1985: Radio nan Eilean established (evolved into Radio nan Gàidheal)
- 2000: UK Government signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
- 2005: Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005– the first piece of legislation to give formal recognition to Gaelic in Scotland. This Act established Bòrd na Gàidhlig.
- 2008: BBC Alba established by the BBC and MG Alba and first broadcast

### **2.3.2 - Gaelic media - Foundations of BBC Alba**

Gaelic was first broadcast on Radio in the 1920s. The BBC's own commitment to Gaelic had long predated the 1990 Act, having a long history of Gaelic broadcasting dating back to 1923, when the first religious broadcasts were made on radio. Regular programmes, however, only came many decades later and much of the remaining Gàidhealtachd did not receive television signals until the 1960s-1980s. Gaelic Radio was established as a service for existing Gaelic speakers, providing broadcasts in the language that those in the Highlands whose first language was Gaelic. Today, Gaelic broadcasting performs a much broader role. Before the 1990s, Gaelic television was sporadic and funding for programme production was awarded on a case by case basis. Since 1990, there has been British legislative provision for financing of Gaelic language radio and television programmes. The Broadcasting Act 1990 established a fund dedicated to Gaelic television, which was to be administered by MG Alba (the operating name of the Gaelic Media Service), and supported the broadcasting of Gaelic television content on two channels: STV and the BBC. Under the quota created, the digital terrestrial television provider was required to ensure at least 30 minutes of Gaelic programming during peak times throughout Scotland (McGonagle et al: 2003). This was mostly experienced by viewers in the form of programmes like *Eòrpa*, *Machair*, *Speaking our Language*, *Dè a nis?* and *Telefios*. This provided

Gaelic television with a strong structure of current affairs, drama, language learning, children's programming and news.

The Broadcasting Act 1996 and then the Communications Act 2003 amended the powers of MG Alba and made other provisions in relation to Gaelic broadcasting, but in spite of this policy support, there were significant blockages for Gaelic television until very recently. Users who wanted to view Gaelic television contended with irregular and inconvenient programming schedules, (SMG, 2005). Furthermore, these programmes were only available in Scotland on BBC Scotland and Scottish independent television channels.

By 2008 only *Eòrpa* and *Dè a nis?* had survived from the robust structure that Gaelic TV had previously maintained. The Communications Act 2003 gave Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig (SMG) a revised remit, in which would lead to the BBC and SMG (MG Alba) agreeing to a working partnership for Gaelic television that would, eventually, result in a collaboration agreement in 2007 and the eventual launch of BBC Alba in 2008.

### **2.3.5 - Remit, Development, Structure, Governance, Funding and Audience**

#### **2.3.5.1 - Remit**

In their National Plan for Gaelic 2007–2012, the language planning body, BnaG, laid out their plans to create a dedicated television service. The launch of BBC Alba in 2008 not only means that the Bòrd have seen the enactment, chiefly by statutory organisation MG Alba, of this language planning goal within the lifespan of their National Plan, but it also means that the UK has been able to fulfil the requirements under its ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. With respect to Gaelic in Scotland, this met the commitment under Article 11, Paragraph 1a (ii) ('to encourage and/or facilitate the creation of at least one radio station and one television channel in the regional or minority languages') and Paragraph 1c (ii) ('to encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of television programmes in the regional or minority languages on a regular basis') (Council of Europe, 1992). Moriarty (2007) argues that in the decade prior to the launch of BBC Alba there had been dramatic change in the 'European mediascape' and that Article 11 was a major factor for this change. With BBC Alba finally launching in

September 2008, it was a relative latecomer to this European minority language media revolution with others launching decades before such as S4C & EITB (Basque) in 1982 and TG4 in 1996.

MG Alba's remit, under the Communications Act 2003, is to ensure that a wide and diverse range of high quality Gaelic programmes is made available to people in Scotland. In addition to the former mandate to fund programme production and development, training, audience research and related activities, the new Service was given new powers to make, schedule and commission programmes and the authority to seek a broadcast licence.

The Communications Act specifies that "the functions of the Service shall be to secure that a wide and diverse range of high quality programmes in Gaelic are broadcast or otherwise transmitted so as to be available to persons in Scotland" (2003, pp 208).

MG Alba's remit also includes training and development for people working in Gaelic broadcasting. One of its talent development initiatives is Film G, a Gaelic short film competition whose winners are given the opportunity to develop their programme ideas to broadcast standard was established in the same year as the channel's launch in 2008.

### **2.3.5.2 - Audience**

When BBC Alba launched, it immediately changed the way Gaelic television was accessed. Before the launch of BBC Alba, daily Gaelic television were only available on the obscure one-hour per day TeleG service which only showed programmes previously broadcast. Other Gaelic broadcasting could be found on BBC Two and sporadically on STV and C4. BBC Alba immediately widened the accessibility of Gaelic television broadcasting, ensuring that Gaelic programming was aired every evening and during primetime. The BBC trust initially set a target audience of 250,000 (MG Alba: 2009) but after launching on Freeview, the target audience figure was raised to 500,000 viewers (according to Dòmhnall Caimbeul - *Ard Oifgear* MG Alba during a consultation meeting at Glasgow University, 2015). This audience target is unprecedented for any Gaelic broadcasting, well surpassing any Gaelic television or radio audience previously broadcast. It is currently unclear whether the new BBC Board has set BBC Alba a target audience figure with no formal or public

declaration though it may be unlikely that the BBC Trust's previous targets would be altered without a major shift of circumstance.

Audience figures<sup>1</sup> have reportedly [TNS System 3 polling (MG Alba: 2009)] grown from around 220,000 during the years prior to its introduction on Freeview in 2011, to an average reach of 550,000 viewers in 2012 (MG Alba: 2012). Indeed, up to 900,000 are reported to have watched the channel on occasion, claimed First Minister Alex Salmond - although this likely due to the acquisition of exclusive football coverage rights and various showings of high profile games.

According to the 2011 census., almost 57,000 people in Scotland are Gaelic speakers and around 30,000 more have some Gaelic language ability(s) (NRS: 2013) MG Alba's data has asserted that 75% of Gaelic speakers consume BBC Alba (MG Alba: 2012). According to this, about 44,000 of Alba's audience are Gaelic speakers. According to the BBC's annual report, with research conducted by Ipsos MORI, 16% of the Scottish population over 16 years of age watch at least 15 minutes of BBC Alba weekly (BBC Trust: 2013). This means that it can be calculated from a total population of approximately 4,382,000 Scots over the age of 16 (NRS: 2013), 701,120 watch BBC Alba weekly. This suggests that a total of approximately 650,000 non-Gaelic speakers watch at least 15 minutes of weekly, which calculates to over 90% of the audience.

### **2.3.6 - Audio-visual Translation (Subtitling) & Dubbing**

Audio-visual translation, more commonly known as subtitling, is a key issue that ML media broadcasters have to consider, implementing appropriate policies. Due to their ability to bring broadcasts to much broader audience they are very frequently found on ML media broadcasts, however their implementation can also prove to be problematic and divisive (see **2.3.6.3**). BBC Alba uses subtitles on most broadcasts, with

---

<sup>1</sup>Television ratings are usually compiled in the UK by the British Audience Research Bureau, or the BARB. It marks an industry standard and allows channel controllers, advertisers, commissioners and industry watchers to see how channels are performing; however, BBC Alba isn't measured by BARB. Its viewing figures are measured using sample surveys conducted by the polling company TNS System Three and no breakdown of viewing figures are produced. It is therefore not clear whether it's football, Eòrpa, or repeats of Speaking Our Language which are drawing viewers to the channel. So far, BBC Alba's viewing data has come from polling data and limited viewing diaries, but polling data inevitably produces sample bias, and that in turn has resulted in a number of sources to publicly question the legitimacy of the figures being cited

exceptions being most prominently live productions such as the daily news programme *An Là* and live sports broadcasts.

BBC Alba appear to have a *de facto* policy (although there is no mention of subtitling in their annual reports) of subtitling almost all pre-recorded adult broadcasts with on-screen English subtitles. This policy changes, however. For logistical and financial reasons, some live broadcasts do lack full dialogue subtitling: mainly news and sporting events. Such live programmes as *Bliadhna Mhath Ùr* do however have small sections of English text at certain times to provide those without Gaelic an overview of the general topic of dialogue, while live interviews and ad-libbed lines do not have captions. Children's programmes are generally not subtitled.

### **2.3.6.1 Function of Subtitling**

In the most commonly recognised sense, the function of dubbing and subtitling is to bring productions in one language, to satisfy the linguistic needs of those who do not have sufficient competency in the primary language of the programme. This in turn means that productions from around the globe can be made accessible to those in other countries in their native or preferred language. This can be advantageous in the case of minority languages, because it is possible, where finance is tight and trained audio-visual professionals are in short supply, to provide a skeleton service with news and comparatively inexpensive productions and fill the rest of a schedule with dubbed material from elsewhere. For example, in a number of minority language situations, English language productions from America can be translated into, for example, Catalan and a slot can be filled at relatively low cost (Jones: 2000). BBC Alba has adopted this swapping service in the form of the series of programmes retitled *Soillse*.

Arguably, the choice of programming is available to a lesser degree to a Gaelic language broadcaster as it is likely films or programmes made in English will already have been seen in the original by a Scottish audience and translation to Gaelic would usually prove pointless. However, this is still done on occasion and was indeed the case for the series of *Cèitidh Morag* which screened in 2013. The English version of *Katie Morag* was screened on Sundays, with the Gaelic dubbed version being screened the following Friday. It was noted in the preliminary research stages of Graffman's (2014) research that young Gaelic speakers would watch the English version first and thereafter have no interest in the Gaelic shown the following week.

It is, of course, true that there are productions in other languages which might be used and to some extent this is done for the series of programmes titled by BBC Alba as *Soillse*. The *Soillse* productions come from a minority language media exchange programme whereby MG Alba receives ten MLM productions for every production it makes available to other MLM broadcasters. Once MG Alba receives such programmes, dubbing is added in Gaelic, and also English-subtitling included.

MG Alba also purchase children's programming material in different languages and dub these into Gaelic, without the English subtitles that appear on adult programmes. There are various examples of children's television programmes which have been animated elsewhere and then dubbed into Gaelic. An example of this was *Peppa Pig*, the preschool animated television series, originally broadcast in English on satellite and cable television, and then dubbed into Gaelic.

#### **2.3.6.2- Audience Requirements: subtitling for whom?**

In 1993 Gavyn Davies, chairman of the BBC's Fair Trading Compliance Committee wrote "At present the Gaelic department of BBC television tends not to favour the subtitling of Gaelic programmes", however as of 2014, and since BBC Alba's inception, most programmes (with the exception of children's) with Gaelic audio now include English subtitles as standard. It has also been revealed in recent years that these subtitles are 'burnt-in' and consequently difficult to remove retrospectively.

The availability of subtitles allows those with no Gaelic language skills the access to Gaelic and Gaelic dubbed programming. This means that BBC Alba can claim a Gaelic cultural niche and present this as an attractive asset to Scots with no Gaelic. From figures published by MG Alba from 2013-2016 it can be calculated that over 90% of the audience have little or no Gaelic (MG Alba: 2014; 2015; 2016). With no other Scottish channel currently broadcasting, BBC Alba could be said to be operating as a quasi-national broadcaster, providing a Scottish audience with distinctly Scottish content not to be found elsewhere.

A minority language channel choosing to subtitle in the way that BBC Alba does, is not without opposition. It faces a choice between placing the English subtitles openly on screen during most programmes, and not having subtitles on some programmes. Apart from subtitling, audio language choice was introduced on rugby coverage in the



2014-15 season using the ‘red button’ facility. This option derived from external pressure from rugby organisations and there is no option to choose different subtitling choices (i.e. English, Gaelic or none) on any other BBC Alba programming. This contrasts with S4C of Wales where audiences can select their choice of subtitling and indeed dubbing on a number of broadcasts. As in Wales, there is sensitivity to this issue, and there are strong feelings as to the best policy. For example, it has been suggested by the group *Craoladh Gàidhlig* that Gaelic speakers feel that automatic and unavoidable *open* subtitling is intrusive (GàidhligTV: 2014). In light of this, S4C of Wales has elected to make the majority of their subtitles *closed*, therefore favouring those competent in Welsh. However, this option is not available on Alba and most adult programmes (where provision allows) are *open*– being on screen automatically.

### **2.3.6.3 – To what extent is the ‘Gaelic channel’ operating as a Gaelic language channel?**

In recent years, and increasingly since BBC Alba’s launch onto Freeview, the issue of subtitling has been controversial. Since 2014, a number of well-known and respected Gaels have collaborated to campaign for more Gaelic on the channel, arguing that too much English is being used on the channel and this is to the detriment of Gaelic. This group, calling themselves *Craoladh Gàidhlig* (Gaelic Broadcasting) have largely led their campaign using social media and maintain a website ([www.gaidhlig.tv](http://www.gaidhlig.tv)) calling for ‘Fo-Thiotalan Gàidhlig a-mhàin’ (Gaelic subtitles only). They argue that the current BBC Alba de facto-policy favouring of English subtitles is favourable to a non-Gaelic speaking audience and is done to the detriment of Gaelic speakers. They have claimed that some programmes contain majority English-language content and has led the group to question who the ‘Gaelic channel’ really targets. Some have argued that English subtitles over spoken Gaelic can assist those trying to learn Gaelic with overall understanding. This however has been dismissed by Dr Eithne O’Connell of Dublin City University, declaring to delegates at the Gaelic Broadcasting conference at Edinburgh University in March 2016 that - English subtitles, rather than helping those trying to learn Gaelic with understanding of the spoken Gaelic, they rather, simply, assist with English-language skills only.

In a minority language situation, learners are a vitally important target audience and subtitles can be used in ways designed specifically to help them. S4C of Wales, for

example, has since 1995 offered its viewers two sets of Welsh subtitles via *Teletext* – one is a straight-forward transcription, whilst another is a simplified translation for those who struggle with the most accurate transcription which may include more obscure terminology. No such service has ever been offered by BBC Alba. Gaelic subtitling would provide learning benefits to both new learners and existing Gaelic speakers who lack competency in writing and reading the language.

Subtitling into English is at present the chief method of translation on BBC Alba. However, although digital technology makes it possible to offer a number of different subtitling options for the same programme this is not currently deployed. Currently, BBC Alba's policies favour providing the non-Gaelic speaking audience majority with English subtitles. This in theory brings more people with no Gaelic into contact with the language, and as MG Alba representatives displayed to delegates at the Gaelic Broadcasting conference at Edinburgh University in March 2016 it is hoped these people become supportive of the language, and then complete the cycle by becoming speakers of the language.

It is possible that consuming a programme with English subtitles while still hearing Gaelic dialogue or Gaelic dubbing may promote acquisition of the language to some extent, however as stated previously, this has been challenged by some academics such as Dr Eithne O' Connell. To offer a separate English soundtrack on all Gaelic-language broadcasts would permit viewers to have no contact with the language at all and this has just been approved for use on rugby matches using the 'red-button' feature. Again, this is controversial with some taking the position that the channel has been established as a 'Gaelic channel' and should do what is best for Gaelic speakers, whilst conversely there is the argument that BBC Alba ought simply to provide the most complete service possible and not concern itself with language planning matters.

#### **2.3.7.1 - Governance**

The powers, organization and responsibility of the Board of BBC Alba are determined by the Communications Act 2003 and its supplementary legislation. The publication of all of these governance aspects of the regional television channel on the BBC Alba's website facilitates their compliance.

#### **2.3.7.2 - Responsibilities of the Chief Executive BBC Alba & the MG Alba Board**

The board of MG Alba is composed of a President and eleven members who are elected by Ofcom with the approval of the Secretary of State for Scotland and, since 2012, by the Scottish Government. The appointment of each member lasts four years. As described in the BBC Alba 2011-12 report, the team includes members nominated by the Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), the BBC and Bòrd na Gàidhlig. It should also be noted that Ofcom must also ensure –as far as possible– that the board’s membership is such that the ‘interests of the Scottish independent production sector are adequately represented’ (MG Alba: 2012)

The Chief Executive is appointed by the Board. Its role is to design an overall strategy to recommend and review measures and practices that allow the fulfilment of the strategic objectives of BBC Alba. Along with this, the Board is responsible for advising and carrying out the direction of the areas of funding, projects, planning, resources, outsourced services, needs of consumers and relations with other players involved in Scottish television.

The President and the members of BBC Alba are bound by the 2008 GMS Members Codes of Conduct, which includes issues relating to gifts and economic resources, conflicts of interest and also values such as objectivity and impartiality, all in reference to the ethical principles of public action within MG Alba.

#### **2.3.7.3 - Collaboration agreement between MG Alba and the BBC in terms of management: the Joint Management Board**

MG Alba and the BBC are under a collaboration agreement which specifies the co-management of resources that they must provide. Compliance with the terms of the agreement is monitored by the Joint Management Board, which is formed by six members, three from MG Alba and three from BBC Scotland.

It is the responsibility of the Joint Management Board to produce the annual report and accounts in accordance with the law and the UK Accounting Standards. The Broadcasting Act 1990 (amended by the Broadcasting Act 1996 and the Communications Act 2003) requires the Board to prepare the accounts for each financial period, which provides an accurate view of the state of the public service television and its results for that period of time. The Board is also responsible for

providing information to the external auditors, and for making sure the corporation's finance data that appears on the website is correct.

#### **2.3.7.4 - Progress in governance: greater involvement of the public through the BBC Audience Council**

One of the differential aspects of BBC Alba is the adaptation of the BBC system of Audience Councils to the Scottish regional television system. These councils were advisory bodies of the BBC Trust (until April 2017), formerly the governing body of the BBC until its replacement by a new BBC Board. Before then these Audience Councils played an important role as they transmitted to the BBC Trust the direct opinions of viewers and listeners of the public broadcasting services, which allowed assessing the needs and interests of the audiences in their respective nations and the performance of the BBC in satisfying these needs and interests and fulfilling its public objectives. It is now unclear how the BBC Trust's abolition will impact the future monitoring of BBC Alba.

#### **2.4.1 –Minority Language Media in Scotland**

When Gaelic broadcasts were first introduced on the radio in the 1920s and for many decades' broadcasts aimed to serve native Gaelic speakers – both those in the Gaelic heartlands and those who had emigrated for the Lowland cities. However, the audience for Gaelic television has changed much over recent years. Although Gaelic broadcasting still seeks to serve communities where Gaelic is still spoken, BBC Alba now aims not only to serve existing Gaelic speakers, but also learners and indeed a majority non-Gaelic speaking audience. Of course, it still serves existing Gaelic speakers, but now almost all listeners and viewers, and indeed the presenters are much more likely to be more fluent in English than Gaelic. Gaelic is therefore supported not for its communicative need but in order to serve the desire of Gaelic speakers to have a service in a language they prefer, whether or not their first language is Gaelic. The support of the Gaelic language using the media is based on the unique minority position of the language. Considering this, it should be deliberated that mainstream media, including television, is increasingly considered a method of language maintenance and revitalisation (Cormack: 2007).

Minority language (ML) television is now present in a number of European countries, provinces and semi-autonomous regions with Wales, Ireland, Brittany, the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) and Catalonia, amongst others, having various levels of service. Comparatively, BBC Alba attracts a much larger audience share than many other ML regions per ML speaker. For example, S4C of Wales attracts around 360,000 weekly viewers to BBC Alba's 700,000, whilst there are 562,000 Welsh speakers in Wales (ONS: 2013) and 56,000 Gaelic speakers in Scotland (NRS: 2013), according to the censuses of 2011. This raises the questions for whom the station is intended and what are the overall aims of the channel. The channel's major funder – MG Alba - has a remit 'to ensure that a wide and diverse range of high quality Gaelic programmes is made available to persons in Scotland.' The other major partner in the collaboration is the BBC. Their 'Declaration of Public Service of BBC Alba' indicates

*The remit of BBC Alba is to offer a mix of original television programmes, including output first shown on other BBC services as well as archive programmes. It aims to serve Gaelic speakers, those learning the language, those who might wish to learn and those interested in the language and culture. It aims to reflect and support Gaelic culture, identity and heritage (BBC: 2010, p. 1).*

This remit lists Gaelic-speakers as the first, and presumably, the predominant target audience. However, the BBC Trust set BBC Alba an initial target of 250,000 viewers in 2008. With less than 60,000 speakers in Scotland according to the national census of 2011, this indicates, by a process of elimination that BBC Alba must serve the majority language population (non-Gaelic speakers) by a ratio of at least a 4:1. Such targets reveal that BBC Alba has been under obligation to cater to non-Gaelic speakers since its launch in 2008. Although this is the target - the channel well exceeds this number. According to the TNS System Three polling figures – the average research from 2013-2016 is roughly 700,000 or 17% of the of the Scottish audience. With 79% of Scotland's Gaelic speakers being BBC Alba viewers and subtracting the number of Gaelic speaking viewers from the weekly reach reveals that around 93% viewers of BBC Alba are not Gaelic speakers. In perspective, when compared with other minority such as S4C of Wales with a weekly 584,000 (where there are ten times the number of Welsh speakers than there are Gaelic speakers) it

appears to be performing well, in terms of audience figures at least. Considering the audience targets initially imposed by the BBC Trust, the Gaelic channel must serve, by default, a majority of non-Gaelic speakers. However, unofficial stated targets (verbally revealed during a BBC Alba community consultations in 2015 at Glasgow University) to reach over 500,000 have now been met. Whether BBC Alba's output is produced and commissioned with Gaelic-speakers as their primary audience is therefore debatable and indeed has been challenged by campaigners such as the group *Craoladh Gàidhlig*. BBC Alba regularly advertises its impressive viewing figures, however it raises several questions about the overall vision and purpose of the 'Gaelic' channel.

#### **2.4.2 - The Indirect Impact of Minority Language Television**

According to TNS's viewing rating panel, the targets set by the BBC Trust in 2008 have almost always been surpassed month-on-month, and by 2013 BBC Alba had reached between 15% and 17% of the Scottish public. The goal of providing a dedicated Gaelic channel, and of increasing the public's accessibility to Gaelic programming has much relevance to RLS efforts for Gaelic in Scotland, and therefore this strategy may be more useful for language planning efforts than might firstly considered.

Although, Radio nan Gàidheal has been available nationally for 30 years, only a TV channel with BBC Alba's policy of extensive subtitling allows non-Gaelic speaking audiences to consume Gaelic broadcasting in ways not seen previously in Scotland: never before has the Gaelic language been so accessible to non-Gaelic speakers and the uptake of those interested in Gaelic programming is at an all-time high.

With 90% of BBC Alba's audience unable to read, write, speak or even understand Gaelic, but nonetheless engaging with the channel lies a number of interesting questions, including:

What impact (if any) does Gaelic have upon the vast majority of the Alba viewing population? What are their attitudes, ideologies and beliefs? Why are they watching Gaelic television? Has viewing had an effect upon audiences and ultimately in the interests of RLS? Are this group a potential source of language maintenance and

revitalisation? Or rather are they a largely passive audience, taking advantage of distinct Scottish content, not to be found elsewhere?

Even if Gaelic media is having a direct impact upon the number of speakers, this may be a superficial way of measuring the success of Gaelic revitalisation as this does not benefit overall language communities. Cormack (2007) asserts that any plans for any new Gaelic media should not simply just attempt to gain bigger audiences, but should aim to provide programmes, that encourage and provide the sense of a distinct community, culture and identity so that speaking Gaelic is seen as part of individuals' sense of themselves and their social context.

Indeed, even if direct impact cannot be measured in terms of the number of people using the language, then changing attitudes towards a language is a tangible result. Overall, improving and reaffirming language attitudes amongst the general population is considered an imperative aspect of maintenance and revitalisation efforts (Baker: 1992). Amorrortu (2002) argues that it is the attitudes of non-minority language speakers the attitudes of the wider population which ultimately has the greatest impact upon language vitality in the long term.

#### **2.4.3 - Language promotion through direct advertising**

Television has been deployed as an overt form of language planning in Scotland. In 2012, Bòrd na Gàidhlig commissioned and broadcast Gaelic-medium education promotional adverts on prime-time, mainstream television in Scotland. This was a focussed attempt to attract more parents to GME throughout Scotland. The primary target audience is most likely to have been parents undecided on the education of their children. GME is open to those of all backgrounds – be that Gaelic or non-Gaelic-speaking, and most of the target audience is likely to have been non-Gaelic speakers, with little or no connection to Gaelic language or culture. Julia de Bres in her 2010 PhD thesis argues that minority language groups need to focus 'an amount' of language planning efforts upon the majority language community (referred to as 'planning for tolerability'). The impact of BnG's adverts has not been researched, however many were exposed to Gaelic language appearing on their predominantly English-language televisions, possibly for the first time. While the direct objective was boosting the number of parents opting to send their children to GME, the indirect result of raising the profile of the language to the wider population occurs. Portraying

the language as a cultural, educational, as well as an economic asset must also be on the language planning agenda, according to de Bres (2010).

With BBC Alba regularly broadcasting to over 700,000 Scots, the impact of introducing Gaelic into many homes that have never before experienced the language and culture lacks any detailed research, although some of *Soillse*'s (inter university collaboration network to support the maintenance and revitalisation of Gaelic in Scotland) Edinburgh based researchers found that television was the most common way non-Gaelic speakers came in contact with the language (O'Hanlon & Paterson: 2013). The channel's ability to reach such a large number of people is likely to be significant in a language planning context. Despite this unprecedented transmission of Gaelic, the power of broadcast media in general to influence language is under considerable debate. It can be argued that the influence of the media upon minority languages has never been fully understood because of the dearth in research.

#### **2.4.4 – A distinctly Scottish language salvage situation**

The Scottish Executive described Gaelic in 2001 as a “critically ill patient on life support” (Chalmers: 2011, p. 128) in reference to the decline of the language at community level. Although it must be recognised that communities that continue to use Gaelic in natural settings remain the most important asset that the language possesses, the sparsity, density and low number of overall speakers revealed by the most recent census (2011) must also be recognised. According to the most recent census figures (NRS: 2013) there are now almost as many speakers in ‘Lowland’ areas as there are in the traditional crofting counties. There are only a small number of island communities located places in the Gàidhealtachd where the language boasts a linguistic majority, and this also correlates with areas of ageing populations. This is devastating for Gaelic at a community level as this surpasses the ‘tipping point’ from which stage the survival of the language becomes ominous<sup>2</sup>. Beyond this stage the immersion environment is lost. And despite apparent growth in urban environments, an immersion environment cannot be replicated in an urban setting where the language is currently experiencing growth in interest, speakers and resources. The present day decline of the linguistic Gàidhealtachd (Munro et al 2011),

---

<sup>2</sup> There are various ‘tipping points’ are suggested by commentators, however the most common tipping points varying from 75% at best to 50% at worst.



requires an approach which communicates with all Gaelic speakers, wherever they may be in Scotland (not always in geographical ‘Gaelic areas’). Second language speakers, such as adult learners at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and also those who have come through Gaelic medium education (GME) form an ever increasingly proportion of language revival in Scotland (MacCaluim: 2007). The Ulpan method of adult second language learning has also been adopted in Scotland and by 2012 has been undertaken by over 200 students, though funding has since been withdrawn and its effectiveness and uptake were criticized (Ross: 2012). Given this current approach to language planning in Scotland and where the apparent growth is being achieved, the media and especially television appears to be recognised by policy makers, such as those at Bòrd na Gàidhlig as a central aspect of the language planning response for Gaelic in Scotland, at least.

#### **2.4.5 - Is BBC Alba currently operating as quasi-national broadcaster?**

As discussed earlier in this thesis, around 93% of the BBC Alba reach are non-Gaelic speakers. This proportion of majority language speakers for a minority language television station is unprecedented. When compared to S4C of Wales which has a weekly reach of 584,000 of which 265,000 (45%) are Welsh speakers, shows that 55% are non-Welsh speakers. Although, it is recognised that the measurement systems for BBC Alba (TNS System 3) and S4C (BARB) are not entirely comparable and that that the Welsh language situation is very different from the Gaelic language situation, the proportion of non-speakers in the Gaelic situation is far greater even considering respective populations of five and three million. The reported viewing figures are even more surprising considering their respective budgets of £15m (BBC Alba) and £100m (S4C). This compares with £22 per viewer, per annum for BBC Alba or £154 per viewer, per annum for S4C. When the population of each respective country is accounted for the budget disparity is even greater with S4C costing over ten times the cost as per their respective populations: the equivalent of £30 per citizen in Wales to £2.64 per citizen in Scotland. Their respective budgets are more comparable if the cost per speaker of the minority language in question. For S4C the cost of the station per speaker is £160, whilst for BBC Alba the cost equates to £245 per speaker of Scottish Gaelic in Scotland. However, of course the channels are not solely the reserve of the minority language ‘ghetto’ and indeed are not only viewed by Gaelic or Welsh speakers. In 2008 the BBC trust set BBC Alba’s initial target reach of 250,000

meaning that the channel had to attract five times amount of viewers than the number of Gaelic speakers in Scotland. This suggests that the respective budgets correlate more closely to the number speakers of each respective language, rather than overall viewing figures.

Since BBC Alba's launch, despite being lauded as a success by various sources, the higher than anticipated viewing levels, have led some media outlets to speculate what is driving audience interest. Often cited is the amount of sport broadcast which is unavailable from English media sources as one potential driver (*The Herald*, 2013). BBC Alba, almost since its launch in 2008 has broadcast significant amount of live sport. As of 2015-16, of 453 hours of new content produced and broadcast – 205 hours was sporting content, representing 45% of overall new content. Sport is the most cost efficient genre to produce and broadcast at £10,000 per hour. This compares to £14,000 per hour for children programming, and £300,000 per hour of drama & comedy programming. Of £9.9 million spent on production, only £2.1 million was afforded to sport, although it represents almost half of new content (MG Alba: 2016).

Much less debated is the position BBC Alba has found itself in as the *other* national broadcaster. The channel has found itself filling a void which is not catered for by the English-language broadcasters and despite the *very* minority status of the Gaelic language, the channel is effectively acting as a quasi-national broadcaster. This void is the lack of even one English-language independent Scottish television channel in country of five million. In the Republic of Ireland, for example, a country smaller than Scotland, there are eleven channels in the English-language, and then also the Gaelic language channel - TG4. BBC Alba has broadcast a number of productions since its establishment which are of interest to the overall Scottish population which are not to be found on the Scottish versions of UK channels. One of the main findings from research conducted over 18 months and published in 2010 by the Scottish Government indicated that 'The level of support for a new Scottish digital channel remains high'. In the absence of any such channel, it could be claimed that BBC Alba is almost operating as a quasi-national broadcaster. The communal-psychological impact of having such prominent broadcasting in a language that is spoken by between one and two per cent of the Scottish population is an interesting scenario, and raises a number of sociological questions.

#### **2.4.6 - Status Impact**

Chalmers et al (2013, p. 217) argues that ‘there is strong qualitative evidence that media provision like BBC Alba can make a positive contribution to the perception of status for a minoritized language’. Howell in 1992 argued that provisions akin to BBC Alba, are significant contributors to assisting with children in particular feeling that their minoritized language has prestige value (Jones & Uribe-Jongbloed: 2013). It is claimed that television is thought to encourage cultural identities (Chalmers: 2013). Similarly Harwood argues that ‘the mere act of making a viewing choice may enhance one’s sense of belonging in a group and be important to overall self-concept’(Harwood (1999), in Jones & Uribe-Jongbloed: 2013, 217).

MacLennan (2003: 72) similarly argues that in terms of Gaelic in Scotland, consuming minority language television ‘helps us to see ourselves as people that belong to this society rather than as strangers in a strange land’. Therefore, even the awareness of BBC Alba and its outputs provides a sense of community to minority language users by affirming that there is an identity group in which Gaelic speakers can connect with and feel a sense of belonging to. It could therefore be argued that not only does this programming show viewers those who can be considered part of that cultural identity group but also the choice to view a minority language television over the dominating majority language channel becomes in some way a declaration of one’s sense of belonging.

Despite Harwood’s and MacLennan’s assertion regarding the potential ability of television to fuse collective identity more recent research by Graffman (2014) conducted with young speakers of minority languages in Finland, Sweden and Scotland revealed that television is not currently acting as a significant contributor of cultural identities, with young people from young minority language backgrounds shunning television for other forms of ‘new’ media, in particular social media, and in Scotland in particular where it was revealed that the minority language media played little part in their everyday communicative environment out with school. It was discovered that BBC Alba services are not appealing to most young Gaelic speakers in Scotland, even to those young Gaelic speakers who have been involved in Gaelic media production themselves.

Alan Sproull and Douglas Chalmers, often publishing together, have made a number of suppositions about the possible impact of Gaelic television on the Scottish population. As a result of a longitudinal study looking at the demand for Gaelic arts, the authors concluded that amongst the Gaelic arts, Gaelic television (before the establishment of BBC Alba) appeared to have the most significant impact on attitudinal perceptions, including amongst a number of effects, the ‘desirability of Gaelic being used in other areas of public life, such as business and schools’ (1998: 37;40); ‘the relevance of Gaelic to local economic development; the employment and careers of young people’; respondents willingness to choose GME for their children; and ‘their desire to live and work within their local community’ (26-27, 44, 46). Sproull and Chalmers’ study discovered that Gaelic TV, compared with other Gaelic artistic media streams, was the most influential amongst both fluent speakers and learners of the language and also those with few skills in the language. Such conclusions were arrived at long before the creation of the dedicated Gaelic channel that now exists and provides legitimate point of comparison for the effects of Gaelic media on today’s audience.

Chalmers et al (2013) argue that in addition to the previous contributions to status, BBC Alba assists with the rediscovery and consolidation of the contemporary relevance and presence of Gaelic in Scotland to both speakers and non-speakers. Importantly, such an effect helps to guard against misconceptions that Gaelic is unfit for use in contemporary Scottish life, with such attitudes still prevailing according to research conducted in 2003 (MRUK) which showed that 43% agreed that Gaelic is not of ‘value’ in contemporary society. Given this, Chalmers et al (2013: 218) argues that one of the most important contributions that BBC Alba should make is to assist with the wider Scottish public recognise the contemporary use of the language.

## **2.5 – Literature Review Discussion & Conclusion**

The Gaelic language in Scotland has been in decline for many centuries. From once being the language of most of Scotland, the language has retreated and declined and is now only spoken by a majority on some of the Scottish Islands, with the Lochalsh parish and the western fringes of Ardnamurchan the only mainland areas with close to a fifth of residents having spoken ability in the language (NRS: 2013). While, the highest concentrations of speakers are still to be found in Highland and Island areas,

there has been a long term rural-to-urban movement of Gaelic-speakers and now the cities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen hold some of the largest numbers of speakers in any one settlement.

Historically, Scottish Gaelic has been regarded as a language of low prestige but as traditional Gaelic communities have experienced language shift, it is within urban areas and amongst the middle-class (Cohen: 1982) where Gaelic has seen most growth, changing language prestige. Public attitudes towards a minority language from both the majority and minority language communities are vital to future language health (Baker: 1991; de Bres: 2008; Garret: 2010). Attitudinal positivity towards the Gaelic language in Scotland is generally favourable (see attitudinal result of West & Graham: 2010 & O Hanlon & Paterson: 2012), especially when considering the *very* minority status of Gaelic in Scottish society. However, in a number of respects, the institutional support for Gaelic is far less than minority language equivalents in Ireland and Wales, and increasing this support would require political support with favourable public opinion. Attitudinal improvement is recognised as a significant aspect in the process language planning – which more specifically comes under the term ‘status planning’ – improving the status of the language in society.

From humble beginnings when Gaelic language was first broadcast on radio in the 1920s to a dedicated Gaelic television station in 2008, Gaelic media has changed beyond any recognition, especially in recent years. During the first decades of the BBC’s Gaelic broadcasts the target audience firmly remained native Gaelic speakers with Gaelic speaking immigrants the Lowland cities making up a significant proportion of audiences (Cormack: 2007). For those in much of the Highlands and Islands radio was by far the most important source of Gaelic media, with a number of remoter communities not able to receive television signal until the 1970s, and even up until the 1980s. Radio nan Gàidheal has proven extremely popular with Gaelic speakers with 74% tuning in on a weekly basis (BBC Trust: 2011). Gaelic television in the form of BBC Alba is equally popular with Gaelic speakers reaching from 70 to 76% of Gaelic audiences in various years from 2012-2015, however the channel’s popularity is far from restricted to Gaelic speakers alone. While Radio nan Gàidheal is generally the preserve of Gaelic speakers, either fluent or not fully fluent, BBC Alba’s audience is now comprised overwhelmingly of non-Gaelic speakers, with

approximately 90-93% of its audience having little or no competency in the language. Largely due to subtitling (accessibility) and programming (i.e. sport heavy) decisions by the channel's operators BBC Alba has attracted hundreds of thousands of non-Gaelic speakers to the channel. Viewed weekly by 15-17% of the overall Scottish adult population of over four million and with no other Scottish alternative, in various respects it could be argued that BBC Alba operates as a quasi-national broadcaster. The consumption of Gaelic media by those that do not understand the language raises a number of questions from a language planning perspective. Little is known about the effect of its programming on attitudes towards Gaelic in both Gaelic-speaking and non-Gaelic-speaking audiences and authors such as Lang et al (2011) and Chalmers et al (2013) have recommended that research be commissioned in order to achieve an understanding of such. Up until now this had not been attempted and indeed this research now seeks to respond to this requirement and discover whether this group are passive consumers of Gaelic television or whether the channel is affecting their relationship with the Gaelic language, be that behaviourally or attitudinally.

In recent years BBC Alba has been criticised for the amount of sporting coverage broadcast in order to boost viewing figures. BBC Alba, however, has a remit to broadcast to non-Gaelic speakers as well as Gaelic-speakers with a remit asserted by the BBC Trust to attract 250,000 (BBC Trust: 2009) viewers from its launch year in 2008, although MG Alba later (2015) claimed target of 500,000 (see 2.3.5.2) in 2015. Sport is one genre deployed in order to attract viewers who might not ordinarily desire to watch Gaelic television. From a minority language maintenance and revitalisation perspective Milligan et al (2011, p. 345) recognised "the importance of coverage of sporting activities on BBC Alba should not be ignored in its fostering of the wider acceptance of the language". Through sporting exposure BBC Alba has the opportunity to 'develop a positive regard and greater awareness of the language' (Lang, 2010 in Milligan et al: 2011).

With fewer than 60,000 speakers in a country of 5.3 million, the chances of coming into contact with a Gaelic speaker in most places in everyday life in Scotland is unlikely. However, BBC Alba has brought Gaelic to the masses in Scotland. Using data by TNS-BMRB it can be calculated that between 90 and 93% of BBC Alba's weekly audience of around 700,000 are non-Gaelic speakers over recent years (2013-16). Television has the ability to shape attitudes towards minority languages

(Amorrotou: 2002; de Bres: 2008; Moriarty: 2007) and broadcasting Gaelic to non-Gaelic speakers may have a 'positive effect on the attitudes of non-speakers to Gaelic' and will at least 'extend awareness of Gaelic as a language that is contemporarily used' (Milligan et al: 2011)

Using the theoretical framework which has been developed by a number of commentators (i.e. de Bres: 2008; Amorrotou: 2002, Moriarty,2007) and cited in this thesis there is sufficient grounds to suggest that BBC Alba's influence upon the Gaelic language is more complicated than simply teaching new speakers through learner programmes, and possibly more important, is its impact upon society as a whole. Milligan et al (2011) suggested BBC Alba commission "research on the effect of its programming on attitudes towards Gaelic in both Gaelic-speaking and non-Gaelic-speaking audiences", and with this aim not yet achieved by any researcher this thesis seeks to address some of the issues which require further consideration through empirical research.

## **Chapter 3 – The Quantitative Element – Survey Questionnaire**

### **3.1 - Introduction**

This chapter will focus on the quantitative element of this research project. Essentially, a survey questionnaire represented one of the two main research phases. The survey was largely organised in multiple choice format, however at various stages opportunity for qualitative feedback was available. The questionnaire was hosted online using the survey collector website “Survey Monkey” with 275 participants taking part overall. However, the first run was considered as a pilot stage, with modifications made to the survey following the collection of 91 surveys. Following amendments, 186 individuals undertook the final run of the survey, and it is this collection of questionnaires which have been presented for analysis in this thesis. This chapter will firstly detail the methodological process (3.2), followed by an examination of the data gathered in a results section. The result section will itself comprise two sections: the first will look systematically at the data in the form of a descriptive analysis (3.3). This is followed by a short analysis of the qualitative data obtained from the survey questionnaires (3.4). Finally, this chapter will be summarised with a conclusions section detailing significant findings (3.5).

### **3.2. - Research context**

Appreciating the reported difficulties of other minority language researchers such as Holmes, Cormack and Hourigan (discussed in chapter two) when attempting to examine any causal relationship between linguistic behaviour and media influence, this research attempts not to achieve such either, but rather it is an investigation of Gaelic media consumers, and seeks to better understand this cohort in relation to Gaelic language attitudes, in terms of themes, trends, and correlations. This part of the research is one half of our mixed method approach. The focus of this section is the large sample for quantitative analysis. Combined with the qualitative element this study seeks to provide an unparalleled profile of Gaelic media consumers, irrespective of Gaelic language ability. The epistemological background to the research methods deployed will now be discussed.



### **3.2.2 – Choice of method - Influencing studies**

Milroy & Milroy (1999) champion the use of questionnaire surveys in sociolinguistics, especially with regard to examining issues such as language ideology and language attitudes. Indeed, in terms of previous attitudinal research concerning issues related to attitudes towards Gaelic in Scotland, by far the most frequently deployed method is questionnaire surveys. Kenneth MacKinnon has repeatedly adopted questionnaire style surveys (1981, 2003 and 2011). As part of the Social Attitudes Survey Catriona West and Alasdair Graham (2011) adopted an entirely questionnaire based approach. Fiona O' Hanlon & Lindsay Paterson's (2012) attitudinal survey in collaboration with Soillse was the most recent study dedicated to Gaelic attitudes and also the largest in terms of both sample and scope. The O' Hanlon & Paterson research in particular has inspired this study although difference lies in overall focus. The O' Hanlon & Paterson study does not maintain a specific focus upon media/television with only a small examination of Gaelic media attitudes. Despite dissimilar subject focus this study takes influence in terms of questionnaire design, but little in terms of the approach to both data collection and research question emphasis. The questionnaire survey component of this research will extract some of the same data that previous studies have obtained. With this data it is hoped some meaningful comparisons can be made between previous studies and the data obtained in this study. It is recognised that differences discovered between study data, particularly questions relating to Gaelic language attitudinal positivity are not seen as proof of attitudinal change, merely a snapshot of a cohort, with Gaelic media being the key focus of attention.

Moriarty (2007) devised a methodological approach in order to conduct a comparative case study of the Irish and Basque contexts. The methodology of Moriarty's investigation was designed with the aim of 'obtaining detailed and specific information about the language ideology and attitudes, language practices, and minority language television use patterns of Irish and Basque university students in order to discover whether minority language television can be described as an effective mechanism of language policy' (Moriarty: 2007). Being the seminal example of a project of the type, this study is shaped by this.

### **3.2.3 - Research design process**

#### **3.2.3.1 - Choice of participant**

The selected cohort was deemed representative of BBC Alba viewers, irrespective of language ability, or connection to Gaelic language or culture. Outwith the Gaelic community, BBC Alba is perhaps best known for its broadcasting of football and rugby, but has broadcast live shinty, sheep dog trials, and curling too.. Indeed, the channel, almost since its launch in 2008, has devoted a large proportion of broadcasting time to sporting content. As of 2015-16, of 453 hours of new content produced and broadcast 205 hours was sporting content, representing 45% of overall new content. The reasoning behind this, at board and policy level could be debated, however efficiencies of production are likely to be imperative to these decisions. This is discussed in Chapter 2 (2.3.9).

The policy of devoting a significant proportion of the broadcast schedule to sport has been successful in encouraging large audiences to BBC Alba, many times the number of the overall number of Gaelic speakers, and significantly more than the BBC Trust's 2011 directive to broadcast to at least 250,000 people on a weekly basis. According to TNS-BMRB audience research overall average viewing figures over the past three years have surpassed 600,000 weekly viewers. Peaking in 2013 at 780,000 (17.6% reach), audience levels have now fallen to slightly less than 700,000 representing around 15% of the Scottish audience over 16 years old. BBC Alba's annual reports consistently show that over 50% of it's audience tune in for it's sporting content, with other genres of television accounting for between 2% (i.e. religion) and 20% (i.e. music & factual) of overall audiences respectively.

Based on such figures, it has therefore been determined by this researcher that a sport viewing cohort best represents the typical BBC Alba viewer, irrespective of language ability, or connection to Gaelic language and culture.

#### **3.2.3.2 - Questionnaire Design**

The questionnaire survey represents the quantitative element of the research project. The questionnaire was made up of predominately closed questions with a limited allowance for qualitative responses. All questions can be found with the analysis section of this chapter. The questions are grouped thematically and were sorted into

sections in order for the questionnaire to be as user friendly as possible for the benefit of each participant. Analysis of the questionnaire continues with the same structure as presented in the questionnaire firstly, before holistic and correlation analysis is presented afterwards.

The questionnaire is at least one of, or indeed the most frequently used method of data collection deployed by social scientists. Perhaps its most beneficial quality is the ability to collect data from large groups of people in a relatively short time. This was true the data collection period for this research during which almost 200 questionnaires were returned in the space of around a month.

Ensuring a properly designed questionnaire was vital in order that all relevant information could be elicited from the participants. In order to achieve this, a number of similar questionnaires were consulted, especially those related to minority language media, linguistic attitudes and Gaelic ideologies in Scotland. There were two main aims of the questionnaire. Firstly, to discover participants' backgrounds and their Gaelic television viewing behaviours. Secondly, to discover their language attitudes and linguistic ideologies, including views upon the Gaelic television itself. From these results correlations can then be made between the first and second aims. Correlations (not to be confused with causations) can suggest strongly that an effect may or may not be occurring. At the very least comparisons can be asserted against previous studies, theory and various other literature.

In order to ensure that the best possible questions were asked the researcher consulted a number of studies and indeed other researchers who have conducted research in similar fields in Scotland, and abroad. In terms of both format and structure and even more specifically questions asked, Fiona O' Hanlon and Lindsay Paterson's 2012 was a majorly influencing study. However, methodological inspiration was also derived from Mairead Moriarty's (2007) study of Irish and Basque university student television consumers. Topics, themes and question influence from Catriona West & Alasdair Graham's (2011) study of attitudes to Scottish Gaelic amongst the general population. Also, Kenneth MacKinnon's various Gaelic attitudinal studies from 1981 onwards have influenced design and subject area.

Questions required to be posed in way that would provide meaningful results. In order to ensure effect data analysis could be conducted following data collection the vast majority of questions were closed questions, with most adhering to a ‘5-point Likert’ format. Towards the end of the questionnaire opportunity for qualitative responses was permitted, however the main reasoning behind this aspect of research was to obtain quantitative data.

Qualitative responses can add richness to the data, however significant mixing of qualitative and quantitative methods can be, not only confusing during analysis (Brown: 2001), but also limit the opportunity to make statistical comparisons. In order to maximise efficiency of data collection it was decided to fully exploit computer technology. It became abundantly clear at an early stage that almost every aspect of data collection could be performed more efficiently with assistance from computers with internet access. Once the questionnaire design was finalised the questionnaire could then “go-live” via a questionnaire hosting website. In this case, the website “surverymonkey.co.uk” was used as the host. This website is a widely used method of data collection both in and outwith academia and enabled the research question to be answered effectively.

### **3.2.4 – Ethics**

As standard within the social sciences it was essential that various ethical considerations were made. Formally, before commencement of research, it was required that ethics approval be sought. It is required by the College of Arts at the University of Glasgow that any ‘research involving human subjects, materials or data not in the public domain’ must gain ethical approval. A submission was made involving a research proposal; consent form (in relation not to the surveys but for the interview stage) and the questionnaire survey itself. The submission was electronically submitted to the COA ethics committee. Within two weeks a response was received which stated that the first draft of the submission required clarification on “issues of safety, confidentiality and security” in terms of interview location. Also, in order to satisfy data protection requirements the storage of data during, and also, importantly after research had to be clarified. Lastly, the inclusion “I wish to remain anonymous / I wish to be identified” on consent forms was added as a legal

requirement. The submission was thereafter redrafted, submitted and promptly approved by the committee in May 2014.

### **3.2.5 - Participant Enrolment**

Following the launch of the questionnaire in October 2014, media viewers were sought for participation. Participants were recruited using the distribution of leaflets, using social media and online forums. The researcher attended sports events, where larger crowds were in attendance and distributed leaflets to interested individuals. This was conducted at sports events in Edinburgh and Glasgow at several sporting venues from where BBC Alba had previously broadcast. The objective was to advertise to large numbers of people who were likely to have experience of watching BBC Alba because of associated interests which have previously been broadcast. The leaflet briefly described the topic of research, how to participate (online) and stated an incentive: entry into a draw for a voucher. At the first sporting fixture one hundred and sixty A6 leaflets were handed-out during the first distribution.

The other methods of enrolment were online based. This included again targeting likely viewers of BBC Alba because of their interests. Again, with much sport broadcast on BBC Alba it was chosen again to focus upon a sports audience. This group of people because of their common interests can be located and targeted easily using forums dedicated to their interests. Several sports fans forums were joined and ‘threads’ were started to advertise, clearly indicating who was conducting the research and under what auspices. Overall, this proved much more successful in terms of participation rates as there were spikes of surveys completed following postings. This was also a less taxing and cheaper method of advertisement than distribution of leaflets, and overall more efficient use of time.

An amount of ‘snowballing’, by which, through word of mouth or social media individuals have ‘recommended’ participation to others may have occurred although no record of this was taken. The incentive for this initial stage of data collection was entry into a draw to prize-draw for shopping vouchers.

### **3.3 - Descriptive Data Analysis of the Survey Questionnaire**

#### **3.3.1 - Initial observations**

After two months of the survey being open for data collection a total of 275 questionnaire surveys were completed over two main data collection periods. The first of which - a pilot study - was completed by 89 respondents. The survey was then closed for amendments to the questionnaire to be made. The amended survey was then completed by 186 participants. It is important that for this stage of sampling that the research process maintains the same (as close as possible) format. The data analysis from now on will concentrate only the post-pilot stage questionnaire survey comprising of responses of the 186 participants.

The content of the questionnaire was determined by the research objectives and were structured into loose sections, eliciting information from the respondent in way which would introduce the respondent into the questionnaire in a hopefully familiar fashion (for those with experience of surveys), gradually bringing in questions more specific to the research study in question.

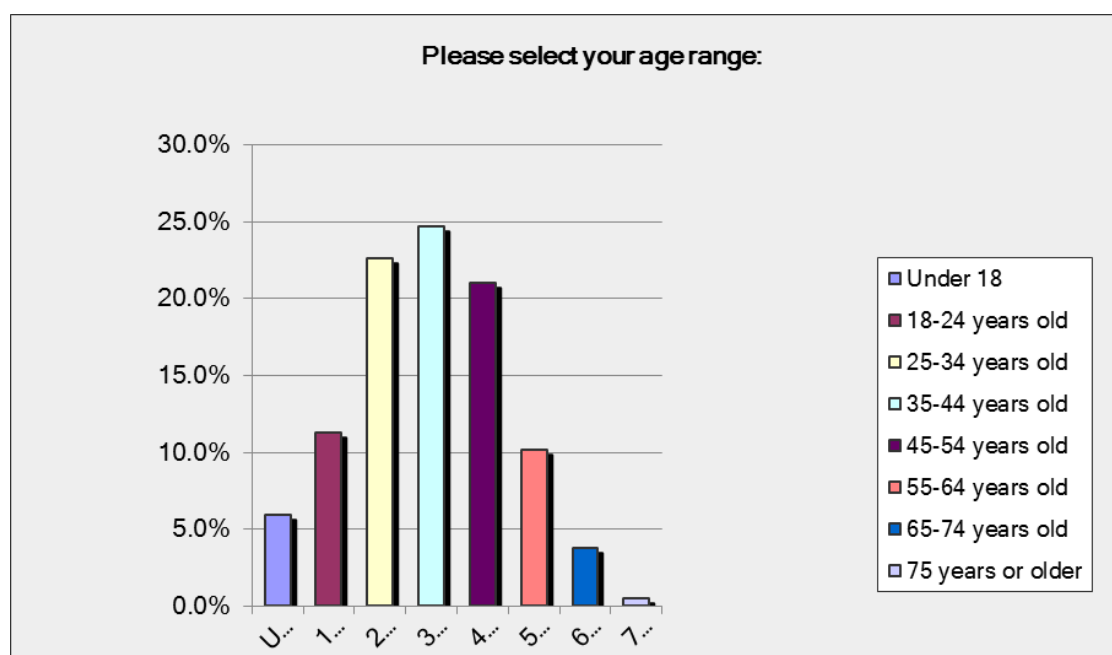
#### **3.3.2 – Gender**

The first questions asked were personal identification questions providing an insight into the overall cohort studied. Firstly, the respondent was asked about gender identification. From 186, 172 respondents or 92.5% identified as male, 12 or 6.45% identified as female, with 1 as 'other' and 1 other preferring 'not to say' - clearly revealing that the vast majority of respondents were male. To be weighted in favour of male respondents, considering the sampling methods, may not surprise. Although this is slowly changing, regular sporting events in Scotland are dominated by male spectators. Indeed, this is especially the case with football in Scotland with males accounting for 95% of fans, according to the National Football Survey (SFA/REPU: 2013). Therefore, although this survey was hugely male dominated, this sample for this survey almost mirrors the gender profile found across in the country for football spectators, although a marginally higher rate of females has responded to this survey.

Are you:		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Female	6.5%	12
Male	92.5%	172
Other	0.5%	1
I'd rather not say	0.5%	1
<i>answered question</i>		<b>186</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>0</b>

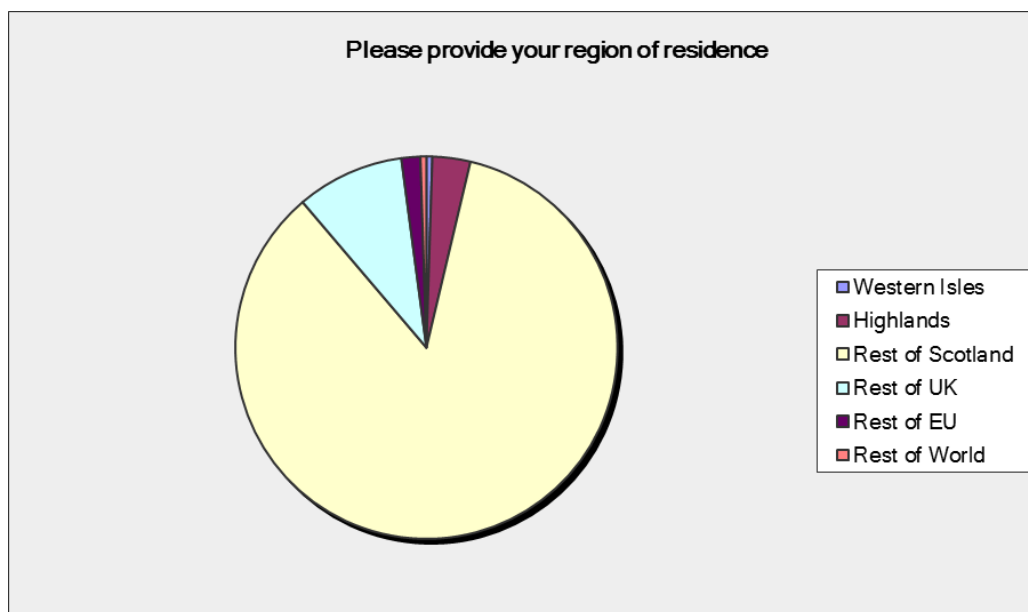
### 3.3.3 - Age

In terms of respondent age, there was equal distribution across the age groups from 18 to 54, with considerable less representation from over and under these groups. Participation peaked amongst 35 - 44 year olds, accounting for 25% of respondents. Over two thirds of respondents were between 25 and 54 years of age. Again, as with gender, the results show remarkable similarity with the National Football Survey (2013) throughout the age groups. In comparison to the National Census of the Scotland of 2011, those of median age in Scotland are over represented, while those of younger and older ages under-represented.



### 3.3.4 - Participant Residence

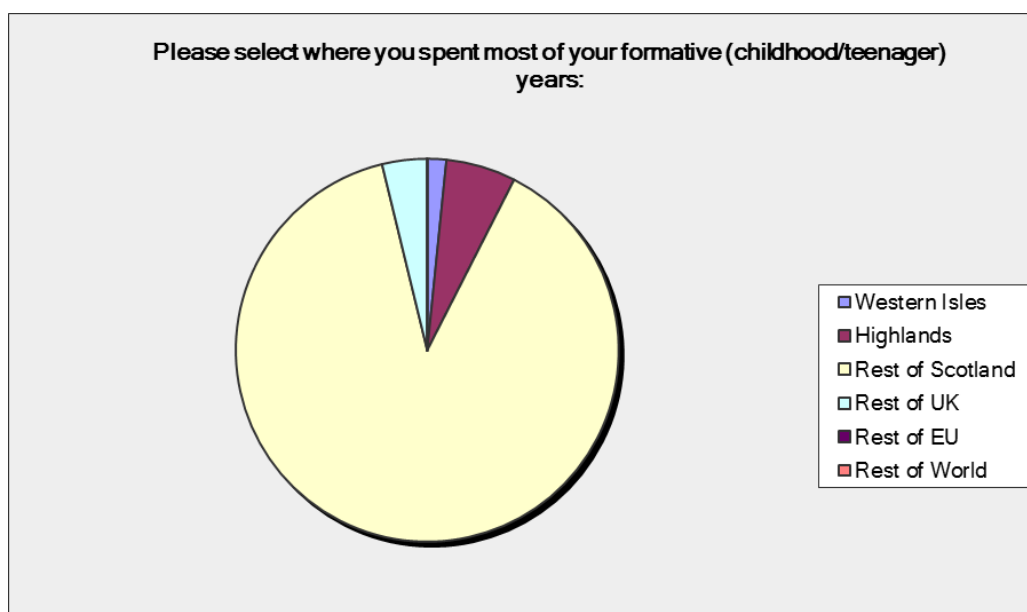
For this question were given six possible answers. All answers related to an area which may be significant as far as the question of Gaelic language is concerned. the overwhelming majority (158 [84%]) are resident in other parts of Scotland where Gaelic is no longer spoken by the native population. Seven of 186 responded that they were resident in areas where Gaelic is still spoken as an indigenous language (so-called traditionally the ‘Gàidhealtachd’). A total of 17 of from the rest of the UK (where BBC Alba is broadcast as terrestrial channel) and 4 others responded from outside the UK.



### 3.3.4 “Formative” years

The scale for this question was the same as the previous question. Again, the answer was dominated by “Rest of Scotland” at 89%. Interestingly there was double the number of those *from* the ‘Gàidhealtachd’ areas as live there now, possibly showing a migration from the Highlands. Also, only 7 grew-up outside of Scotland, although three times that number now live outwith the country. These figures may indicate affinity/interest in BBC Alba/Scotland/Highlands/Scottish Football despite (or because of) emigration from Scotland. Future/further analysis of survey could confirm this hypothesis.

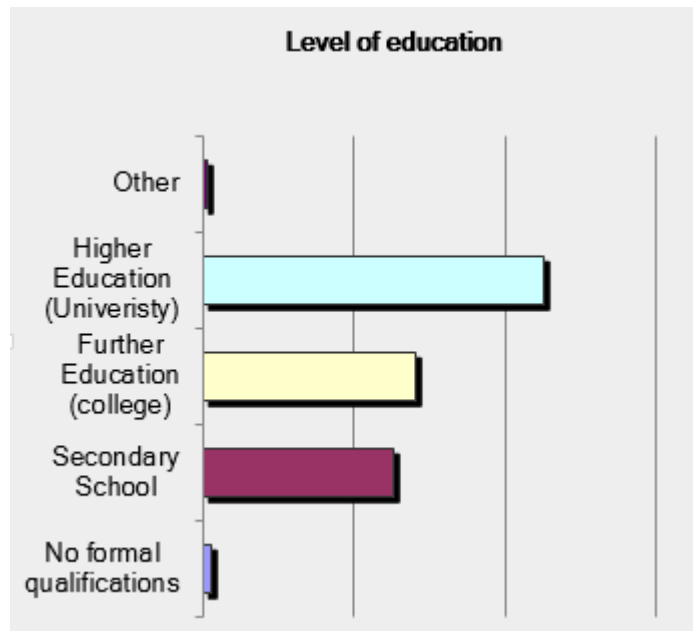




### 3.3.5 - Level of Education

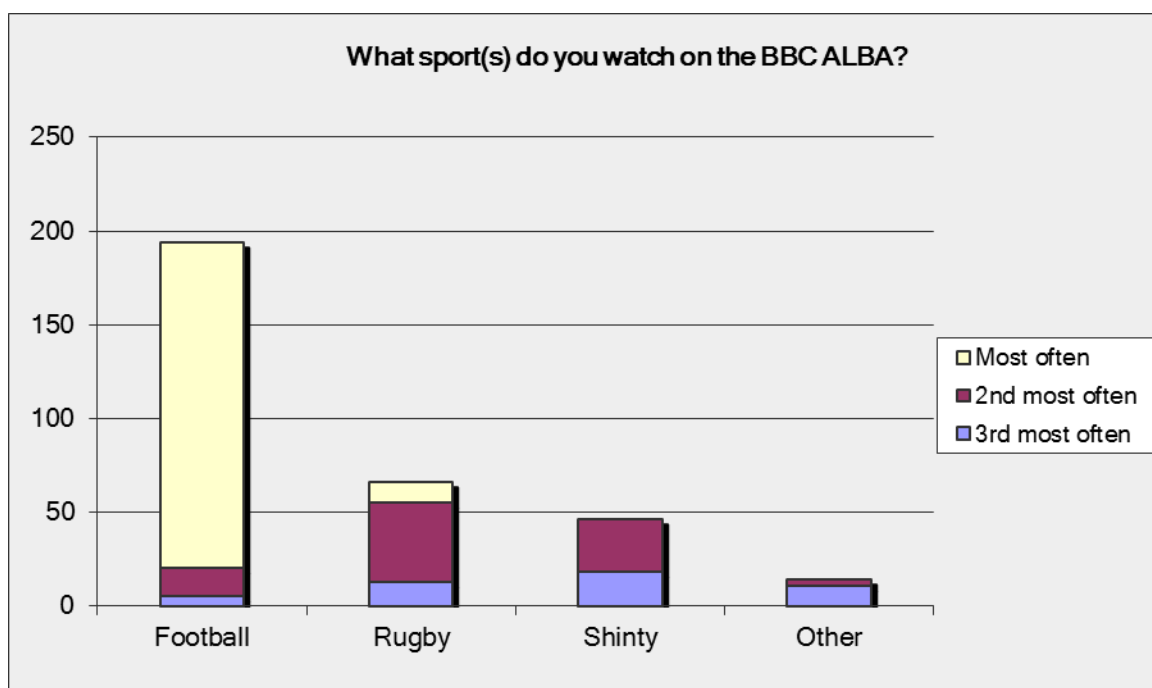
In this section three people responded ‘no qualifications’ or ‘other’. 25.3% of respondents had up to high school level qualifications. A further 28% had up to further education qualifications and 45% indicated that they had a university degree. The last figure is particularly interesting. According to a report published by the Scottish Government, based upon the 2011 census “26 per cent of the 4.3 million people aged 16 and over living in households in Scotland hold university degrees”. In this questionnaire survey 45% indicated that they have a university degree, making the sample of this study relating to Gaelic television almost twice as educated in terms of university education. However, it must be noted that the results of this survey are not entirely comparable as it was open to those who live outwith Scotland, accounting for approximately 10% of respondents. Allowing for a 10% margin of error, the research cohort does indicate high educational attainment overall.

No formal qualifications	1.1%	2
Secondary School	25.3%	47
Further Education (college)	28.0%	52
Higher Education (Univeristy)	45.2%	84
Other	0.5%	1



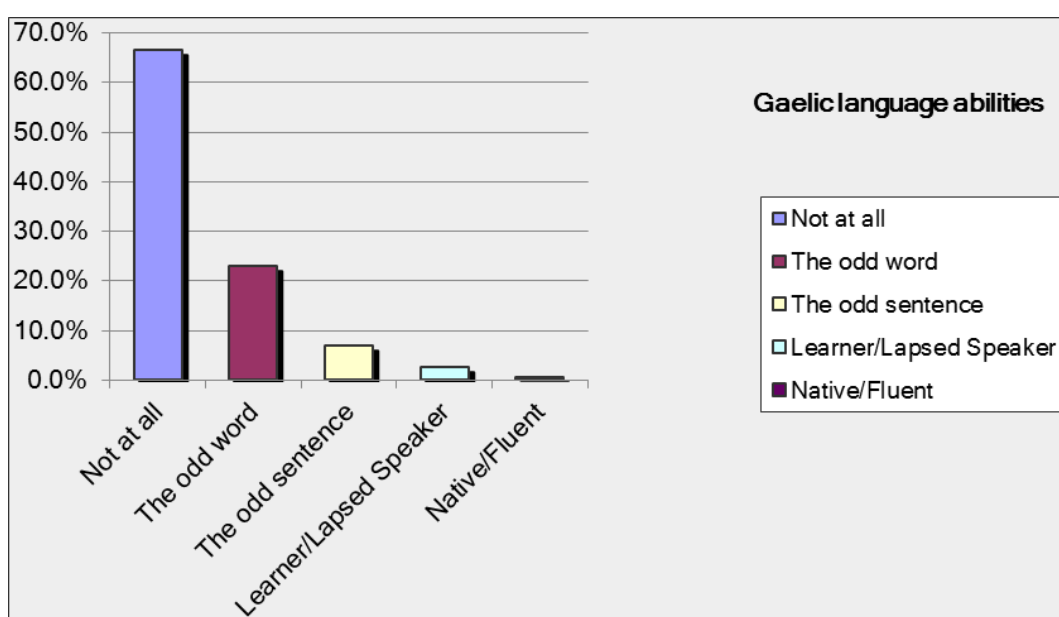
### 3.3.6 Sport on BBC Alba

Considering the method of sampling, two questions were dedicated specifically to sport. Participants were asked what sport(s) they watched in order to rate what sports they watched most often. 95% of those who responded, indicated that football was the sport that they watched most frequently, whilst the remaining participants indicated that rugby was the sport they most frequently. Interestingly, shinty, which was not watched by anyone 'most often', was watched secondly and thirdly by around 25% of people. This would appear to be particularly high of amount of viewership considering the *folk* and regional status of shinty in Scotland (a very small number of clubs [there are 68 clubs in the entire country], players, and attendances [single figures to maximum 4,000-5,000] in comparison to other sports in Scotland. A further 14 indicated that other sports were watched. From the second question, 95% of participants indicated that their club had been broadcast on the Gaelic channel.



### 3.3.7 Gaelic abilities

Do you have any Gaelic language abilities?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Not at all	66.5%	121
The odd word	23.1%	42
The odd sentence	7.1%	13
Learner/Lapsed Speaker	2.7%	5
Native/Fluent	0.5%	1
answered question		182
skipped question		4

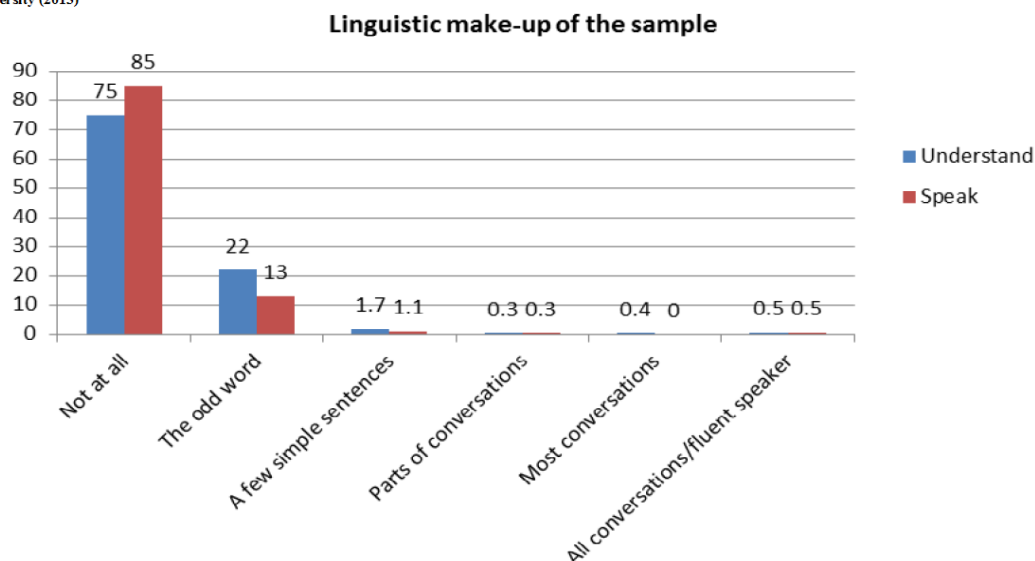


From question 9 the survey changed direction asking questions specifically relating to Gaelic. The first question asked about personal Gaelic language abilities. The vast majority (66.48%) of respondents had no Gaelic whatsoever, 30% combined indicated that they had a very limited Gaelic, whilst 5 participants indicated that they were either learning or a lapsed speaker, with 1 participant indicating fluency. Levels of fluency are fairly consistent with levels of Gaelic abilities/use in the overall Scottish population and in other Gaelic related studies at less than 2% nationally. Indeed, O' Hanlon and Paterson (2012) found an identical level of fluency of 0.5% from a sample of 1229 people. The national census reported that 1.1% as Gaelic speakers, though this is not a reflection the abilities of competencies.

In terms of those claiming some level of knowledge of Gaelic (“the odd word” or “the odd sentence”) this study reported much higher results than is found in previous studies. West & Graham (2001) found in their study that:

*Knowledge of the Gaelic language was limited, with just over one in ten (13%) of the Scottish population claiming to have at least some knowledge of Gaelic. For the most part this was knowledge of a small number of words/phrases (11%) (West & Graham: 2011, p. 4)*

The results of this research indicate a much higher level of simple Gaelic abilities than the West & Graham study, however the methodology could also be challenged with slightly different wordings being used, resulting in different levels of reported Gaelic. This study, however, applied identical wording for the first two categories to the Paterson and O' Hanlon (2012). This study reported 84.8% having no Gaelic whatsoever, whilst this study found much less with no Gaelic at 66.5% and those responding with the category “odd word” this study reported not far off double the levels with basic Gaelic at 23%, compared with 13% in the Paterson and O' Hanlon study:



### O' Hanlon & Paterson (2013)

When it comes to more than “the odd word” but less ability than fluency, this study also reported a far higher rate of ability. In the O' Hanlon & Paterson study, the three categories “A few simple sentences”, “Parts of conversations” and “Most conversations” combined account for between 1.4% (speak) and 2.4% (understand) of respondents. During this study, in similar categories focusing on Gaelic abilities beyond the “odd word” but less than fluent (“the odd sentence” [7.1%] and “Learner/Lapsed speaker” [2.7%]) 9.8% combined claimed such abilities, which is between four and seven times the rates reported by the O'Hanlon & Paterson in 2013.

Overall, this study of sports fans who are also Gaelic television viewers reports a much higher level of basic Gaelic abilities than previously found in other equivalent studies. Given the methodology used for this study it cannot be assumed that there is any causal relationship between watching sports on Gaelic television and basic Gaelic abilities, although there does appear to be a correlation across all levels of ability. It is admitted that such comparisons could also be challenged on various methodological grounds, however it cannot be denied that compared to other studies, this research appears to show higher levels Gaelic abilities than has been previously found in studies on the general Scottish population.

### 3.3.8 Experience of Gaelic

During the last 12 months, how often have you heard Gaelic on television?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
More than once a week	8.1%	15
About once a week	26.3%	49
Less than once a week but at least once a month	30.6%	57
Less often than once a month	30.6%	57
Never	2.7%	5
Don't know	1.6%	3



Participants were asked a number of question regarding their exposure to Gaelic. The combined majority of respondents 61.2% had heard Gaelic on the television but less frequently than once a week (30.2%) to less than often than once a month (30.2%). A combined 34.4% had heard Gaelic about about once a week (26.3%) or even more frequently than once a week (8.1%). Only a very small number had never heard Gaelic (five respondents) while three were unsure if they had ever heard Gaelic on television.

When many have only experienced Gaelic through the media, if at all, this possibly implies that when Gaelic television is watched, a minority choose to turn audio off to avoid commentary they do not understand.

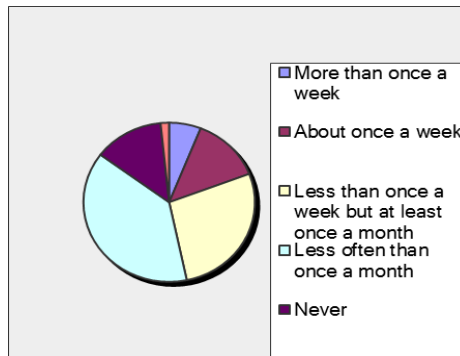
Although MG Alba resisted the demand for full English commentary on sports, in August 2014 ,in time for the new *Pro-12 season*, the ‘red-button’ option was introduced, allowing viewers to watch the Gaelic channel without hearing any Gaelic.



Thus far the “red-button” English commentary option has not been extended to football coverage. Although the introduction of the ‘Red Button’ option on rugby, but not football has not been publically communicated, this author was informed by a representative of MG Alba that the SRU had put pressure in the form of withholding coverage in the event that MG Alba did not provide an English language commentary alternative. This example perhaps confirms the former Justice Minister, Kenny MacAskill’s, assertion that BBC Alba is being treated as a ‘repository’ for content that would otherwise not be shown on English language television (MacAskill: 2016)

In terms of frequency of exposure, 13% had not heard Gaelic in the past year, 38% had heard Gaelic but less often than once a month, 27% had heard Gaelic within the past month, whilst, 13% had heard Gaelic once a week, with 6% saying they had heard Gaelic in some form once a week.

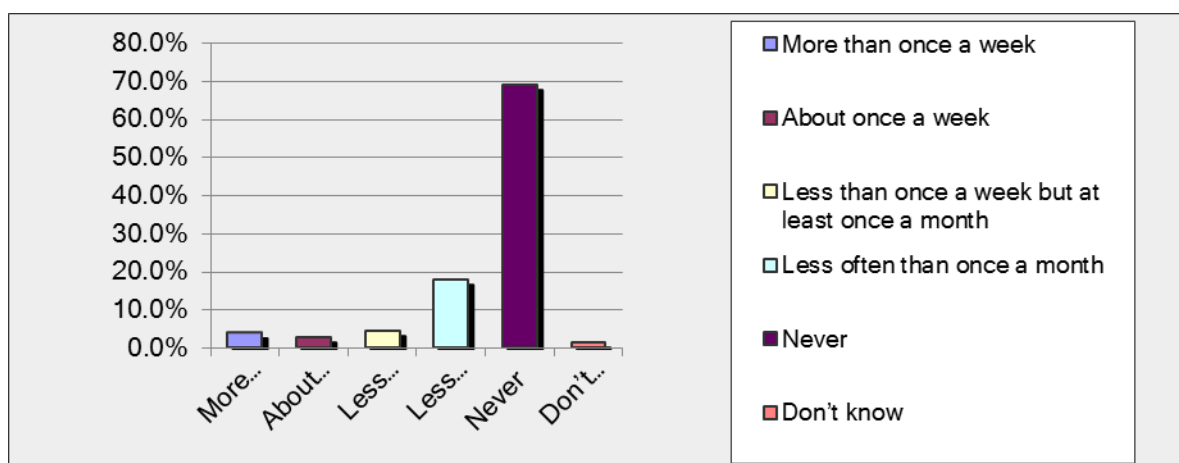
During the last 12 months, how often have you heard Gaelic being used?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
More than once a week	6.0%	11
About once a week	13.2%	24
Less than once a week but at least once a month	27.5%	50
Less often than once a month	38.5%	70
Never	13.2%	24
Don't know	1.6%	3



Similarly, exposure of spoken Gaelic whilst young was low. Approximately 90% of respondents stated that they heard Gaelic less than once a month, with 70% stating 'never'. Therefore childhood exposure was slightly higher but not significantly.

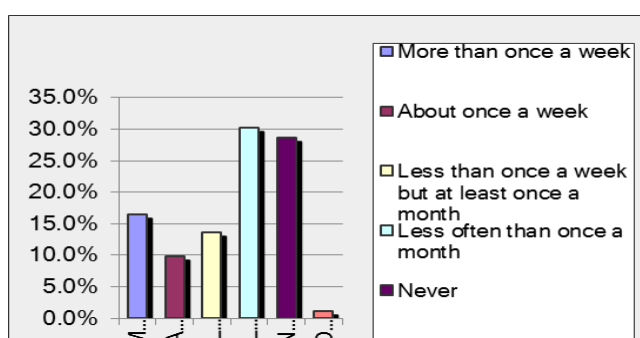
Did you ever hear Gaelic being spoken when you were a child, either at home or among your wider family or community?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
More than once a week	3.8%	7
About once a week	2.7%	5
Less than once a week but at least once a month	4.4%	8
Less often than once a month	18.1%	33
Never	69.2%	126
Don't know	1.6%	3





Exposure to Gaelic in the form of public place signage was significantly higher than that of spoken Gaelic. On this occasion approximately 70% of respondents stated that they had seen Gaelic in the public sphere. Out of this group 16% reported that they had seen Gaelic as frequently as once a week. The other 30% indicating that they had never seen Gaelic in public, or if so, they were not aware of it.

During the last 12 months, how often have you seen Gaelic in a public place?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
More than once a week	16.5%	30
About once a week	9.9%	18
Less than once a week but at least once a month	13.7%	25
Less often than once a month	30.2%	55
Never	28.6%	52
Don't know	1.1%	2

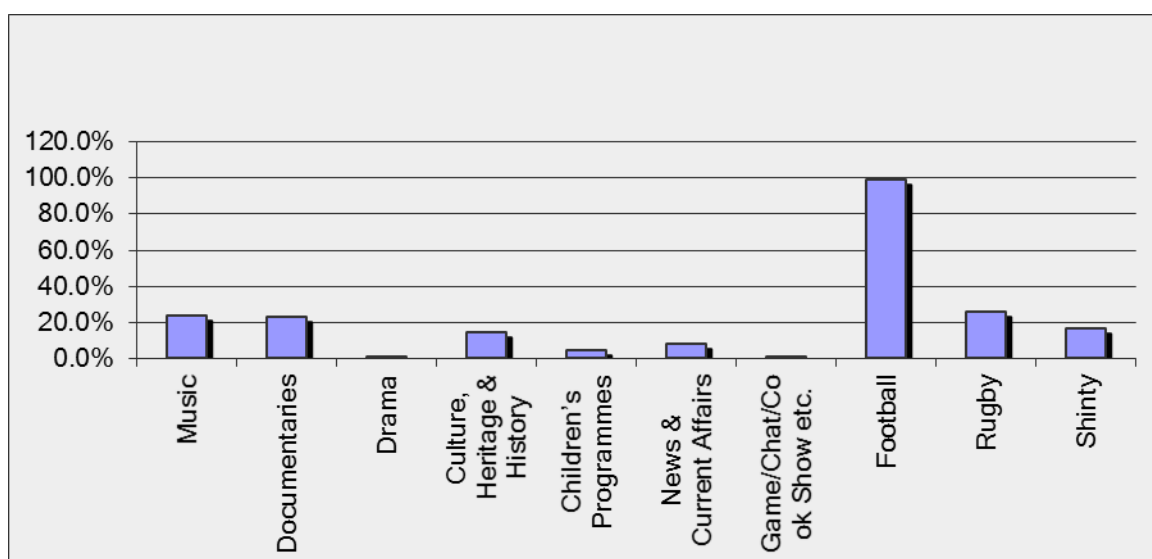


### 3.3.9 Experience of Gaelic Television

Participants were asked a variety of questions relating to their experience of Gaelic television. Unsurprisingly, considering the sampling methods deployed, almost all of those who responded to this question stated that they had watched football on BBC

Alba, at 99.43%. Following this, 26% watched rugby. Music and documentaries were the next most popular genres of television at 24% and 23% respectively. This was followed by shinty at 16% and “Culture, Heritage & History” programmes at 15%. ‘News and Current affairs’ and children’s programmes were watched by 5% and 8%, whilst only two people each selected ‘Game/Chat/Cook’ shows and ‘drama’. During the period of data collection. BBC Alba’s new flagship drama ‘Bannan’ had only at that time been broadcast as a pilot, with only repeats of *Machair* and one off dramas being broadcast. MG Alba reported themselves in their annual report that Bannan was a great success amongst their core audience, reaching 83.4% of regular viewers (MG Alba: 2016). Figures for Bannan amongst the overall population were not reported. This study found little engagement with drama programmes amongst the sample.

From the categories provided, during the last 12 months, what types of BBC ALBA TV programmes have you watched? Please note that there is		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Music	23.9%	42
Documentaries	22.7%	40
Drama	1.1%	2
Culture, Heritage & History	14.8%	26
Children's Programmes	4.5%	8
News & Current Affairs	8.0%	14
Game/Chat/Cook Show etc.	1.1%	2
Football	99.4%	175
Rugby	25.6%	45
Shinty	16.5%	29
Other (please specify)		2



### 3.3.10 - Other Gaelic media

Just over a quarter (26%) answered they had ‘accessed’ Gaelic via any other media platforms beyond television. Significantly, however it should be noted that this question was skipped by 138 individuals. This admittedly was a failure of the survey design with no option for ‘None/no’. The consequential analysis shows skewed results not representative of the entire cohort with 74% of respondents removing themselves from this question, but not taken into consideration during analysis.

Have you accessed Gaelic language via any other form of media?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Radio	62.5%	30
Newspapers	8.3%	4
Social media	31.3%	15
Online Video	16.7%	8
Other websites	10.4%	5
Other		19
answered question		48
skipped question		138

Responses adjusted for those eliminated show radio at 16%, Gaelic via social media at 8%, via ‘Online-video’ at 4%, other websites at 3% and newspapers at 2% being the other ways in which respondents had accessed Gaelic media.

With 16% of the overall cohort reporting radio as an another form way in which they have accessed Gaelic language is indeed quiet a significant result. Gaelic television and its current subtitling policies means that it is medium very much accessible to non-Gaelic speakers, however Gaelic radio, largely in the form of Radio nan Gàidheal is very much different, and indeed its audience is almost exclusively Gaelic speakers. The BBC Trust,however, stated in 2011 in reference to Radio nan Gàidheal:

*the impact of the station could be widened by directing non-Gaelic speakers or non-fluent speakers to Radio nan Gàidheal’s Gaelic and traditional music”. In terms of comparisons with other studies West & Graham’s 2011 study showed that 10% of the sample Scottish population “indicated that they came into contact with the Gaelic language... [via] the radio (10%)” (BBC Trust: 2011).*

In 2015 MG Alba (MG Alba: 2015) reported large increases in those accessing their online resources: [LearnGaelic.net](http://LearnGaelic.net) (103.9%), [FilmG.co.uk](http://FilmG.co.uk) (678%), [mgalba.com](http://mgalba.com) (57%), Twitter 60.7%, Facebook 70%, however there is no indication from MG Alba whether this cohort contained Gaelic-speakers or not

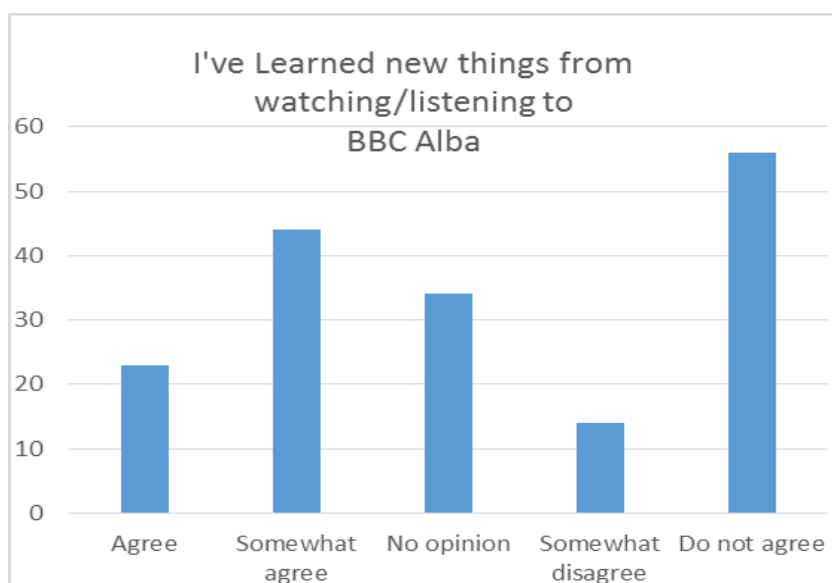
### 3.3.11 Reflections on the experience of the Gaelic channel

The section comprises questions based upon experiences of, and attitudes towards BBC Alba. These questions were designed in a 5-point likert scale format – a style frequently deployed on media approval ratings scales. Responses were ranged from “Agree” to “Do not Agree”, with “Somewhat Agree”, “Somewhat Disagree” and a “No opinion” option also available.

For this series of questions descriptive analysis will be provided, allowing the reader to contrast and compare responses. Furthermore, on occasion outside information, data and previous literature will be consulted. For improved appreciation of the results correlations between different data strands has been highlighted, with significant statistics analysed further.

Question 17 asked participants to respond to the statement: *“I’ve learned new things from watching/listening to BBC Alba”*.

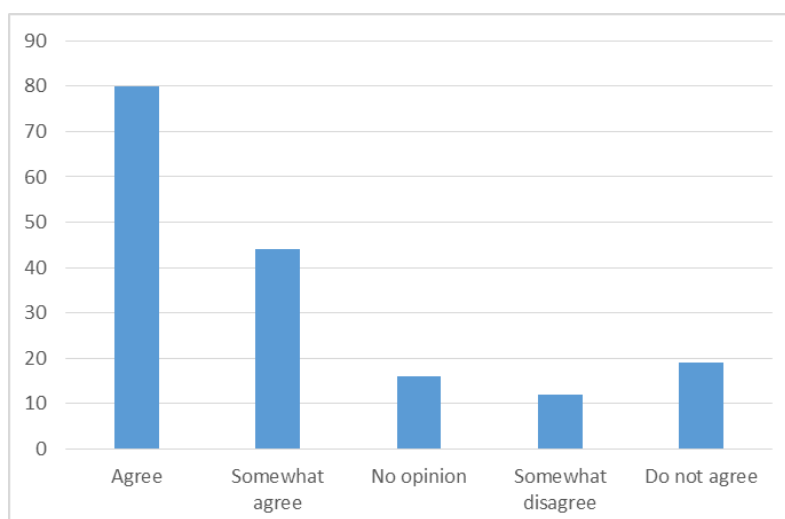
Agree	Somewhat agree	No opinion	Somewhat disagree	Do not agree	Rating Average	Response Count
23	44	34	14	56	3.21	171
answered question						
skipped question						



The results indicated that the highest number of responses for “Do not agree” (32.7%). This may suggest a lack of engagement amongst a sports viewing audience. However, if both negative responses together are combined, and then both positive responses combined, then the results are almost equally split between broad agreement (39%) and broad disagreement (41%). Significantly though, 20% have ‘no opinion whilst a further 15 people did not answer this question, perhaps indicating that a majority did not believe this statement to be true.

Question 18 asked participants to respond to the statement: “*BBC Alba is a worthwhile thing for the BBC to be spending the licence fee on*”

BBC ALBA is a worthwhile thing for the BBC to be spending the licence fee on						
Agree	Somewhat agree	No opinion	Somewhat disagree	Do not agree	Rating Average	Response Count
80	44	16	12	19	2.10	171
					answered question	
					skipped question	



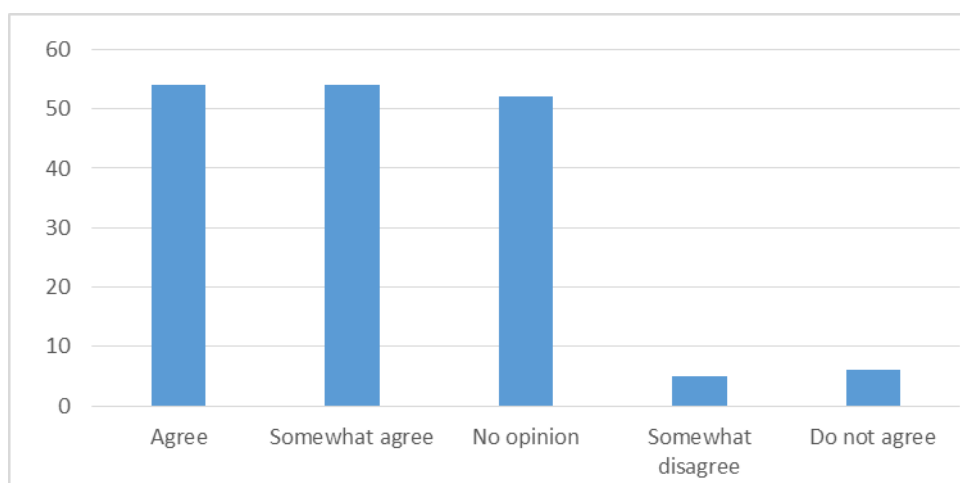
Respondents reacted positively with 73% agreeing to some degree, with only 18% disagreeing, and 9% having no opinion. This can be closely compared with Ofcom's (2014) report on research conducted over a 6 year period. That research asked the same question showing that at various times from 2008 to 2014, between 41% and 66% of respondents agreed to this same statement with an "8, 9 or 10" out of ten with 1 "strongly disagree" and 10 "strongly agree".

BBC ALBA is a worthwhile thing for the BBC to be spending the licence fee on	6.396 41%	6.636 57%	7.059 56%	8.215 66%	7.421 50%	7.224 51%	7.128 51%	7.128 53%
--	--------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	--------------

Audience opinions - BBC Alba, *PSB Annual Report* (Ofcom: 2014)

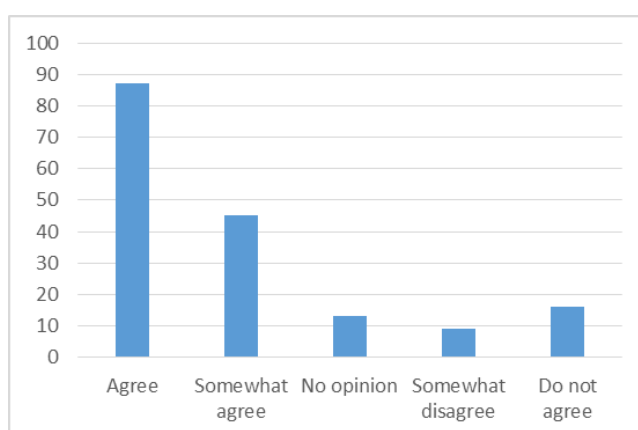
In response to "BBC Alba maintains high standards of quality" participants reacted positively with 63% agreeing to some extent, with only 6% reacting negatively. Significantly, 30% (52 people) of respondents had 'no opinion', potentially indicating a lack of engagement with this question by a significant minority.

BBC ALBA maintains high standards of quality						
Agree	Somewhat agree	No opinion	Somewhat disagree	Do not agree	Rating Average	Response Count
54	54	52	5	6	2.15	171



In response to “It is important for Scotland to have a dedicated Gaelic-language service in the digital age” participants indicated overwhelmingly positivity with 78% agreeing to some extent. 15% disagreed to some extent with 8% indicating no opinion.

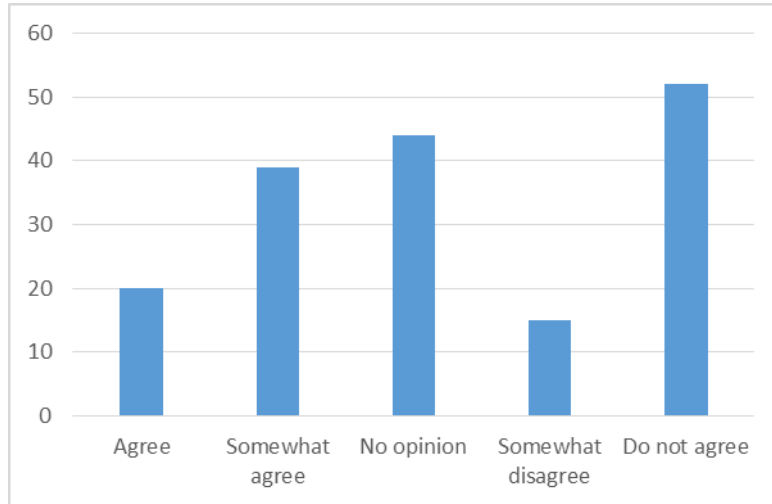
It is important for Scotland to have a dedicated Gaelic-language service in the digital age						
Agree	Somewhat agree	No opinion	Somewhat disagree	Do not agree	Rating Average	Response Count
87	45	13	9	16	1.95	170



In response to “BBC Alba has improved my understanding of Gaelic words” participants reacted somewhat negatively with a combined figure of 39% disagreeing with this statement. A significant minority indicating no opinion at 26%, with 35% overall of respondents reacting positively in some form.

**BBC ALBA has improved my understanding of Gaelic words**

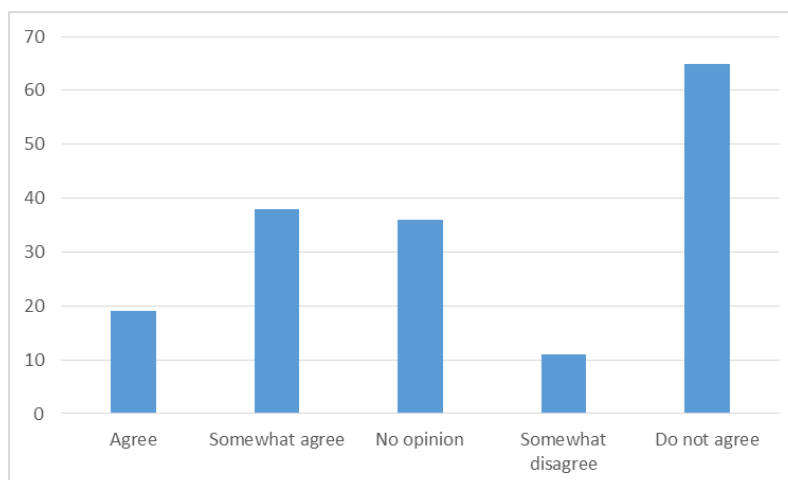
Agree	Somewhat agree	No opinion	Somewhat disagree	Do not agree
20	39	44	15	52



In response to “BBC Alba has made me want to learn Gaelic / improve my Gaelic language skills” again participants overall reacted negatively with 45% overall disagreeing with this statement. However, 34% of the participants did show some agreement to the statement with 21% ambivalent.

**BBC ALBA has made me want to learn Gaelic / improve my Gaelic language skills**

Agree	Somewhat agree	No opinion	Somewhat disagree	Do not agree
19	38	36	11	65





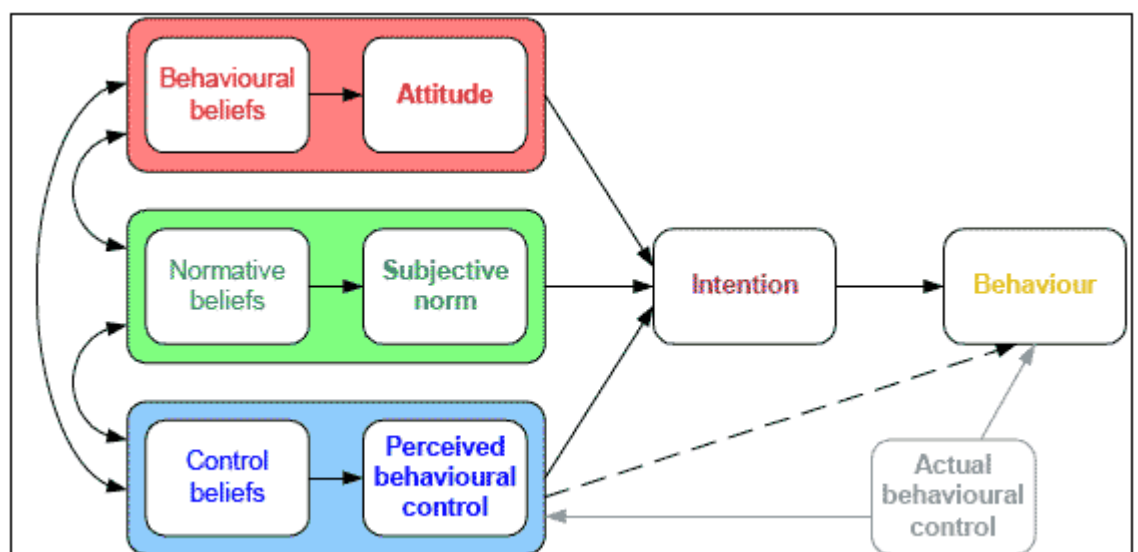
Analysing the previous two questions as a collective, considering only 10% of the overall cohort had declared any Gaelic abilities beyond the “odd word”, it might be expected that a minority would react positively to questions concerning Gaelic learning. In the first of two Gaelic learning questions, 26% of the combined sample reacted positively towards Gaelic learning as a result of the process of watching BBC Alba. In the second of these two questions, a slightly higher level of 34% indicated positively regarding future Gaelic learning desires.

### **Attitudes and the Relationship with Future Behaviours**

In some respects, the value of the study of attitudes lies in their ability to predict behaviour. From a language maintenance and revitalization perspective, it would be wonderful to believe that such desires were going to, almost without question, result in new Gaelic-speakers. When desire is there, what indeed prevents this desire materializing into actual behaviours? It is well-understood in the fields of psychology and sociology that attitudes and future behaviours do not always correlate. Although actors may have certain desires, this does not mean that these aspirations will result in the desired behaviour.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is a theory that connects beliefs and behaviour. The concept, proposed by Icek Ajzen in 1985. The theory states that attitude toward behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, together shape an individual's behavioural intentions and behaviours (Ajzen: 1991).

### **Schema representing the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)**



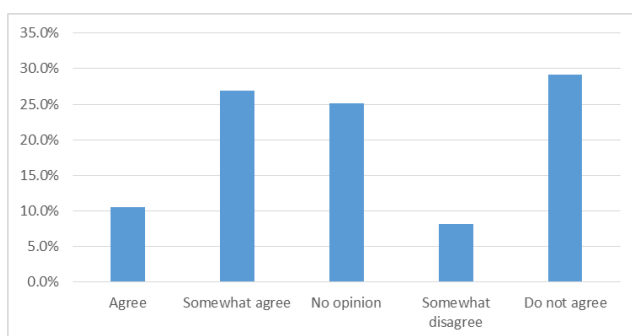
TPB model originally from Aizen (1991). Representation of model and diagram accessed at <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2008/01/07105336/3>

In TPB, following the development of certain attitudes, the behaviour itself needs to be within our actual or perceived control. Internal and external factors can have an effect upon this control. External factors include, for example, time available, opportunities, facilities, and to what extent we are dependent on other people. Internal factors include, for example, access to skills, knowledge and abilities and the extent to which people are able to plan adequately (Garrett: 2002). At one level, people may have a very positive attitude to learning a minority language, but be very aware that language learning involved a sustained long term commitment compared to other mundane processes of everyday life. For many, there may be little confidence in the ability to maintain that level of commitment. There may be other reasons such as money or time.

However, the opposite viewpoint is also valid, the variables that stand between behavioural intentions and actual behaviour, especially in the study of language attitudes, are also very much of interest (Garrett: 2002). Links between people's attitudes towards minority languages and their own behaviours are likely to be abstract and complex and a study of attitudes is one of the best ways to discover the strength (or not) of these links. Further study, using a different methodological process is the best way to verify to what extent such attitudes are resulting in behaviours which may benefit the health of the minority language in question. The qualitative element of this research study seeks to answer some of the unanswered questions.

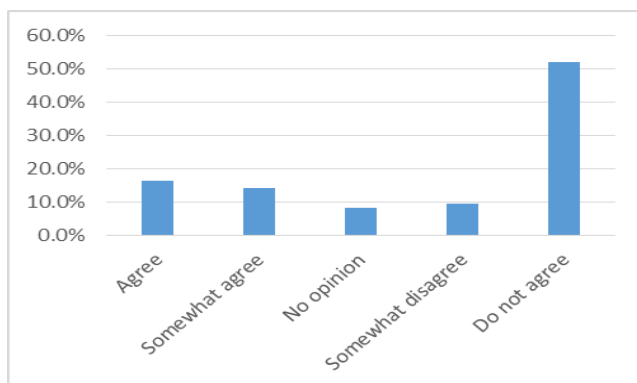
In response to "I know much more about the Gaelic language because of BBC Alba" there was equal combined distribution between overall agreement and overall disagreement at 37% each, respectively. 25% of respondents were indifferent.

I know much more about the Gaelic language because of BBC ALBA		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Agree	10.5%	18
Somewhat agree	26.9%	46
No opinion	25.1%	43
Somewhat disagree	8.2%	14
Do not agree	29.2%	50



In response to “BBC Alba was my introduction to Gaelic language” there was strong disagreement 61% of respondents indicating combined disagreement. 30% did indicate agreement, however with 8% having no opinion.

BBC ALBA was my introduction to Gaelic language		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Agree	16.4%	28
Somewhat agree	14.0%	24
No opinion	8.2%	14
Somewhat disagree	9.4%	16
Do not agree	52.0%	89

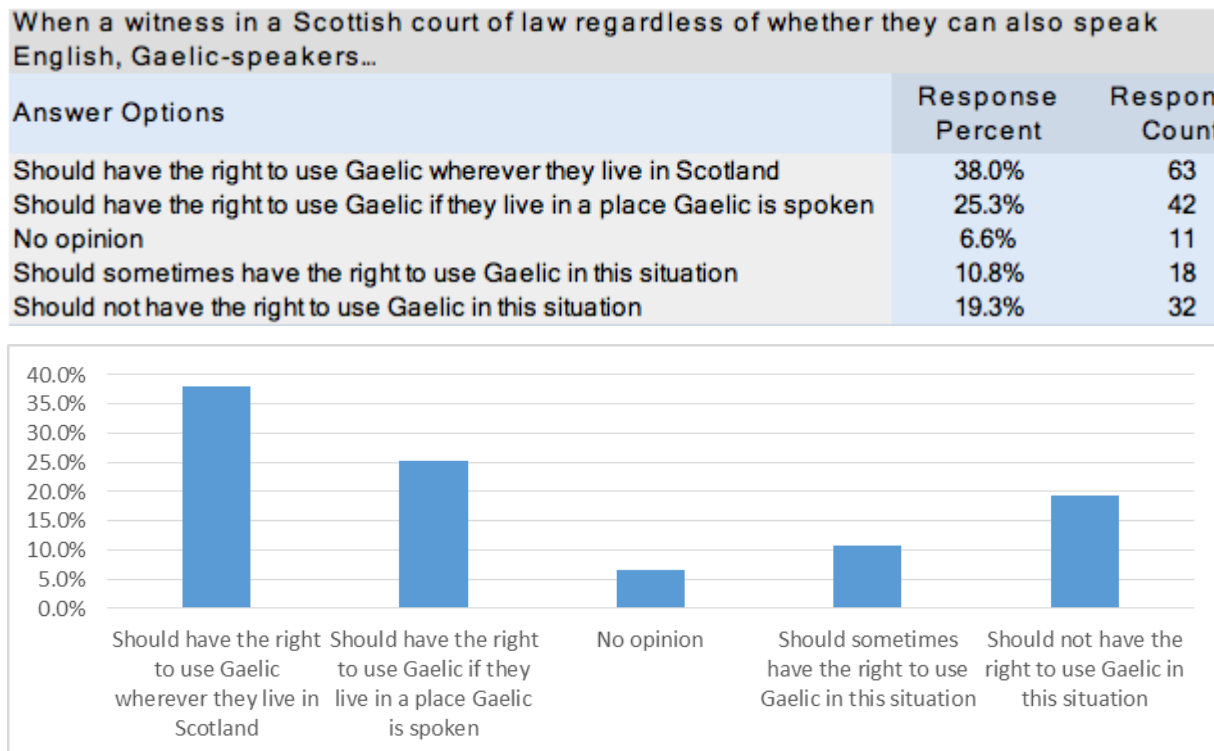


### 3.3.12 - Rights of Gaelic speakers

Following on from the section relating specifically to BBC Alba and Gaelic, the participants were then asked three questions in regards to language rights.

The following three questions were adaptations of questions asked during the *Scottish Social Attitudes Survey* (2013). The primary difference was that a 5-point Likert scale was deployed during this study, whilst in this 2012 study a 4-point scales was used. This was in order to conform to the format used throughout this study. Despite this, is possible to make general comparisons between the respective studies.

In each question the participants were provided with a supposed real-life example. For each example, the respondents were then provided with four statements which would most likely fit with their own language right ideologies. Further to the four statements provided, there was an option to select “no opinion”.

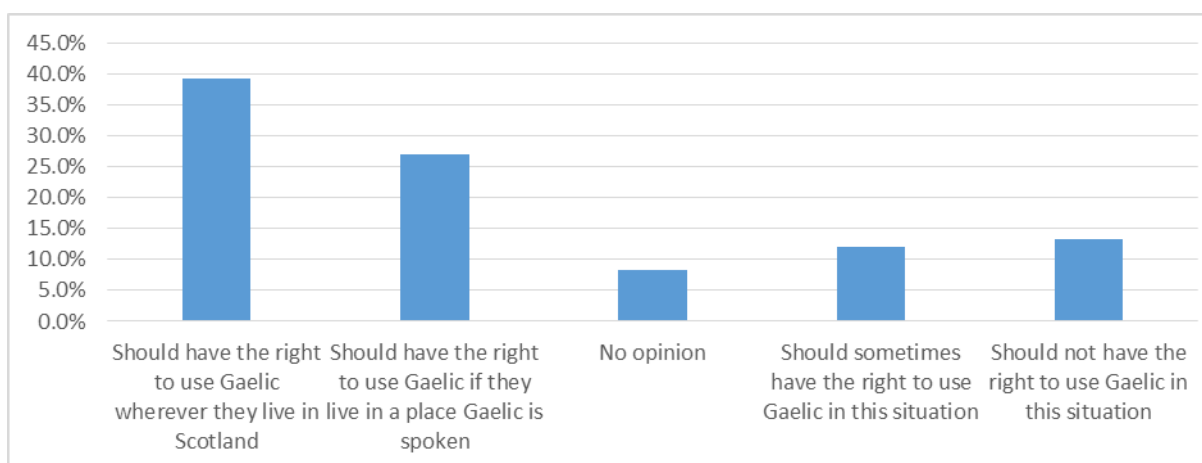


In response to the statement “When a witness in a Scottish court of law regardless of whether they can also speak English, Gaelic-speakers...” 63% of the cohort responded

positively. 30% respond negatively, with 7% indicating no opinion. In comparison, during the *Scottish Social Attitudes Survey* (2013) 40% respondents supported this right anywhere in Scotland, whilst 31% supported this in ‘Gaelic areas’. Combined this was 71% of respondents – 8% higher than the combined figures in this study.

**When dealing with their Council regardless of whether they can also speak English, Gaelic-speakers...**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Should have the right to use Gaelic wherever they live in Scotland	39.2%	65
Should have the right to use Gaelic if they live in a place Gaelic is spoken	27.1%	45
No opinion	8.4%	14
Should sometimes have the right to use Gaelic in this situation	12.0%	20
Should not have the right to use Gaelic in this situation	13.3%	22

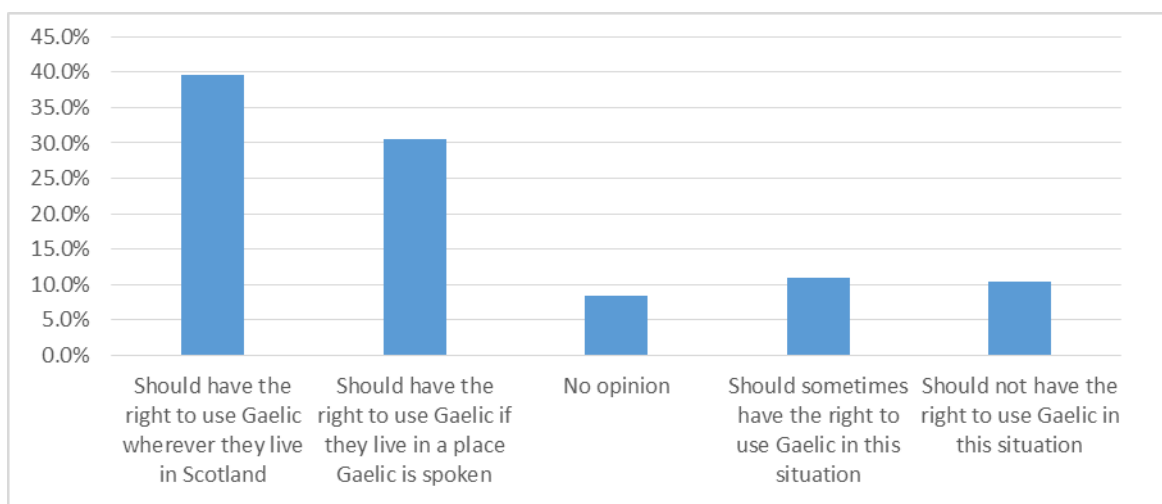


In response to “When dealing with their Council regardless of whether they can also speak English, Gaelic-speakers...” over 80% show support for Gaelic in at least some situations. With 10% opposed to this right, and 9% indicating no opinion. In comparison, during the *Scottish Social Attitudes Survey* (2013) 38% respondents supported this right anywhere in Scotland, whilst 46% supported this in ‘Gaelic areas’. Combined, this was 84% of respondents – 4% higher than the combined figures during this study.

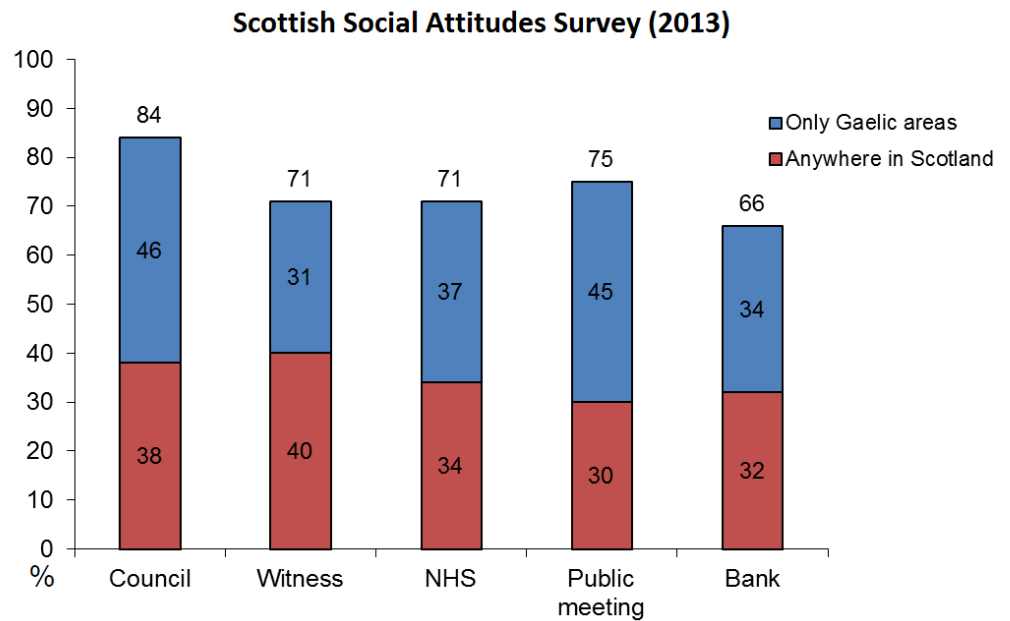
Presented with the statement “*When speaking at a public meeting, regardless of whether they can also speak English, Gaelic-speakers...*” the respondents were provided with four statements:

When speaking at a public meeting, regardless of whether they can also speak English, Gaelic-speakers...

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Should have the right to use Gaelic wherever they live in Scotland	39.6%	65
Should have the right to use Gaelic if they live in a place Gaelic is spoken	30.5%	50
No opinion	8.5%	14
Should sometimes have the right to use Gaelic in this situation	11.0%	18
Should not have the right to use Gaelic in this situation	10.4%	17



Combined, 81% of respondents that they should have the right, and 11% were against this right, with 8.5% having no opinion. This compares to 75% agreeing to this right on various levels during the *Scottish Social Attitudes Survey* (2013) as displayed below:



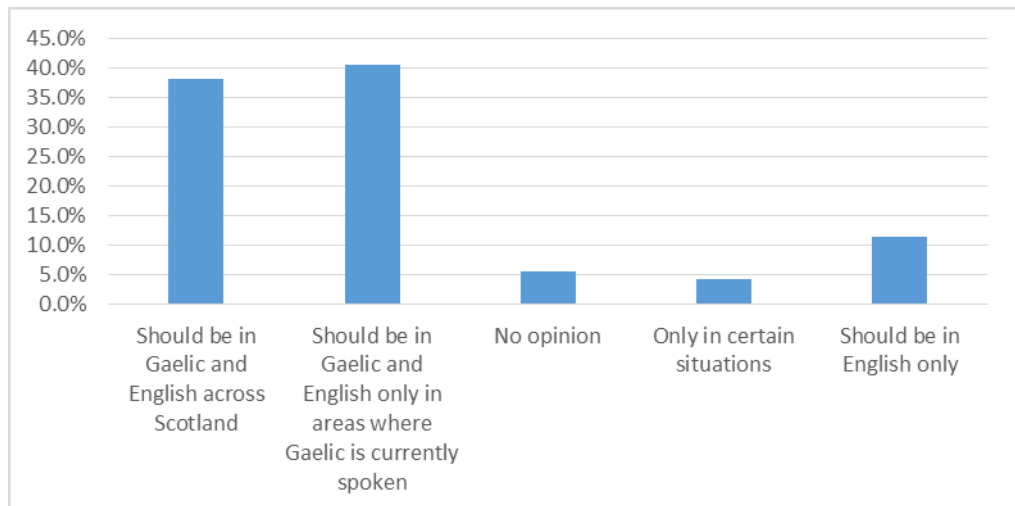
Overall, in all three questions regarding language rights the respondents in this study have shown strong majorities supporting Gaelic language rights, especially supporting such rights in the perceived traditional Gaelic (Gàidhealtachd) areas. In reality, such rights as those discussed above are rarely exercised, nor challenged. It could be argued then, that support for these rights appears remarkably high, not just in this study but also compared with other studies such as the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey (2013). It does raise the question that if the respondents had to deal with the associated responsibilities would they be so supportive? In other words - are respondents too agreeable to offering rights when they are not subjected to any of the consequences of such rights?

By law, since 2005 the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act accorded Gaelic ‘equal respect’ with English; before this point there was no legislation according Gaelic speakers with such rights. It must be pointed out, however, that from a legal perspective “equal respect” has no clearly recognised meaning in law (McLeod: 2006, p. 6).

### 3.3.13 – Provision of Gaelic services

In response to the question below (Question no. 31) regarding road signs, the respondents were given five options and table provides the available answers, and the subsequent numbers of those selecting such choices:

Which of the options best describes what you think about having road signs in Scotland in both Gaelic and English?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Should be in Gaelic and English across Scotland	38.2%	63
Should be in Gaelic and English only in areas where	40.6%	67
No opinion	5.5%	9
Only in certain situations	4.2%	7
Should be in English only	11.5%	19

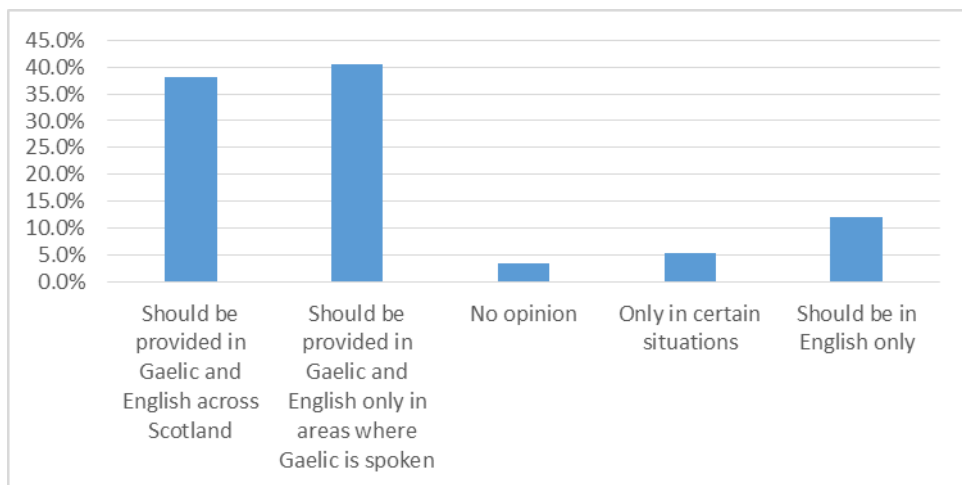


Combined, a total of 83% supported Gaelic roads in some form, including 38% for their use across Scotland, 41% in ‘areas where Gaelic is currently spoken’, and ‘only in certain situations’. 12% believe that signs should be in English only and 5% had no opinion (See Chapter 4: ‘linguistic landscape’ for further discussion on Gaelic road signs)



When asked about the provision of written information in Gaelic the following responses were provided:

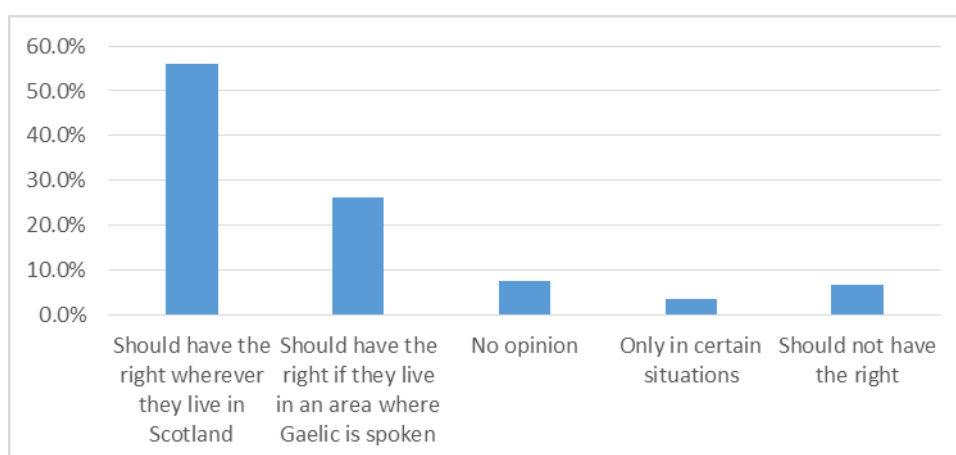
Which of the phrases comes closest to your view about providing written information about public services in Gaelic as well as in English?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Should be provided in Gaelic and English across	38.2%	63
Should be provided in Gaelic and English only in	40.6%	67
No opinion	3.6%	6
Only in certain situations	5.5%	9
Should be in English only	12.1%	20



Combined, a total of 84% support some sort of provision for Gaelic, including 38% agreeing that Gaelic information should be available throughout Scotland, 41% support provision in Gaelic areas with 5% supporting some provision in certain situations. 12% indicate that only English should be provided and 4% had no opinion.

In response to “*Should parents should [sic.] /should not have the right to choose to send their children to Gaelic medium education?*” participants reacted highly extremely favourably towards GME:

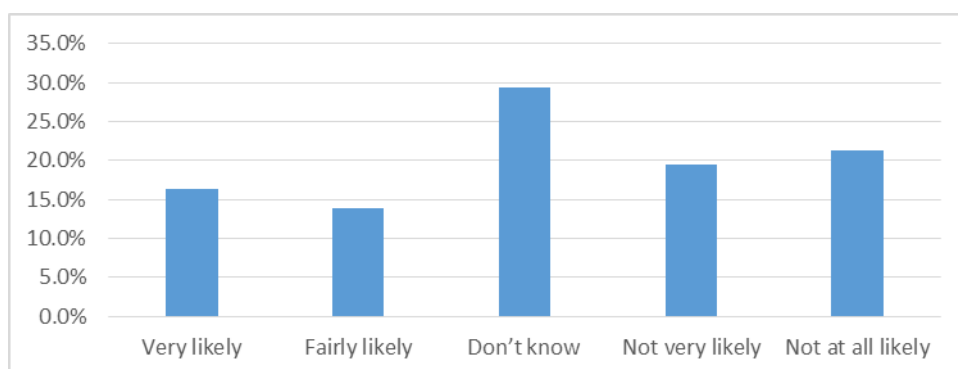
Should parents should/should not have the right to choose to send their children to Gaelic medium education?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Should have the right wherever they live in Scotland	55.9%	90
Should have the right if they live in an area where	26.1%	42
No opinion	7.5%	12
Only in certain situations	3.7%	6
Should not have the right	6.8%	11



In total 86% supported the idea that parents should have the right to GME to varying degrees. 56% supported this right anywhere in Scotland, whilst 26% supported the right if they live in a Gaelic area, and another 4% indicated in 'some situations'. 7% were against the right, whilst 7% had no opinion.

In response to the question *“If there was a primary school in your area which provided Gaelic medium education, how likely would you be to send a child of your own to this school?”* the participants provided a fairly even spread of responses:

If there was a primary school in your area which provided Gaelic medium education, how likely would you be to send your own child to this school?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very likely	16.3%	26
Fairly likely	13.8%	22
Don't know	29.4%	47
Not very likely	19.4%	31
Not at all likely	21.3%	34



Combined, 30% of respondents dictated that it was either ‘very likely or fairly likely’, while 41% agreed that this was ‘Not very likely’ or ‘not likely at all’. 29% of respondents were unsure.

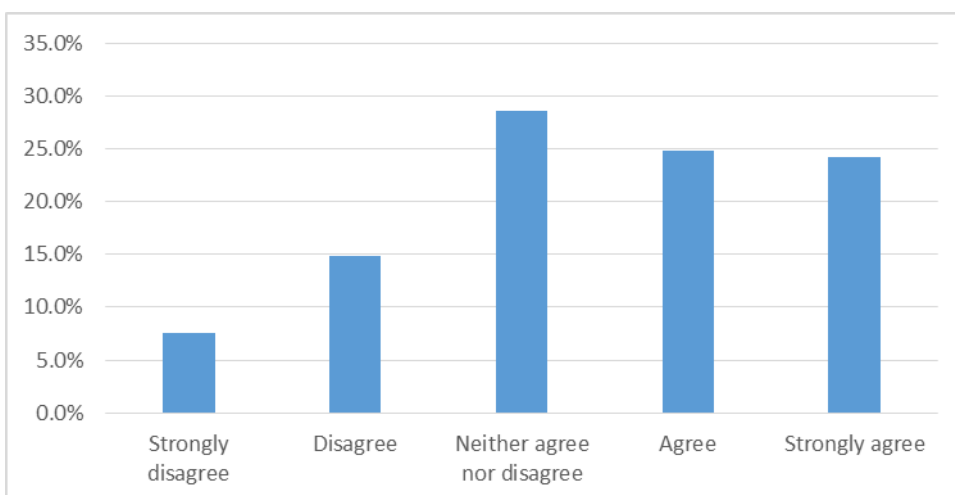
On consulting this data, it should be considered, in context, that currently less than 1% of pupils in Scotland go through Gaelic-medium education (nursery, primary & secondary education). Furthermore, other studies using similar questions and methodological approach have discovered that between 20%-25% of their respective samples responded in favour of GME to this same question amongst the general population. O’ Hanlon & Paterson (2013) found that 25% of the sample said they would be likely (either ‘very likely’ or ‘fairly likely’ to send a child to Gaelic-medium education if there was provision in their local area (O’ Hanlon & Paterson: 2013)

As shown above, 30% of respondents responded in favour of Gaelic-medium education in this study, a 5% increase compared with the findings in O’ Hanlon & Paterson’s (2013) study. In terms of reported attitudes held and then intended behaviours, the reader should recall the discussion of *The Theory of Planned* (TPB) from earlier in this chapter (found at section 3.3.11) indicating that *actual* behaviours do not always correlate to with *planned* behaviours.

### 3.3.14 – Importance of Gaelic

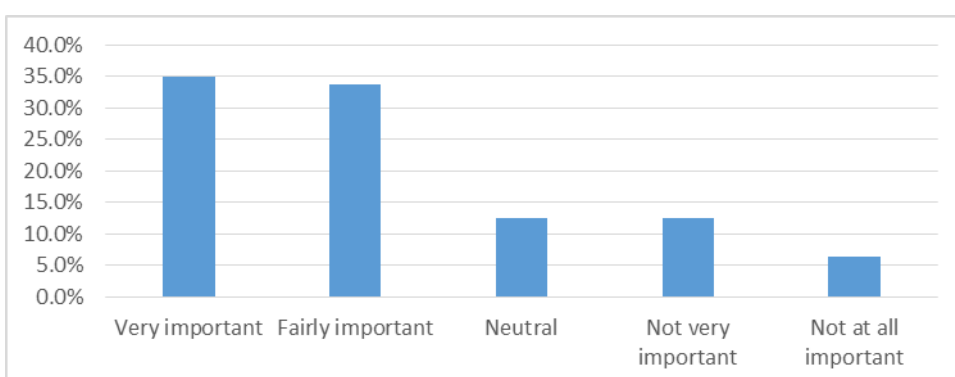
In response to the first question of seven regarding the importance of Gaelic “Do you agree or disagree that learning foreign languages such as French or Spanish is more worthwhile than learning Gaelic?” 49% of respondents either ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agreed’. 22% ‘disagreed’ or ‘strongly disagreed’, whilst 29% held a neutral stance.

Usefulness Do you agree or disagree that learning foreign languages such as French or Spanish is more worthwhile than learning Gaelic?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly disagree	7.5%	12
Disagree	14.9%	24
Neither agree nor disagree	28.6%	46
Agree	24.8%	40
Strongly agree	24.2%	39



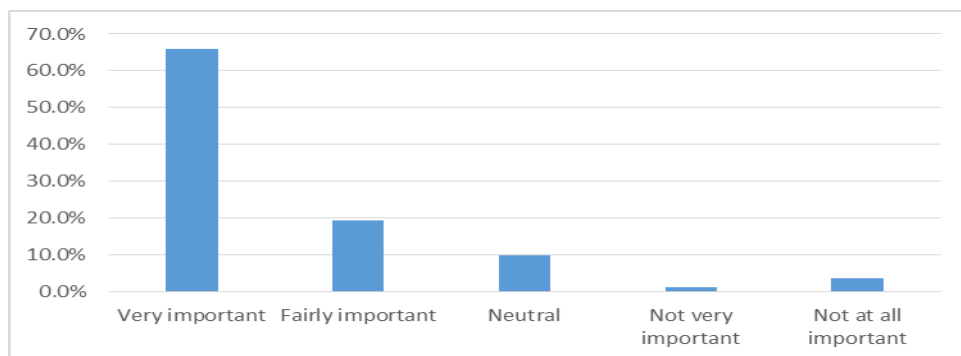
In response “How important do you think Gaelic is to Scotland’s cultural heritage?” 69% of respondents indicated that Gaelic was either ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ important. 19% stated it was ‘not very important’ or ‘not important at all’. 12.5% were neutral.

How important do you think Gaelic is to Scotland's cultural heritage?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very important	35.0%	56
Fairly important	33.8%	54
Neutral	12.5%	20
Not very important	12.5%	20
Not at all important	6.3%	10



In response to “How important do you think Gaelic is to the cultural heritage of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland?” 85% responded Gaelic was “very” or “fairly” important, whilst only 5% suggested that Gaelic was “not very” or “not important at all”. 10% were neutral.

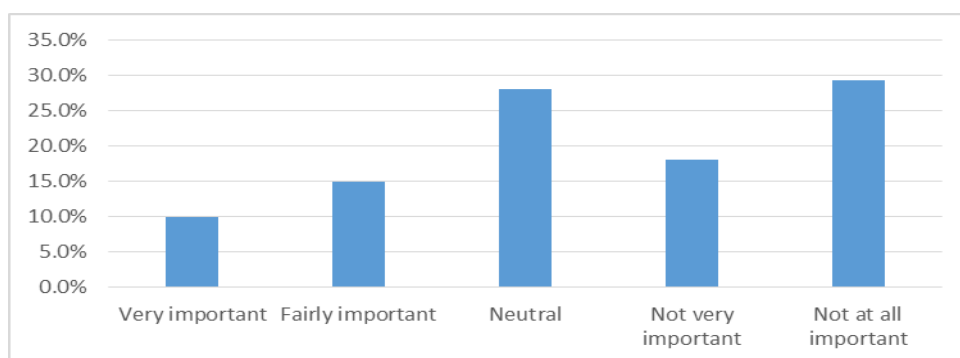
How important do you think Gaelic is to the cultural heritage of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very important	65.8%	106
Fairly important	19.3%	31
Neutral	9.9%	16
Not very important	1.2%	2
Not at all important	3.7%	6
answered question		161
skipped question		25 <sup>3</sup>



In response to the question “How important is Gaelic to your own cultural heritage?” - 37% responded that it was “not very important” or “not important at all”, while 25% responded that it was “very” or “fairly”, whilst 28% were responded neutrally.

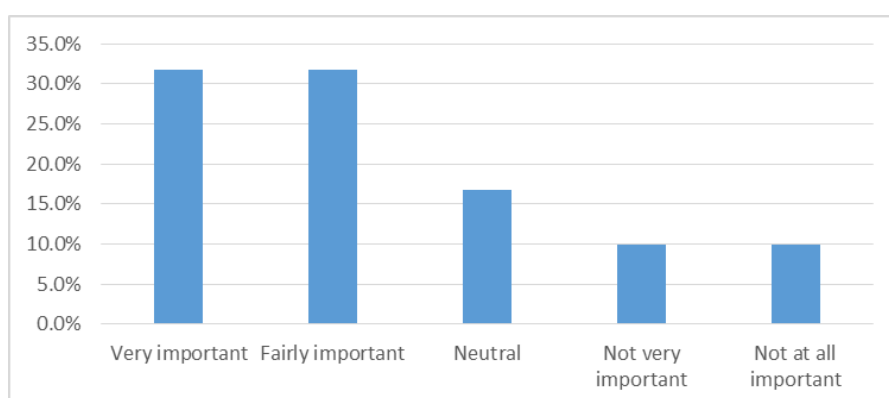
How important is Gaelic to your own cultural heritage?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very important	9.9%	16
Fairly important	14.9%	24
Neutral	28.0%	45
Not very important	18.0%	29
Not at all important	29.2%	47

<sup>3</sup>Following this question, no more dropouts (skipped questions) were recorded, with all those who arrived at this stage completing the survey.



In response to a statement concerning the importance or insignificance of encouraging Gaelic in Scotland 63% indicated that Gaelic was either “very” or “fairly” important, while 20% indicated that Gaelic was “not very” or “not very important at all”, while 17% responded neutrally.

Encouraging Gaelic in Scotland is...?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very important	31.7%	51
Fairly important	31.7%	51
Neutral	16.8%	27
Not very important	9.9%	16
Not at all important	9.9%	16

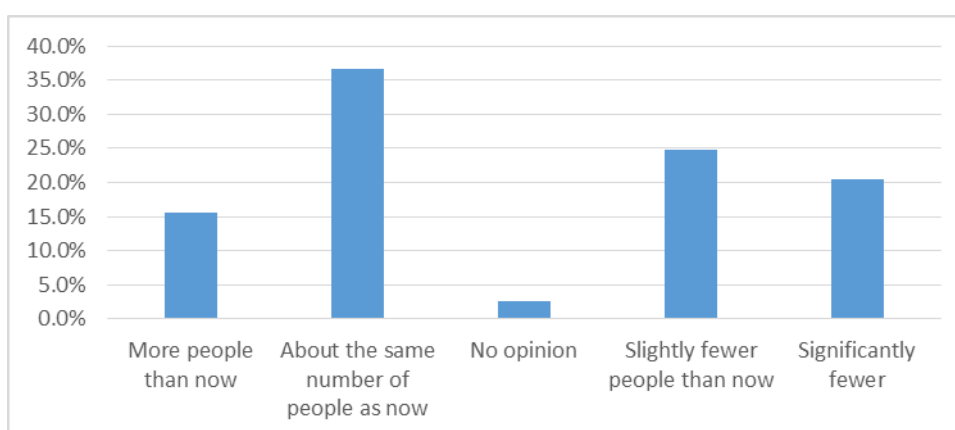


### Public attitudes towards Gaelic’s future versus media discourses of language death

In response to the question concerning future expectations “Thinking about Scotland in 50 years’ time - do you think Gaelic will be spoken by more, fewer or about the same number of people as now?”, 52% responded that Gaelic will have the “same” or “more” speakers, whilst 45% stated that Gaelic will decline, having “slightly” or

“significantly” fewer speakers, with only 2% maintaining a neutral stance - the lowest level of any question.

Thinking about Scotland in 50 years' time - do you think Gaelic will be spoken by more, fewer or about the same number of people as now?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
More people than now	15.5%	25
About the same number of people as now	36.6%	59
No opinion	2.5%	4
Slightly fewer people than now	24.8%	40
Significantly fewer	20.5%	33



The national census of 2011 revealed further decline of the Gaelic language in Scotland, albeit at a much slower rate than before (at least in terms of overall population). Gaelic is a minority language that is critically endangered (UNESCO: 2009) and research by Munro et al (2011) suggests that the language is struggling as an everyday language even in the strongest Gàidhealtachd areas. The narrative of Gaelic language death discourse amongst the print media has been well documented by some commentators. Writing in 2006, Emily McEwan-Fujita’s *The public discourse of Gaelic language death in Scotland* examined this question and found widespread evidence perpetuating the idea of ‘language death’<sup>4</sup> (Crystal: 2000) through print media.

An assortment of headline clippings from UK and Ireland media outlets:

<sup>4</sup> It could be disputed if languages indeed “die” at all. Languages are not technically not living things. Some languages have ‘died’ and then been revived, such as Cornish. Living things ultimately die and cannot be resurrected. The discourse of ‘death’ is therefore contentious.

**MailOnline**

How will we speak in 100 years? 90%  
of languages will become extinct  
because of migration, linguist claims

**theguardian**  
website of the year

The death of a language

**4 TODAY**

The death of language?

The Herald **sundayherald**

Why Gaelic is dying a death

**The Telegraph** Welsh language is dying out, research finds

**BBC** Are dying languages worth saving?

Why the Irish language is dying

**IrishCentral.**

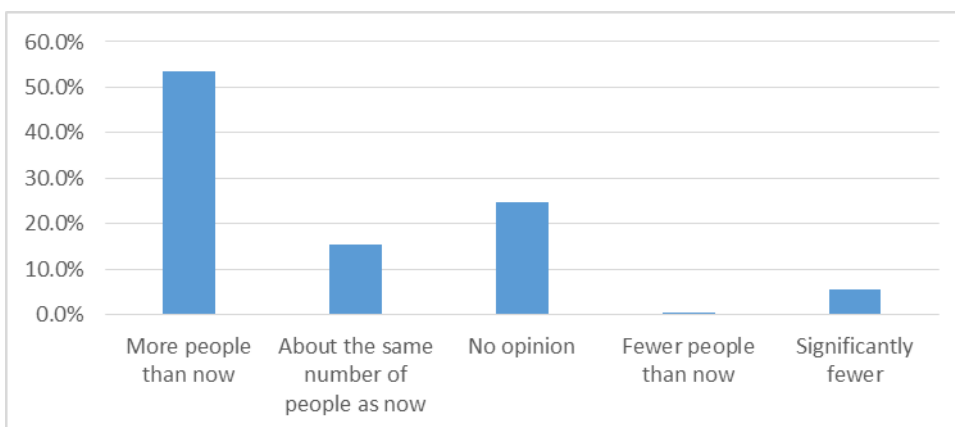
Despite a media bombarding the public with discourse suggesting Gaelic will inevitably die, a majority of respondents in this study have expressed a view that more people will be speaking Gaelic in the future. With censuses, transnational organisations supportive of language revival, academics, and the print media all adding to this notion of language decline why has the cohort shown strong indication that they believe Gaelic will consolidate and even thrive? Has the narrative of Gaelic language health changed, and if so what has been the intervention to cause this? Has the unprecedented viewership of Gaelic broadcasting amongst non-Gaelic speakers performed a role in not just normalizing Gaelic in contemporary Scottish society, but promoting the language as attractive vibrant modern part of Scotland? From the questions asked during the survey questionnaire it cannot be understood why the cohort holds such views, however, the qualitative element of this project does attempt to address some of these questions.

In response to the question “Again, thinking about Scotland in 50 years’ time, how many people would you like to be speaking Gaelic? More, fewer, or about the same number as today?”



Again, thinking about Scotland in 50 years time, how many people would you like to be speaking Gaelic? More, fewer, or about the same number as

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
More people than now	53.4%	86
About the same number of people as now	15.5%	25
No opinion	24.8%	40
Fewer people than now	0.6%	1
Significantly fewer	5.6%	9



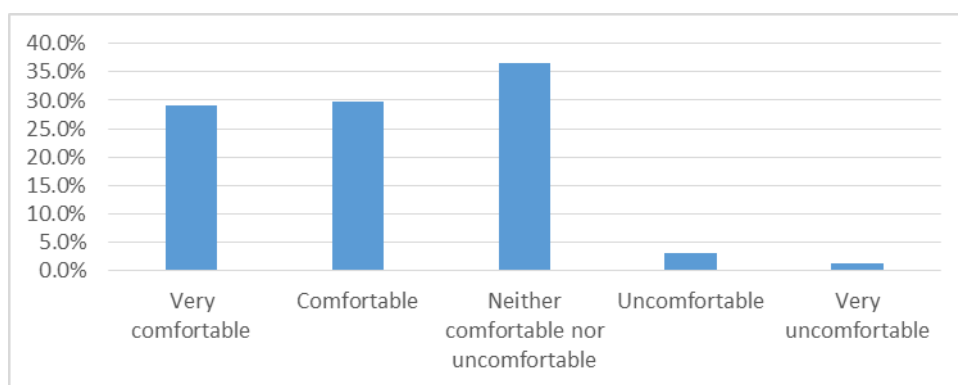
Combined, over two-thirds or 69% of respondents wished that there would either “more” or the “same” number of Gaelic speakers. Only 6% were hostile to Gaelic, wanting either “fewer” or “fewer significantly” Gaelic speakers. 25% were ambivalent to this question.

### 3.3.15 - Linguistic Tolerance

The following three questions and answers discussed concerns relating to linguistic or language tolerance. To elicit levels of tolerance, questions were asked as to how ‘comfortable’ respondents were on hearing different languages in public. There were three questions of this type overall:

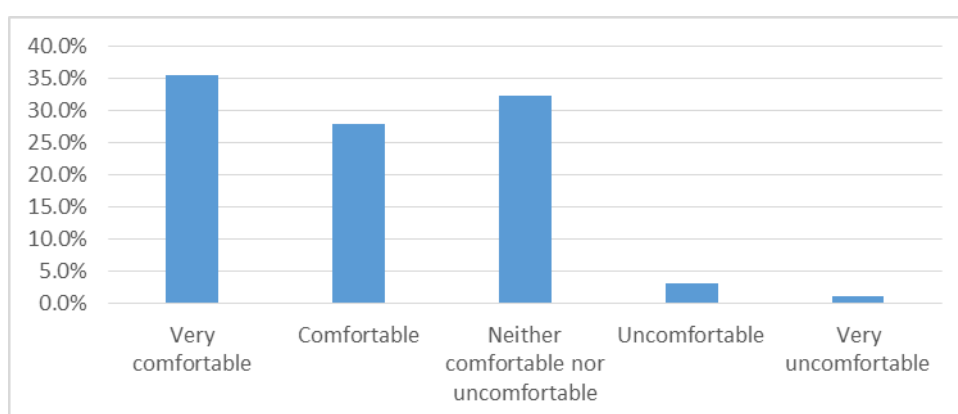
How do you feel/would you feel when/if you hear people in Scotland speaking to each other in Gaelic?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very comfortable	29.2%	47
Comfortable	29.8%	48
Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable	36.6%	59
Uncomfortable	3.1%	5
Very uncomfortable	1.2%	2



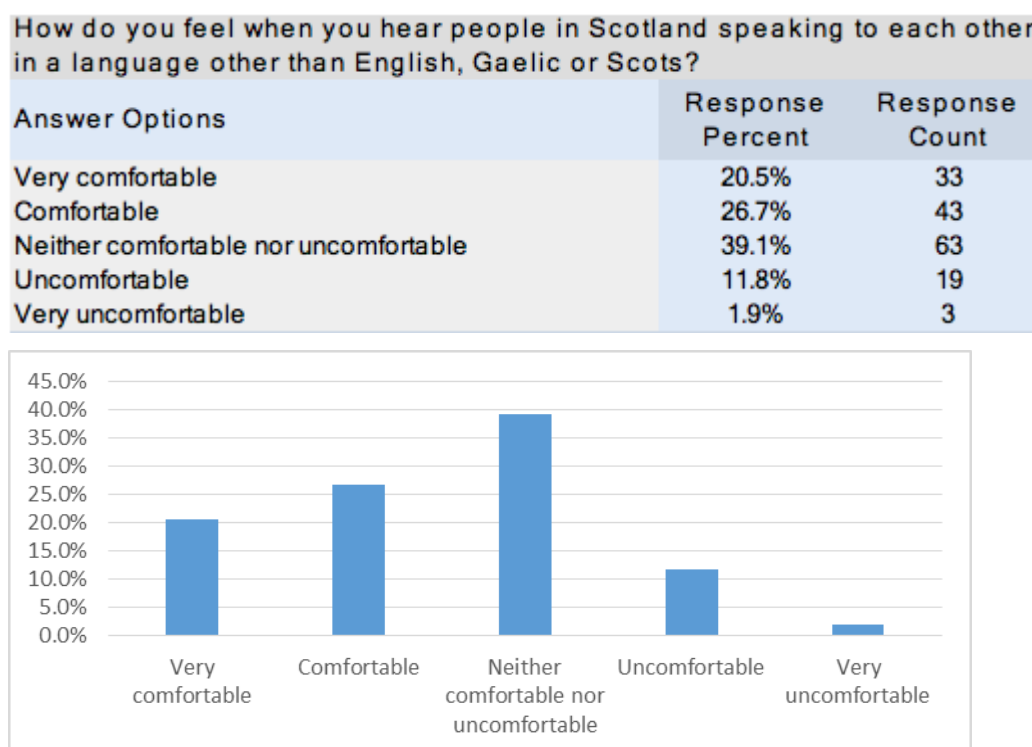
In response to “How do you feel/would you feel when/if you hear people in Scotland speaking to each other in Gaelic?” a combined figure of 59% of respondents stated that they were either ‘comfortable’ or ‘very comfortable’. However the highest proportion (37%) of participants responded with neither ‘comfortable’ nor ‘uncomfortable’ perhaps indicating indifference to this question. A small number of respondents in total (approximately 4%) were hostile to hearing Gaelic.

How do you feel when you hear people in Scotland speaking to each other in Scots (Lallans/Doric etc.)?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very comfortable	35.4%	57
Comfortable	28.0%	45
Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable	32.3%	52
Uncomfortable	3.1%	5
Very uncomfortable	1.2%	2



In response to “How do you feel when you hear people in Scotland speaking to each other in Scots (Lallans/Doric etc.)?” similar to the previous question a high proportion (63%) of those questioned reported that they were either ‘comfortable’ or ‘very comfortable’, slightly higher than the Gaelic figure at 59%. Again, around a third of

participants (32%) were neither ‘comfortable’ nor ‘uncomfortable. As with the previous question, uncomfortable or very uncomfortable responses accounted for 4.3%.

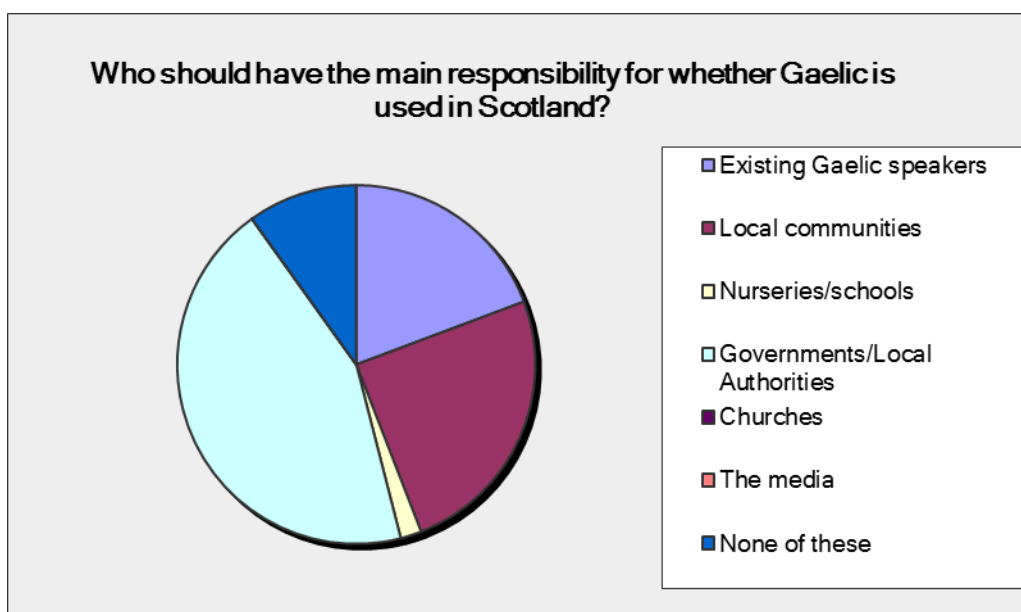


In response to “How do you feel when you hear people in Scotland speaking to each other in a language other than English, Gaelic or Scots?”, the highest proportion for a single response was ‘neither comfortable nor uncomfortable’ at 39%. A combined total of 57% were “comfortable” or “very comfortable”. Small, but potentially significant 14% of respondents stated that were either ‘uncomfortable’ or ‘very uncomfortable’ hearing languages other than English, Gaelic or Scots, indicating a degree of intolerance amongst the respondents to non-native languages of the country.

### 3.3.16 - Responsibility for Gaelic

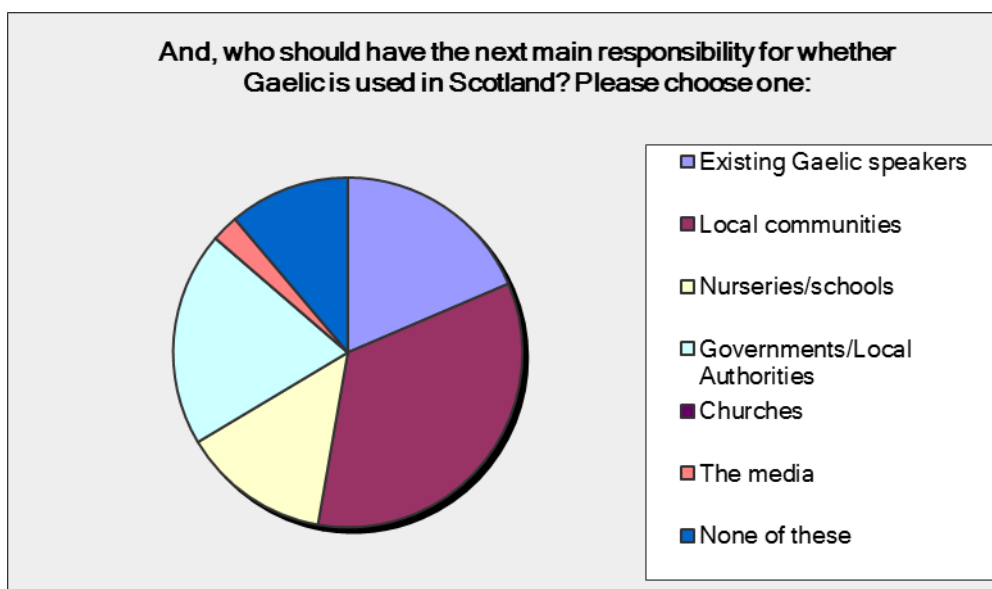
The final two questions concern ideas of who is responsible for ensuring Gaelic’s future viability.

Who should have the main responsibility for whether Gaelic is used in Scotland?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Existing Gaelic speakers	19.3%	31
Local communities	24.8%	40
Nurseries/schools	1.9%	3
Governments/Local Authorities	44.1%	71
Churches	0.0%	0
The media	0.0%	0
None of these	9.9%	16
Other (please specify)		6



Local authorities/government should be most responsible for Gaelic according the largest number of respondents with 44% selecting this option. Local communities were deemed the next most responsible at 25%. 19% of respondents indicated that it was existing Gaelic speakers themselves, with 2% selecting schools/nurseries. 10% indicated that none of these 'options' were responsible, however within the text box no other suggestions were given, although one participant did indicate that 'everyone should play their part in promoting the use of Gaelic across the whole of Scotland'. Nobody selected 'churches', which are traditionally highly associated with the language in the Gaelic 'heartlands'. Furthermore no-one selected the media as being responsible for Gaelic. Overall, from this data, it can be concluded that a strong majority of respondents (71%) believe organisations/society should be most responsible for Gaelic, while only 19% believe the primary importance lies with the individual.

And, who should have the next main responsibility for whether Gaelic is used in Scotland? Please choose one:		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Existing Gaelic speakers	18.6%	30
Local communities	34.2%	55
Nurseries/schools	13.7%	22
Governments/Local Authorities	19.9%	32
Churches	0.0%	0
The media	2.5%	4
None of these	11.2%	18
Other (please specify)		5



In response to the question ‘... who should have the next main responsibility...’, again “Local Communities” were deemed the “next main” responsible at 34%, while “Governments/Local Authorities” were deemed the “next main” responsible at 20%. The next highest scoring category for “next main” responsibility was deemed to be “existing Gaelic speakers” at 19%. 14% of respondents selected “Nurseries/schools” as the “next main” responsible. 2% (4) selected the media, while 11% indicated that ‘none’ of the choices provided were responsible.

According to the results of the two previous questions, there is a strong consensus that responsibility for Gaelic lies collectively rather than with the individual, with 71% indicating collective responsibility in question 45, while 70% made selections indicating collective responsibility in the follow up question.

### 3.4 - Qualitative Survey Data

The following box allows you to add any further comments you have about Gaelic language or Gaelic media in	
Answer Options	Response Count
	35

The final survey question afforded participants freedom to provide qualitative responses. Participants were instructed that they could use the text box to provide ‘any further comments you have about Gaelic language or Gaelic media in Scotland’. A total of thirty-five responses were received from a total of 161 who had completed the survey up to that point, from an overall participation of 186 at the beginning.

Firstly, the thirty-five responses were either labeled ‘positive/supportive’ or ‘negative/disproval’ of Gaelic or Gaelic television. From the thirty-five responses, twenty-nine were deemed of positive or supportive character and six responses were deemed of a negative or of a disapproving nature.

The qualitative data was then thematically analyzed breaking down the data into themes. The most common themes mentioned in during the qualitative question have been grouped as language learning (3.4.1), identity (3.4.2) and attitudes towards the Gaelic television channel (3.4.3) which are described a briefly analysed below:

#### 3.4.1 - Language learning

Learning the language was the most common theme, with 10 respondents mentioning this. From this, 6 of the respondents mentioned ‘children’ learning Gaelic in school: either children that were or they thought more should be/have been done in regards to Gaelic’s promotion in school. Interestingly, the language is often referred to in relation to school/children/young people with 9 mentions. The language in relation to ‘older’ people receives only one mention. While, in the past Gaelic might have more been referred to in terms of older people, the past and ‘language death’ (McEwan-Fujita (2006) discusses the theme of Gaelic ‘language death’ spread by the media), the respondents completing this survey seem to associate Gaelic more with youth, school

and children. While older native Gaelic speakers are dying, they are being replaced with children going through Gaelic medium education (3,583 current in the system as of 2014) (gov.scot). With a high proportion of those working in the media of young age (soc.gov: 2008) there is also the question of how much of a role BBC Alba is playing a role in changing the perception of Gaelic in terms of demographics, despite the actual number of active/fluent speakers of different ages.

Three respondents described learning the language themselves, whilst one respondent explicitly stated that TV was being used as a resource in order to achieve learning objectives. Conversely, another respondent stated ‘viewers gain no understanding of Gaelic from Alba's football coverage’ and suggested ‘perhaps by teaching a few words during each game’. One respondent mentioned ‘new learners’ and the difficulties of achieving language revival success outside the Highlands and Islands, and also within the classroom. Two respondents wished for Gaelic to become ‘compulsory’, whilst one person warned against this.

#### **3.4.2 - Gaelic symbolic of Scottishness / Identity / Heritage**

A total of 12 participants from 35 described Gaelic’s importance in terms of heritage, with 10 relating it to ‘Scottish’ heritage, or Scotland, with 3 relating it to ‘Highland/the West/the North’. Of those, one participant described how it is a ‘language for the Highlands’ and not of all Scotland. Another described how there should be ‘more emphasis outwith the Highlands and Islands’, whilst two other respondents described Gaelic in relation to ‘The West Coast’ and ‘up north’. Overall, from this small sample, Gaelic appears to be connected more frequently to Scottish identity and heritage, rather than specifically Highland/Island identity.

#### **3.4.3 - Attitudes towards BBC Alba**

A total of seven respondents referred specifically to BBC Alba during qualitative data collection. Most mentioned the football coverage, although three participants mentioned other programming, with two participants stating that it was not accessible because of lack of understanding, with one person suggesting Alba should be more accessible ‘like S4C’ with a ‘red button option’, whilst conversely another respondent cited the benefits of existing subtitles in terms of being able to access programming

other than football. Another described the Gaelic channel as ‘pathetic’, suggesting existing sports coverage should be moved to BBC1.

Although, BBC Alba receives annual “high approval levels” of around 73-75% amongst Gaelic-speaking audiences (MG: Alba 2016) and a majority of the general population consistently consider BBC Alba worthy of the license fee (Ofcom: 2014), animosity directed towards the channel is not uncommon. Worldwide, frequently minority languages do tend to suffer from hostility from a proportion of the majority language ‘community’. In some regards, it must be accepted that a proportion of the majority language population are always going to hold negative and hostile views towards the minority language and community, which can appear to receive ‘special treatment’. Julia de Bres in her (2008) thesis “Planning for Tolerability: Promoting Positive Attitudes and Behaviours Towards The Māori Language Among Non-Māori New Zealanders ” examines the attitudes of non-Māori speakers, the importance of this population, and ultimately, what impact this may have on efforts to maintain and revitalise Māori in New Zealand. Her analysis of language regeneration policy in New Zealand, combined with the situations in Wales and Catalonia revealed that ‘planning for tolerability’ was ongoing in all situations. Given this growing policy activity, de. Bres concludes that planning for tolerability deserves more attention from researchers and policymakers than it had been getting.

TNS BMRB have recorded generally favourable approval ratings over a number of years amongst the general population of Scotland (Ofcom: 2014), however if social media is consulted it may appear that a majority of those engaging in comment maintain negative views. The researcher understands issues with using social media in social research and there is a understanding that “online feelings are over-stated and that interest in a topic may actually not translate into further actions (value–action gap)” (Social Media Research Group: 2016).

#### **Survey Question 49**

This question allowed participants to provide questionnaire survey feedback, however a small number of respondents used this as an additional opportunity to provide further information in relation to the Gaelic language and to Gaelic television:



“I wish we were taught Gaelic from a primary school age rather than French/Spanish.”

“I hope this survey carries more weight in making Gaelic more accessible throughout Scotland. Living in central belt I had no knowledge of Gaelic throughout School. I do hope that any future children of mine are granted the right to have...Gaelic language engrained in their curriculum.”

“More Scots please and less Gaelic with English”

“I hope this survey leads to a stronger Gaelic culture.”

### **3.5 - Survey Questionnaire Data Summary – key findings**

- In total 186 BBC Alba viewers responded to the survey. The overall cohort was overwhelmingly male dominant, but also representative of football fans in Scotland. The ages of respondents peaked in the 35-44 age bracket, but almost matched by 25-34 and 45-54 year olds. Under 18 and over 65-year olds were particularly under represented. Participants were largely derived from areas of Scotland outwith the traditional Gàidhealtachd, with nominal responses from other areas. Respondents were highly educated (above levels nationally) with 45% of respondents having higher education qualifications.
- Two-thirds of respondents had no-Gaelic abilities at all, with only 10% having Gaelic abilities beyond the “the odd-word”.
- 80% had heard Gaelic on television. 16% had heard Gaelic nowhere in the last 12 months, while up to 11% had heard Gaelic in public. 38% had heard Gaelic less often than once a month, but more than once a year. 40% however had seen Gaelic in public more often than once a month.
- Football was by far the most watched genre on Alba, watched by 99%, however music and documentaries were also watched by 24% and 23% respectively.

- Overall, significant numbers of respondents had not accessed Gaelic via other forms of media, although 16% of the overall cohort claimed to have accessed Gaelic radio.
- The cohort equally agreed and disagreed to having learnt new things from BBC Alba. 73% of respondents stated that BBC Alba was worth the license fee. 63% agreed that high standards were reached. Almost four-fifths agree that a Gaelic service was important in the digital age. Participants overall suggested that BBC Alba had not improved their understanding of Gaelic words or Gaelic skills, though significantly - 34% of the overall cohort (overwhelmingly non-Gaelic speaking) suggested it made them want to learn Gaelic or improve their Gaelic.
- Most participants supported the rights of Gaelic speakers to use Gaelic in court, with interactions with local authorities, at public meetings either in ‘Gaelic-speaking’ areas or throughout Scotland. Gaelic was also supported on road signs, public services and education.
- Interestingly, 30% of the cohort, despite little Gaelic abilities or background, claimed they would be ‘very likely’ or ‘fairly likely’ to send their children to GME.
- Statistically, learning French or Spanish was considered more ‘worthwhile’ than learning Gaelic.
- 69% of respondents stated Gaelic was either ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ important part of Scotland’s cultural heritage. Even more (86%) thought the same for Gaelic and the Highlands and Islands, while 25% considered it important to their own cultural heritage.
- Encouraging Gaelic was ‘important’ or ‘very important’ according to 63%

- Despite pessimistic outlooks for Gaelic within academia - a majority of participants believe Gaelic will not decline significantly and even grow. Even more (69%) hoped for similar outcomes.
- Local authorities & government should be “most” responsible for Gaelic, while only 19% believing current Gaelic speakers should be most responsible. Responsibility was also placed with “local communities”.
- Learning Gaelic was a common topic when given freedom of choice to provide comments. Gaelic identities were also a common theme related to perceived sense of *Scottishness*.
- Throughout the survey, including in the comments section a small minority articulated hostility towards both Gaelic and BBC Alba. Negativity about Gaelic’s position in contemporary Scottish life is apparent amongst a minority, which can also be seen by a vocal minority on social media.

Despite the Gaelic language’s *very* minority status in Scottish society, the language’s position in contemporary Scottish society is at times vibrantly, and at other times, bitterly, debated. This survey has demonstrated that amongst sport supporters, particularly football fans, views towards Gaelic and BBC Alba are overwhelmingly (though, not unanimously) positive and supportive from those who watch the channel. Indeed, in many instances this survey has revealed that non-Gaelic speaking sports fans are more supportive of the Gaelic language than those from the general public as a whole, when compared to the results of other research, such as West & Graham (2010) and O’ Hanlon & Paterson (2013).

On reflection there are two methodological issues which should be noted. The fourth option during the language rights section of the questionnaire might have been eliminated or changed. This response carries too much ambiguity - not specifying what ‘sometimes’ actually means in practice. The other methodological point of concern is epistemologically related: following a dropout rate of 13% at around two thirds through the survey, are those who continued with the survey until the end likely to display more attitudinal positivity towards the topic of this survey? Conversely,

are those who maintain hostile attitudes more likely answer with most conviction? In conclusion, it cannot be ascertained whether these concerns are accurate or not, however this researcher believes that it is likely and may have impact upon the results of the survey. Ritchie & Lewis (2009) recommends this sort of researcher reflection and it is claimed that such transparency adds rigour to overall research conclusions.

This concludes analysis of the survey questionnaire in isolation. Combined with findings from Chapter Four (interviews), a concluding chapter will seek to examine quantitative and qualitative elements concurrently. During this chapter, research findings will be cross-examined and analysed, complimenting and possibly also contrasting each other, strengthening both validity and reliability.

## **Chapter 4 – The Qualitative Element – Survey Questionnaire**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter will focus on the qualitative element of this research project. The second of two research phases comprises semi-structured interviews with a small group of interviewees. The interviewees were sampled using the same methods as the survey cohort, with a number participating in both studies. All interviews were conducted by the author at a variety of locations across Scotland. Following a pilot stage, ten individuals were interviewed and it is the data obtained from this group which are presented for analysis in this thesis. This chapter will firstly detail the methodological process (4.2), followed by an examination of the qualitative data gathered in a data analysis section (4.4) which has been thematically arranged according to Grounded Theory (Glaser: 1998 [originally devised in 1967]). The data analysis section will comprise the thematically analysed data supported by relevant literature and previously conducted studies in the fields of media, sociology, sociolinguistics and other associated academic fields. Summaries and overall conclusions are then drawn and described in Chapter 5.

### **4.2 - Methodology**

The qualitative stage of data collection (interviews) was conducted after the quantitative element (survey questionnaires) in order to complement and strengthen the results obtained using the survey questionnaire stage. Qualitative research ‘focuses directly on meaning and interpretation’ (Ritchie & Lewis: 2003, pp 13) and assists researchers to reach further than statistics are capable of, gaining more in-depth understandings of questions which have been posed. It is a valid sociological approach when attempting to unearth the social attitudes and beliefs of the people interviewed (Oliver: 2002). The analysis method deployed in this study are largely informed by approaches associated with Grounded Theory (GT). GT is the generation of theory from research data obtained. It is a general form of research procedures leading to the emergence of conceptual categories and is a type of thematic data analysis.. Although the data analysis is largely informed by GT it could not be described as GT in its pure form with theory deriving not only from interview data, but also from previous conducted research and literature. The research methodology

described in this chapter encompasses the methods used to gather data and coding techniques deployed in order to achieve effective data analysis

#### **4.2.1 – Choice of method**

Qualitative data collection in form of semi-structured interviews were considered the most appropriate way to complement the questionnaire survey element. This second stage of data collection was employed in order to fulfil the aims and objectives of this research, and also in an attempt to mediate investigator bias which often has a strong influence over the collection and interpretation of the data obtained in the social sciences. Face-to-face interviews were selected in the hope that the outcome would be more or less loosely structured conversations. This method of talking to people first hand was important in order not only to be able to dissect interview data and extract meaning from individual statements, but also to determine an overall point of view.

Individual interviews are arguably the most widely used method in qualitative research. Their key feature is the ‘ability to provide an undiluted focus on the individual’ (Ritchie, Lewis: 2003, pp120). Interviews provide an opportunity for detailed investigation of individual perspectives, for in-depth understanding of personal context (Robson: 2002), illuminating environmental context. May (2001: 36) describes the benefits of semi-structured interviews in social research: ‘interviews yield rich insights into people’s biographies, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings’. Ritchie & Lewis (2003: preface XIV) describe qualitative research as a blend of ‘empirical investigation and creative discovery’, and also a mixture of ‘science and art’. Although it is recognised that a ‘delicate fusion can leave unease about the safety of its use or worries about its methods of conduct’. However, the adoption of rigorous design and execution can help social scientists capture a reality in terms of ‘social constructs, beliefs and behaviours’ (ibid).

#### **4.2.2 – Influencing studies**

In terms of both methodology and subject matter this research took considerable influence from Mairead Moriarty’s (2007) PhD thesis: *Minority language television as an effective mechanism of language policy: A comparative study of the Irish and Basque sociolinguistic contexts*. Moriarty’s research investigated the effect of television on language attitudes and language practices on Irish speaking university

students. Concentrating on the examples of TG4 in Ireland and ETB in the Basque Country – the research indicates that the availability of minority language media has altered the position of the minority language amongst particular groups. In the case of Irish speaking university students who are not L1 Irish speakers Moriarty found that a limited percentage of the participants reported a direct increase in their Irish language use as a direct result of watching TG4, and stated that ‘there is a clear identifiable change in the way they perceive the language’. She discovered that the presence of MLs on the media has on actual language practices is indirect and is mediated through language attitudes. On this basis the thesis concludes that the availability of the media in MLs is of benefit to the language revitalisation, particularly from the point of view of encouraging linguistic normalisation.

In terms of the aims and objectives no other study is more closely related to the research of this thesis. As a result of Moriarty’s successful deployment of a tripartite methodology which included both quantitative and qualitative methods in the form of questionnaires, focus groups and media diaries, this author decided to implement a similar methodology, adopting a variation of two of the three methods used by Moriarty reflecting the Masters level scope of this research, rather than that of a PhD project.. This was decided in April 2016 at a supervisory meeting and the methodological approach retains both qualitative and quantitative methods, without the use of focus-groups as deployed by Moriarty.

### **4.2.3 - Research design process**

#### **4.2.3.1 – Ethics**

As described in the previous chapter a number of minor ethical considerations were apparent. Ethics approval for the qualitative element of the research was sought in conjunction with approval for the quantitative element, although there were specific considerations for each element. Clarification was specifically sought regarding “issues of safety, confidentiality and security” in terms of interview location.

Furthermore the inclusion of the statement “I wish to remain anonymous / I wish to be identified” on consent forms was added as a legal requirement which was specific to the qualitative element. Following amendments, the submission was thereafter redrafted, submitted and punctually approved by the committee.

#### **4.2.3.2 - Choice of participant**

As with the quantitative element, the selected cohort was deemed appropriate in order to best represent a general BBC Alba audience: this is the average viewer, irrespective of language ability, nor connection to Gaelic language or culture. It is well documented that BBC Alba, almost since its launch in 2008 has broadcast significant amount of live sport with over 50% of the audience viewing the channel for its sporting output (MG Alba: 2014). The most watched sports on BBC Alba are football and rugby (ibid). It was therefore deemed by this author that it is sports fans, regardless of ability or connection to Gaelic language that can best represent the average BBC Alba viewer and it is this broad group which were selected for inclusion in this study.

#### **4.2.3.3 – Interview design**

The interviews conducted could be described “semi-structured informal interviews”. The interview design could be most credited to the writings of Jane Richie & Jane Lewis (2003) although the content and subject matter of the interviews were informed largely by the data drawn from the quantitative element of this research. Interviews of this type were considered the most appropriate method to extract the data desired.

As previously mentioned, the interview design was largely informed on data gathered during the quantitative element of this research. More specifically, the questionnaire provided the backbone of the interview guide thematically. As per Grounded Theory (GT) groups of survey questions were merged into themes (i.e motivations for television consumption/experience of Gaelic language) which emerged from the data collected, and interview questions that were previously closed or restricted to numerical choice were transformed into research questions or themes which allowed participants to provide fuller, more elaborative answers, expanding on the quantitative data already gathered

Furthermore, following on from analysis of questionnaire-survey, groups of data which provided ‘interesting’ or unexpected results were especially focused on, and these topics became increasingly emphasised in the interview guide in order to draw-out further information from participants.



Overall, the questionnaire design and interview guide formed rather organically from the research questions set and thereafter from the developing themes arising in the questionnaire survey analysis. In order to avoid ambiguity, the interview guide was not a list of questions, but rather a guide in order to direct the researcher through the topics of interest. Questions as written in the interview guide did not always materialise to questions in the interview itself, and were subject to change as the interview progressed, as intended. A copy of the interview guide can be found in the appendices.

#### **4.2.3.4 - Participant Enrolment**

The enrolment of the participants for the qualitative element was largely a spin-off from the enrolment of participants for the survey questionnaires. With around a quarter of those participating in the surveys leaving contact details (email addresses) there were around 70 contactable participants who indicated a willingness to also undertake interviews. Emails were sent to this group; however only six people responded equating to a response rate of 9%. It was initially considered that the number of people contacted via email would be sufficient to cover the interviewees required; however it became clear that further enrolment would be required. It was decided to re-advertise on internet based forums. Through re-advertisement, a further eight responded. Fourteen had communicated, and eventually interviews were conducted with ten people plus one pilot interview. All participants were incentivised with a £20 “Love2Shop” shopping voucher and given the opportunity to have their travelling expenses covered. No leaflets were distributed immediately prior to the qualitative stage as this was deemed an efficient means of recruitment based upon the experience of the survey recruitment stage.

#### **4.2.4 – Interview experience**

Interviews were arranged predominantly via email; however on certain occasions when deemed appropriate, telephone communication was initiated. Interviewees were given three interview location options – at Glasgow University, at Edinburgh University or a place of their own choice. Participants selected a variety of these three choices, however because of a communication breakdown interviews were not conducted at Edinburgh University, but rearranged for Edinburgh Central Library – a location in proximity to Edinburgh University. All-in-all interviews were conducted

at various locations in Edinburgh, with 3 interviews conducted at Glasgow University. All interviews took place between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2016.

The interviews were each allotted between 30 minutes and one hour, and with most taking less than 45 minutes. All interviews were recorded using a laptop computer with an internal microphone using *Quicktime* software. With professional recording equipment not being used meant that interviews were only conducted in places with very little background noise. This could have posed a problem but as suitable quiet locations were obtained this did not pose any difficulties. Following recording the files containing the interviews were saved within a folder on a password controlled computer, whilst a duplicate was made of each interview and then saved onto a secure USB drive.

#### **4.2.5 – Data Analysis Methods**

##### **4.2.5.1 – Transcription**

Once all interviews had been conducted attention was then turned to manual transcription of the interviews into text data. This was conducted using *Microsoft Word* from *iTunes* audio playback. Transcription of data was a time consuming task taking almost a month to complete.

##### **4.2.5.2 - Coding**

Following transcription the text data was ready for coding. In thematic analysis the task of the researcher is to identify a number of themes which adequately reflects their textual data. Therefore ‘coding’ of all transcribed data was necessary. Coding is essential applying codes to various pieces of text data. Coding of the data was sometimes done line-by-line, but on occasion fairly large chunks of data became coded items and the data was grouped under various themes which emerged.

Through thematic coding, it was possible to separate relevant from irrelevant data, and chunks of data together could be then grouped together under themes. It was extremely important that coding was led by the themes that occurred in the data, abiding by the basic principles of the discovery and emergence of data (Silverman: 2010). Data, which constituted ‘relevant’ data, was anything that came under one or more of these headings (i.e. “quality of programming”, “nationalism & Gaelic”, “linguistic landscape”). Data was then comprehensively broken down through the

process of elimination. At various stages, it was important to alter and modify the codes and themes as new ideas developed as the researcher become more familiar with the data and better understandings emerged.

As themes became more sophisticated external literature was integrated in order to substantiate or indeed contrast with themes and theories which were developing. This provided contextual confirmation of phenomena that may be occurring, giving strength to the overall research findings.

Finally, but importantly several numerical tables, graphs and charts were added. Although, the qualitative element only represents a small number of participants, their inclusion is intended to support sections of text. Indeed, Sultan suggests:

*There is no reason why researchers cannot give numerical indications of the incidence and prevalence of each theme in their data. For example, what percentage of participants mention things which refer to a particular theme* (2011:, 28)

#### **4.2.3 - Participant Background Information**

Interviews were conducted over a period of two weeks, however in one particular day half of the interviews were conducted in Edinburgh. In terms of geographical location, all interviews were conducted and all interviewees were based in the central belt of Scotland. This geographical weighting is somewhat different from the survey data whereby a number (7) originally came from 'Gàidhealtachd' areas or indeed from outside Scotland (21). The central belt bias is due to two independent factors: the first being the researcher based in the Glasgow area; and secondly those responding to interview requests all residing in the central belt.

In terms of gender males heavily outweighed females by nine to one. This reflects football supporters in Scotland with 90% of those responding to the National Football Survey (2013) recorded as male.

In terms of age, the youngest interviewee was 26, with the oldest being in his 60s, while other participants were various ages between 35 and 60.

All participants had watched BBC Alba for football coverage, whilst a number had also watched other sports programmes.

None of the participants claimed to be ‘Gaelic speakers’, although most had the ability to understand and speak some simple words and phrases.

All participants have been given (tagged/initialed) pseudonyms.

#### **4.4 - Data Analysis**

The interview data is hereby thematically arranged.

##### **4.4.1 - Initial viewing motivations**

Unsurprisingly, considering the sampling that was undertaken in order to gather participants, this theme is dominated by sporting interest. At times other influences were apparent, however the dominance through the attraction of football on BBC Alba for the participants is undeniable.

DW (pseudonym) reflects on how football has drawn him towards BBC Alba:

*Well probably when they started doing the football. I think that's when it came to a lot of people's attention. There was (sic) games on. I'm a big football fan and there's a tsunami of football coverage out there. Particularly English football and there's just so much of it, but basically when Hibs were on BBC Alba – that's when I would watch it, and of course we've (Hibs) been on a lot over the past couple years! (DW).*

Similarly the next participant describes similar motivations:

*Yeah, well I'm not a Gaelic speaker so...emm...actually you know, I've got four children and it's rare that I get to my television! But to be honest – it's just the football and it's my team playing in that league that effectively that has taken me into that world (EM).*

For EM, again it is football which provided an introduction to BBC Alba and although there seems to other issues of access, the language of the channel doesn't seem to be it.

Again for the next respondent it is football coverage which has taken him to the channel:

*I first started watching BBC Alba a good few years ago – I remember Hearts were playing somebody. And I hate not being able to not watch the football*

*live and I think what's great about it is that it's all about the football and you get the half time interviews and they're good interviews – you get to get an insight into the lives of different players. It does very much focus on the teams that don't usually get much publicity. I like the fact that it's quite clean cut – there's not much mucking about, there's no adverts (sic). The way they structure it, the way they show it - it's perfectly good (NW).*

NW praises the simplicity of the channel and its focus on the football itself, but also praises the interviews. The following respondent (KD) provides a slightly different take on the channel:

*As soon as I realised that BBC was covering Hibs games. You don't get all the rubbish you get from other channels – you get the game and that's what you want (KD).*

KD shows appreciation for the absence of extra 'rubbish' (assumed meaning from context – pundit analysis/interviews with so-called experts) which usually comes with football preferring BBC Alba's coverage.

OW also cites football and specifically his own team for attracting him to the channel:

*I wasn't very aware of BBC Alba until they got the football rights for the Scottish Championship. That's when I really started to take a keen interest in the channel, but to be honest I've not really seen much of their other programmes – that's pretty much it – when ma teams oan. They have a lot of rights for the football league that ma team plays in.*

Another football supporter describes how he first came across the channel, but unlike others it was not as a result of live football coverage, but rather a documentary about a famous football manager.

*I first become aware of BBC Alba through BBC iPlayer and I think there was a documentary on Jock Stein a couple of years, and that's when I become aware that some programmes were in English and some were in Gaelic. And it was that point that I noticed that Alba transmit football matches, in some cases, even live. So that was an obvious advantage so I just basically watched it, eh (DH)*

DH reflects how on his first experiences of BBC Alba: he found out that the channel does broadcast an amount of English – in fact having the understanding that BBC Alba broadcast programmes in both English and Gaelic, seemed to encourage him to watch more of the channel discovering live footballing coverage after this too.

Similarly, another participant – FG – praised another football related documentary but discovered BBC Alba following a dislike of the main stream (*‘normal’*) channels:

*I don't like generally watching the BBC because I think they're so biased – particularly normal channels – they're so anti Hibs, in my opinion, that's why I started watching BBC Alba. And then started watching games that weren't Hibs, it was fantastic. Then I saw the BBC Alba guys at Easter Road, obviously doing their interview stuff and now I always check to see what's on BBC Alba. Because there's some absolute gems – the thing about the Famous Five was another one, the documentary was excellent. This programme was probably half in English, half in Gaelic. Probably mostly in English, I remember it vividly, emm. That's when I first became aware that it wasn't just in Gaelic. That's how it all started for me (FG)*

FG dislike of the *‘normal’* channels derives from his belief concerning their footballing bias. BBC Alba presumably has avoided such bias. FG's comments are generally praising of the channel.

RG reflects on his first experience of watching Alba:

*I started watching it because I used to go to Belladrum every year – I used to watch the highlights. Just flicking through the channels and noticed it, and then since it's more been watching the football. I watch the shinty, purely because of the time I spent in Fort William and I always know people on it. Overall, I think they do the football very well (RG)*

Differently to a number of other respondents RG's introduction to BBC Alba was through music coverage, watching the music festival highlights. Also, shinty coverage interested RG because of local and personal connections

WY had a long history of watching Gaelic television, predating the establishment of BBC Alba:

*I started watching Gaelic television a long time ago. That wisnae Alba – must have been 20 year ago, more than that. I'm sure it was a learning programme, targeted at children. If you dunno the language, then it helps you out. But the new Alba – eh – BBC Alba – I would say that I've been watching it for five, six year. Mainly the football, but just happened to pick up it up, Eòrpa one night and if I know it's on I'll watch for it, and of course you can always read the banner along the bottom...(pause) [I: subtitles?] Subtitles, aye. A lot ai it anyhoo. It was, trying to, trying to pick some ai the words up (WY)*

WY's interest in Gaelic television clearly pre-dated BBC Alba. Although his main interest is declared as football, he had a clear interest in learning some Gaelic and also mentions children's programmes as way assisting with language learning. He also mentions *Eòrpa* – the highly successful and popular current affairs programme broadcast on Alba and previously broadcast on BBC2.

DM reflects on first experiences of BBC Alba through watching football, but how this then lead to interest in other programming:

*Yes absolutely, I hadn't really heard anything about it until I heard that Hibs/Hearts were on BBC Alba. It was certainly the football that drew me in. Because they now have the rugby and football on, it probably gets more exposure. But if you focus on the music side of it, it probably doesn't get the exposure that the sport does (DM)*

Collectively, the respondents overwhelmingly cited sports and particularly football as the initial attraction to BBC Alba, but not absolutely. A small number of respondents also cited music, children's and current affairs programming as first experiences of BBC Alba. The domination of sport amongst the group is certainly not surprising considering the sampling methods; however responses following initial viewing experiences will further reveal the journey that a non-Gaelic speaking viewer embarks upon after the initial engagement with Gaelic television and in what ways this had shaped their attitudes to Gaelic language and culture.

#### 4.4.2 - Beyond Sporting Coverage

All participants have experience of sports on BBC Alba in common, however a number of participants also stated that they had watched other programmes. Some as a result of firstly watching football and then discovering other programmes, whilst a minority had experience of watching BBC Alba and indeed other Gaelic television prior to viewing sporting coverage. OW describes Gaelic television viewing journey:

*I first started watching BBC Alba when they first got the rights to show some Scottish Championship Football matches. I'm a big football fan and my team have been on it for the past couple seasons. That's what drew me in, initially. From there it's opened up a range of programmes I'd probably not have watched. Particularly, there's some documentaries that I've been really interested in - sports related as well, but they do put a really good documentary together, and even though it's in Gaelic I can still get quite a bit from it (OW)*

OW describes his transition from football to documentaries. His interest and enjoyment of the documentaries appears to have come by surprise considering Gaelic is not a language he understands, however the subtitles provide accessibility for English speakers. OW's journey from football to other programmes is perhaps typical but it is certainly not the only type of journey to Gaelic television that non-Gaelic speakers take.

NW – who 'hate(s) not being able to not watch the football live' describes some other interest in BBC Alba:

*I've watched a few of the musical things. But sometimes I'm flicking through the channels and I will stop at BBC Alba and see what's on and I've got connections with Lewis and sometimes you see Lewis on which is great. I think the Western Isles are beautiful. But I've my middle daughter who goes to the Gaelic school – she's watched it for Katie Morag (NW).*

NW indicates personal connections with the Western Isles, particularly Lewis and its beauty as an attraction, but also because his daughter attends Gaelic school. NW was the only participant revealing a Gaelic connection through a family member in Gaelic education. BBC Alba does tend to broadcast many programmes featuring heavily



Highland and Island landscapes such as *Eileanan Fraoich* and *Tir Teanga* consolidating a sense of *Gàidhealach* identity.

Indeed, another participant (FG) replies with an answer about the Isle of Skye when asked about football on the channel:

Researcher: *Is it mostly football related programmes you tend to watch?*

FG: *Eh, not exclusively. Eh, I now check the channel almost daily to see what's on. Some documentaries, em, and I've been to Skye for the first time in my life last year and I thought it was beautiful. There's whole a country up there that I know precious little about* (FG)

WY indicates a strong interest in Gaelic beyond his love of football:

*Generally – the football obviously, but I've always had an interest in learning some of the Gaelic, at least phrases. Ah, but I just feel – it could be better – subtitles – then the Gaelic word – to see what was just being said. I would like to see a wee bit of the Gaelic, alongside the English, just to learn a bit ya know* (WY)

WY articulates a desire to learn Gaelic from the channel but indicates that this could be made easier through the use of some Gaelic subtitles, rather than have all subtitles automatically in English. As already discussed in the prior chapters WY's views are reflect the findings of Dr. Eithne O' Connell that majority language subtitles on minority language broadcasts are of no benefit to acquisition of the minority language in question, conversely further supporting majority language acquisition and language prestige.

Not all participants such as WY an interest in learning Gaelic using BBC Alba. RG describes what set up he would prefer:

*Being a non-Gaelic speaker, I don't know if anyone else would have said it, but even tho I know it's a Gaelic channel, I wish there was a wee red button for English commentary. You know, when they're speaking to the co-commentator – they're speaking English anyway. You can watch the football without understanding the commentary, but sometimes I turn the sound down.*

*I tried it on the tablet, watching it, and putting the radio on but it doesn't come in sync (RG)*

RG describes a desire for a 'wee red button' in order to understand commentary during football broadcasts. Such a button (feature) exists for rugby broadcasts whereby the viewer can press such a button and have the commentary in Gaelic replaced by alternative English commentary. For some critics, this feature is controversial as BBC Alba is a supposed dedicated Gaelic channel now broadcasting some programmes almost entirely in English. However there would be support from some as demonstrated by WY. Despite the interest of some non-Gaelic speakers to increase the amount of English on BBC Alba, MG Alba released a statement in September 2014 stating that this feature would not be extended to football broadcasts (WHFP: 2014).

Another respondent, FG, describes what else he would like to see beyond the football coverage he already consumes:

*I'm constantly looking on there to see what's on. I like politics too, but I don't remember seeing much politics on Alba, that I could understand, umm, but that's the kind of things that I tend to like (FG)*

BBC Alba does have a limited amount of political programming with special programmes *An Taghadh* during elections, and referendums; the daily news programme *An Là* is often politics heavy. These programmes tend to broadcast more live material than most programmes and thus tend to have less subtitling and are therefore less accessible to those with little Gaelic. *Eòrpa* – as mentioned by other respondents – is a popular current affairs programme which often deals with European/international, as well as domestic politics. Its popularity beyond its quality can be credited to the subtitling and dubbing policies

WY again laments the lack of accessibility:

*My granddaughter there, she can watch the cartoons, and it's in Gaelic, and she gets transfixed. But the words come oot quite quick and it's just a pity that she couldnae be told what that went...meant, or an adult could say, because she could say to me "what does that mean" and it's Gaelic so I can make a bit of sense out of it, but I don't really understand most of it, ya know (WY)*

WY here is advocating for some more tangible learning tools to be available whilst his granddaughter consumes Gaelic programming. MG Alba do offer Gaelic learning tools on LearnGaelic.net but WY's comments maybe suggest that accessibility and simply knowledge that these tools exists.

Another respondent – OW – describes his consumption of BBC Alba:

*I thought it was quite unusual that the broadcaster has rights for the games but I was delighted that I was able to see them, although it was quite surprising. I've seen a couple of documentaries. They're quite good – mainly football related, though. They must get a good, eh, budget for sport on that channel because all the best programmes seem to be sport (OW).*

OW describes his pleasure at being able to watch football and some other programmes on BBC Alba indicating surprise at amount of sport on the channel suggesting that the channel must have a large budget. BBC Alba does broadcast a large amount of sport which arguably has little connection to what some might argue as 'traditional' Gaelic culture. There is also much misconception through media misinformation about the amount of funding MG Alba operates on. The model to show a large proportion of sport is however both common and intentional as it is on comparable channels such as the Irish language channel TG4, the Basque broadcaster EITB or the Welsh channel S4C and is fact a way of producing fairly cheap programmes and also a way of fulfilling the requirements imposed by the BBC Trust to exceed viewership levels at almost ten times the number of Gaelic speakers (see 2.3.5.2). This model also has the added benefit for non-Gaelic speakers of providing access to programming that would not normally be broadcast on majority language television stations.

#### **4.4.3 - Awareness / lack of awareness of non-sporting programming**

All participants have experience of watching football on BBC Alba in common, however not every participant stated that they had watched any other programmes on the channel. A number of participants cited lack of awareness of various programmes for this. DW describes how he discovered programmes of interest on the Gaelic channel:

*Researcher: So is BBC Alba's reputation growing amongst football fans for doing football related programmes?*

DW: *Well, I have to say that I wasn't aware of those other programmes, but the Famous Five programme – my mate actually knew the presenter, I'm not sure what his name was, some guy who used to be a very good footballer himself, apparently...it wasn't you was it? –*

Researcher: No, no (laughs)

DW: *So, it's that small world, so I saw it advertised on Hibs.net (football fans forum) rather than directly from the channel itself (DW)*

DW indicates that he discovered programmes of interest on Alba in two ways. One through interview forums which frequents online, while the other way is through word of mouth.

The next respondent also talks about awareness:

*Now I have a few relatives that speak Gaelic, but to be honest, I don't know if they know what's on the channel – I don't know how well it's advertised. I don't know how well the channel promotes itself – to tell people what's actually on... That's the challenge for every channel I suppose – how do you get more awareness... I suppose it's about using every resource available to tell people how what the station does (NW)*

NW describes the difficulties of promotion, indicating that people do not know what is on the channel. Another respondent (EM) also describes why he has not watched too much else of BBC Alba other than football suggesting a number of theories:

*Eh not really, because em I've not really been aware of watching it and something coming up saying, some kind of trailer for something else, that I can really remember at all. I don't know if that's because there aren't any, or because or it wasn't something that appealed, or...I genuinely can't remember. Because I'm not a Gaelic speaker, I'm kind of watching it and your brain kind of fuzzes out a little bit, because it's a language you don't understand and then you may hear a bit of commentating in English, so you can pick up again. Other than that it tends to be the picture that you're seeing and you're not quite aware of the words around it and whether there's been after programmes mentioned in Gaelic, I've not really been aware of it (EM)*

EM suggests a number of reasons why he perhaps hasn't watched more Gaelic television. All such perspectives are valid for the purpose of this research, however it could be suggested that BBC Alba have indeed attempted to address some of issues that EM highlights. EM states *"I've not really been aware of watching it and something coming up saying, some kind of trailer for something else"*. During football programmes as of 2016, and indeed before this time adverts for other sporting fixtures are broadcast at the end of play, either before or after post-match player interviews. These adverts are usually a mix of Gaelic commentary with on screen English, with some on-screen Gaelic also. These adverts tend to advertise football and rugby broadcasts but don't currently extend to other types of programming. Also, immediately following sports broadcast BBC Alba does tend to advert related programming. For example, the programme DW mentioned *The Famous Five* (documentary programme about five prolific footballers of Hibernian Football Club during their successful 1950 era) was advertised repeated after sporting broadcasts on BBC Alba, particularly after Hibs games in early 2016. Other examples have been Gothenburg '83 in 2013 – a documentary about Aberdeen's 1983 defeat of Real Madrid, and *Jock Stein* – a documentary about the life of one of Scotland's greatest football managers.

Another respondent - DW - suggests that, similar to him, other people do not watch other programming than football related programming. He also suggests that an awareness of the presence other programming was not from advertising on the channel itself, but rather from online fan forums:

*Well there's a lot of people that I know – or at least I've spoken to, who have watched football on BBC Alba and I don't think they watch anything else. And I don't know if that's a lack of interest or the extent to which they're just unaware of programmes of interest, about I dunno...I did watch something else funnily enough...that programme about Hibs – 'The Famous Five' – there we go! And again, I was aware of that, through Hibs.net actually, not through a particular trailer on television or anything (DW)*

#### **4.4.4 - Quality of programming**

The same respondent (DW) describes the quality of programming:

*It's a recurring comment on Hibs.net which is - the coverage is much better than watching Sky... the coverage is always good. It's also because there's no adverts. But there's also usually a feature at half time where they're speaking in English to a player or whatever and I think it's usually decent and is of quite a lot of interest. But because of the games that they [BBC Alba] get the game are maybe not the most glamorous, it's generally I believe lower league – but the coverage its self is decent (DW)*

Similar comments from NW:

*I like that the football is fairly simple – they don't go too into depth in terms of analysis – maybe it's because they don't have the resources to do it. I do like fact that there's no adverts (NW)*

Both DW and NW note that there are no adverts which is absolute across all BBC channels in the UK. They also refer to the features at half-time which usually pre-recorded material rather than the pundit analysis format which audiences have become familiar with. Similarly Kevin McKenna of the *Guardian* wrote in September 2016 that BBC Alba's coverage was “refreshing and ground-breaking” and “sharp and innovative” (McKenna: 2016, *Guardian* 10<sup>th</sup> Sep. 2016) referring specifically to the format which BBC Alba has introduced to Scottish audiences.

In DW's last sentence he describes how BBC Alba tends to get games which are “maybe not the most glamorous”. This comment can attributed to BBC Alba tending to broadcast content for which it does not have to compete financially and has perhaps become known as a place where more obscure sporting fixtures can be viewed. The former Justice Secretary of Scotland Kenny MacAskill wrote in 2016 “BBC Alba...It does a great job but BBC Alba is meant to be a dedicated Gaelic channel, not the repository for anything with a particularly Scottish perspective” (MacAskill: 2016). This article was written during the ongoing debate about potential changes to broadcast media in Scotland focussing on the potential replacement of ‘News at Six’ with a ‘Scottish Six’ and was suggesting that BBC were treating BBC Alba as the other<sup>5</sup> Scottish channel.

---

<sup>5</sup> See literature review/background chapter for discussion on BBC Alba performing as a pseudo-national broadcaster

#### 4.4.5 - Viewer relationship/interaction with Gaelic

During the interviews, following on from questions specifically about BBC Alba viewing habits and attitudes towards the channel the conversations were thereafter directed onto questions about interviewee relationship with Gaelic, interaction with Gaelic and questions concerning general language rights.

One respondent – DR – describes how BBC Alba has made him more aware about Gaelic:

*Undoubtedly, I would have known about it, but I wouldn't have known, eh, where I could get access to it. Until I saw the BBC Alba website, watched the actually channel. It has brought to me, made me, acutely aware that there's a lot more people who speak Gaelic than I thought there was (DR)*

Another respondent – RG – describes the perceived popularity of Gaelic:

*Definitely. You know, with growing up, you were never encouraged to speak it. It is now encouraged. In schools, it is far more popular than it's ever been. There's the college on Skye as well (RG)*

Both DR and RG refer to the language vitality. DR describes how BBC Alba has given him the understanding that there are a lot more Gaelic speakers than he once thought. RG describes how Gaelic has never been so popular, but not necessarily because of BBC Alba

In terms of the number of speakers, Gaelic is spoken by fewer people now than at any time in recorded history, however because of efforts at maintenance and revitalisation Gaelic is perhaps more visible to the general population than at any time before with a number Scotland's trunk roads in the Highlands now (increasingly since 2009) displaying bilingual signage and a number of shopping chains such as the Co-op, Asda and Argos recently adopting Gaelic signage in a number of their Highland, island and northern stores. Through manifestations such as the television and signage (the 'linguistic landscape'<sup>6</sup> [Puzey: 2012]) Gaelic can appear to the general population to be going through a 'revival', however in a number of ways this is a more imagined

---

<sup>6</sup> Further discussion on the "Linguistic Landscape" at 4.4.6

revival (Watson: 2010) than any real change to the linguistic behaviours of a population.

Indeed, it is likely that BBC Alba has brought Gaelic into many homes which would have previously had little interaction with the language. Peaking in 2014, BBC Alba still (as of 2016) broadcasts to over 700,000 people on occasion – over ten times the number of Gaelic speakers. Even in 2011, the year of BBC Alba's launch on Freeview the "highest awareness of Gaelic usage" was "in the media" at 61%, higher than in education, the arts/music and on signage at 39%, 30% and 27% respectively (West & Graham/TNS-BMRB: 2011) .

*"The media and television in particular, was also the main way in which a substantial minority of people came into contact with Gaelic."* (West & Graham: 2011 pp 55)

Catriona West and Alasdair Graham discovered 39% of the population were aware of Gaelic usage in education. In this study there were many mentions of Gaelic education:

*My youngest daughter, she did it, she did it in high school, I'm sure. Not that she had to do it, but it was part of the curriculum. It was never part of the curriculum when I was there* (RG)

*You know there's quite a lot of interest in the Gaelic school here in Edinburgh – and I don't want this to sound the wrong way – but there's a lot of foreign families, and they're now sending their kids to Gaelic school* (EM)

*If it wasn't for the school I'd probably know no one who speaks the language* (NW)

*I think it would be great, and I think there's one school in Edinburgh where Gaelic is taught and I think that's fantastic* (DR)

All respondents in this study were aware of Gaelic education either of Gaelic-medium education or Gaelic as a subject, and indeed a number of respondents discussed the prospect of family members, or indeed themselves attending Gaelic-education. During the quantitative element (questionnaire surveys) of this research 30.1% have indicated that they are "fairly likely" or "very likely" to send their own children to a



GME. Although there are slight methodological differences, this finding can be directly compared with Soillse's research by Fiona O' Hanlon & Lindsay Paterson's study (2012) asking the same question to a sample representative of Scottish population where 25% indicated a positive GME response. In reality, despite the high awareness and apparent interest in Gaelic education only around 1% of Scottish school children attend Gaelic-education. A number of respondents did discuss the prospect of Gaelic education which never materialised:

*We did briefly consider sending our kids to the Gaelic school, but it's on the other side of Edinburgh and there's bigger questions attached (KD)*

*Yes, I would send them, and I've actually discussed it, she's actually at the primary school now, and she's really quite close to the move down to Bonnington, that's where it is (Gaelic school)... The problem with that is – single parent – and she's got other things going on (WY)*

*I know about the primary school in Glasgow that teaches Gaelic, and there's one in Edinburgh too, I think. I think my family thought about putting me into Gaelic-medium education, but for some reason it did not work out (OW)*

*Hypothetically, yes - because of my age! But yes, some of my friends have children in GME including an English friend. That was quite illuminating for me – I wasn't quite sure of the background of the children, being completely non speakers. I think people have a perception that because it's a Gaelic school, you must speak Gaelic as a parent, but obviously that's not the case, so yeah absolutely yes, I would (DW)*

A number of respondents cite Gaelic education not materialising for them or their families. There are a number of real and imagined barriers for parents to consider when deciding to place their children in Gaelic education. As of 2015-16 1,003 children in Scotland attended a Gaelic nursery, 3,004 pupils were enrolled in GME primary education and 1,193 in secondary education. These figures are up from 2012-13 where 989, 2,500 and 1,104 pupils attended GME respectively (Bòrd na Gàidhlig: 2016). The major barrier to growth in urban areas is often cited as teacher availability, whilst in more rural areas the reluctance of more parents to choose GME has stunted its further growth in traditional West Highland and Island 'heartlands' (MacKenzie: 2015).

#### ***4.4.6 – Normalising Language – the Linguistic Landscape***

The debate surrounding Gaelic road signs is perhaps the most topical and most talked about aspect of current Gaelic regeneration activities amongst the general population. Gaelic campaigners, however, have been championing Gaelic road signs for decades in order to increase visibility and, as with television, helps to normalise the language. Iain Noble, an English merchant banker who bought a large estate on Skye, used his position as a landowner to force the Highland Regional Council to erect Scotland's first ever state sanctioned Gaelic road-sign introducing the language officially into the linguistic landscape on Highland roads (Hutchison: 2005). Noble's unprecedented campaign was the precursor for the bilingual road-sign policy throughout the trunk roads of much of the Highlands and Islands. It has had a significant impact upon the promotion and public visibility of Gaelic in areas where the majority of people in relatively recent history were Gaelic-speaking. Gaelic road signs however are not without controversy with some voicing opposition to their implementation. Gaelic within the linguistic landscape has not yet been normalised and amongst the country's media there has been much interest in the roll out of Gaelic road-signs, with few positive stories making tabloid headlines. At a time of austerity road-signs have been divisive, further fuelled by information and misinformation, mostly relating to their cost. *The Daily Record* ran a story in 2012 (July 12<sup>th</sup>) claiming that new Gaelic road signs were costing the taxpayer an extra £26 million. This financial disinformation was repeatedly recited in various media outlets and potentially had an impact upon attitudes towards Gaelic in Scotland. Furthermore, Stewart Stevenson the Scottish Government Minister for Transport stated in 2009 that there was 'anecdotal' evidence to suggest that Gaelic road signs were dangerous (BBC News: 2009) fuelling a tabloid backlash against Gaelic road signs. A report published by Transport Scotland in 2012 concluded that safety concerns were unfounded (BBC News: 2012), although this appears to have done little to dispel all such rumours circulating in the media.

As an issue that the Scottish public have been generally engaged with more than most Gaelic issues, it was a topic that organically arose during some conversations while in other interviews direct questions were asked regarding views concerning the Gaelic linguistic landscape:

Researcher: *Do you approve of Gaelic road-signs?*

EM: *Yes, but only if they're in both languages. I've seen this in Donegal when you come to a junction and there's a sign with a worrying looking symbol and then there's some Gaelic that we did not have a Scooby what it meant.*

EM refers to the Donegal Gaeltacht example where monolingual signs exist. In Scotland it's very rare to see official road signs only in Gaelic. In fact, Transport Scotland have implemented this on very few occasions and only when the Gaelic place-name is identical or almost identical to the English. An example of this, highlighted by the *Daily Record* in 2013 (Dec. 29<sup>th</sup>), is 'Malaig' when the English equivalent is 'Mallaig'.

*Apart from station signs and other superficial things down here you don't see or hear it – it's [the Gaelic language] not particularly visible [DW]*

*Bit in Edinburgh there's more and more Gaelic signs popping up, but obviously a lot of more West and North, but you do see it at the parliament, but not much on road signs like you do up north and west (DM)*

*At the moment, the way Edinburgh Council are, if they were to put up Gaelic signs people would probably just think it was a waste of money. Is that really a priority? What good does it do? (NW)*

*I've never been a fan of Gaelic road signs, where I've lived anyway, and I wonder, is there any point in having these signs here? The further south you go, the less and less Gaelic speakers, I would have thought anyway. Fair enough, I mean - I've worked all over the Highlands and Islands but you don't see a lot of people speaking it. It should have English bit at the bottom (RG)*

It is the aim of this research to discover in what ways Gaelic television is helping to support Gaelic regeneration, largely through focusing on language ideologies and attitudes. As discussed, television, as with other forms of media has the potential to inform and affect language ideologies. The linguistic landscape which we inhabit has the ability also reaffirms language prestige and can impact such ideologies and both are related linguistic exposure of the majority language community to the minority language. With Gaelic language exposure as a result of bilingual road-signs it became a frequent topic of conversation and a theme which could elicit responses from those with little other exposure to Gaelic other than television.

#### 4.4.7 - Gaelic & Scottish nationalism

Another frequently mentioned topic was Gaelic's relationship to Scottish Nationalism. Combining language and place is a major pillar of identity politics, however unlike our Celtic neighbours of Wales and Ireland, there is no inseparable link within the Scottish dimension linking nationalism and language. In Scotland, two separate *national* languages emerged (Gaelic and Scots, of Celtic and Germanic origin respectively), and their coexistence has not favoured the development of linguistic nationalism. However, although this link remains weaker than in other language identity situations, the Gaelic language is arguably seen increasingly as a symbol of national identity. A number of respondents in this study linked Gaelic to nationalism:

*I've seen Gaelic at train stations, as close as Linlithgow. I remember getting a train past there one day and looking around and thinking "what the heck is that?", and my friend said "that's Gaelic for 'Linlithgow'", and he said that since the SNP came to power in 2007 that they changed all the signs and put the Gaelic names up as well (DR)*

*A party I see supporting Gaelic are the SNP, maybe the Liberals to be fair – way up north – maybe that's unfair. I think mainstream Westminster parties – they would do anything to suppress Nationalism. If that includes suppressing Gaelic, then so be it (FG)*

*The SNP have supported it financially from their budget and correctly so. You know, and there must be quite a few Gaelic speakers in the SNP, there must be. And I think they've done what they can within the constraints that they live with. (RG)*

*You never know if we get independence you never know! I think it will be far more used than it is now. There's a whole load of offshoots, I wouldn't be surprised if we see signs in Edinburgh, more in schools etc. How that translates to being used in business, I don't know (NW)*

Historically, although the link between Gaelic and national identity in Scotland is not as strong as in other situations, the tabloid media often run stories asserting such a link. Gaelic policy is often and increasingly portrayed as nationalist propaganda in local and national newspapers. Amongst the print media in Scotland, the SNP

(Scottish National Party) is repeatedly associated with especially favourable policies towards the Gaelic language, with much coverage criticising the current SNP Government for excessive Gaelic language expenditure. This is despite much of the significant Gaelic policies developing under pre-SNP administrations such as the Gaelic media fund expansion in 1993 (Conservative/UK Parliament ministers) and the Gaelic Act 2005 (Labour-Liberal Democrat coalition/Scottish Parliament). The overall amount spent on Gaelic services by governments or local authorities is difficult to quantify, however the level of funding is regularly misrepresented in print media for political gain with headlines suggesting excessive expenditure without the research to confirm this.

A few examples of frequently published Gaelic critical tabloid headlines, with all connected stories linking the promotion of to the SNP administration:

**Gaelic road signs plan is branded waste of money**

**EveningTimes**  
NOBODY KNOWS GLASGOW BETTER

**SUNDAY EXPRESS**

**The SNP, Gaelic TV and £10m of our cash**

**MailOnline**

**SNP plan to spend £28m  
on 'dying' Gaelic language**

Evening Times (25 Jun 2012), Sunday Express (Mar 7, 2010), Mail on Sunday (3 May 2015)

In the interviews the link between Gaelic with nationalism in Scotland was raised repeated, however, it could be argued that this has not necessarily been evident historically. It has been argued that Gaelic has been disadvantaged by not having the nationalised pull of Welsh and Irish which have been supported, and with this Gaelic would be a much stronger position in Scottish society. It could be argued that Gaelic would benefit from a nationalist government, however, conversely, it be argued that Scotland's form of civic nationalism is less concerned with culture and identity, and

more interested in constitutional issues and community cohesion, which may mean that Gaelic is neglected.

Most Gaelic language regeneration movements are not historically political affiliated and MG Alba as a government funded public organisation has no official political agenda. Print media, however, is less distanced from political impartiality and has perhaps encouraged this link. There appears to be an understanding amongst a number of the participants indicating a link between the Gaelic and Scottish nationalism. It could be argued, therefore, that BBC Alba exposure is perhaps unlikely cause for such language ideologies, however it should be noted that some Gaelic television viewers hold these notions, irrespective of what influenced these attitudes.

#### **4.4.8 - Cultural importance**

A number of interviewees described Gaelic in terms of heritage and cultural importance to Scotland:

*Well I suppose, Gaelic is very important in terms of Scotland's history and culture, so I'm extremely supportive of money being spent on Gaelic to bring it to a higher level. In the same way that I believe Welsh has been well supported by Welsh language television (DW)*

*I think Gaelic is very important. I think if you asked people towards the north and north west people might say it's more important than in the central belt, but I think it's critical overall in Scotland that we hold on to bits of culture, like the Gaelic language (KD)*

*I think as an important part of Scottish culture, I would support it wherever there is demand. I think it's good for society generally (DW)*

*I think Gaelic is vitally important, because I studied Latin at school and that has almost been allowed to die. Maybe not quite in the medical fraternity, but I don't hear anybody speaking Latin now. I would distraught to think, that Gaelic disappeared for those that speak it (FG)*

*You can see why it's Gaelic because it's part of Scotland's history but does it bring the same advantages as other languages, if you were fluent in Spanish,*

*for example, it could open up a lot of doors for you but Gaelic doesn't really do the same thing. We're keeping the heritage but how does it benefit us? That's part of the challenge to promote it (NW)*

Each respondent above mentions Gaelic in relation to its importance in terms of Scotland's cultural heritage. One respondent suggests that Gaelic is important to Scotland as a whole, but maybe more relevant to some parts of country than others. The debate of where Gaelic's place in within contemporary Scottish society, and indeed within Scotland's history is often debated (Hutchison: 2005). Promotional efforts extending beyond the Highlands and Islands are not always met with unanimous welcome with some believing Gaelic belongs to some parts of the country, but not others. This argument suggests that Gaelic has been appropriated by some parts of the country where there is not a Gaelic history.

As the workings of the Gaelic revival have sought to promote Gaelic, not just in the current Gaelic 'heartland' areas but also, throughout Scotland, including areas where there is little recent history of indigenous Gaelic, there has been a rebellion by some who consider Gaelic as not part of their heritage and view Gaelic promotion Scotland wide as a kind of cultural imperialism. It is felt by some that Gaelic is being imposed upon them as the national Gaelic policies become more visible. It has been argued as far back as Chapman (1978) that Gaelic is being 'symbolically appropriated' from the language of the Highlands to the language of Scotland in order to appeal to greater numbers and resources.

#### **4.4.9 - Money**

Continuing with the debate regarding Gaelic's place in contemporary Scottish society, and the amount of expenditure allocated to the Gaelic language services (mentioned in previous page) the interviewees maintained various views on levels of cash spent on Gaelic related services:

*I definitely think it's worth spending money (on Gaelic) as I say, I think it's very important to help protect our cultural heritage. The difficulty is deciding how much we should spend on Gaelic. Working within a council I see first-hand what many people consider "priorities" and that's where is difficult to determine how much priority is given to Gaelic, as opposed to people's education, adult health care etc. and that's why I'd never be a politician! (KD)*

Researcher: *Is BBC Alba worth the license fee?*

DR: *Absolutely – I'd double their budget tomorrow - vitally important for our heritage. I think if they're targeting sport then it's a very clever thing to do, marketing wise. There's an awful lot of folk who watch football, and there's loads of people who talk about BBC Alba.* (DR)

*I think if we're talking commercially, then Mandarin should be taught in school, but culturally Gaelic is more important, as it's this country's language. It's our heritage, undoubtedly, it's our culture and that should be protected. The Belgian Flemings will not give up their language so why should we - it's vital. You could spend a lot more money at it, if the will was there.* (FG)

Each respondent provides an insight into the debate on Gaelic expenditure discourse in Scotland. Various factors enter the debate concerning the levels of funding (perceived or real) spent such as its importance in terms of culture, its so-called 'usefulness' and indeed other Gaelic language priorities where funding could be directed. All participants were supportive of Gaelic language funding of one sort or another and some, indeed, proposed increased funding. This is perhaps not the impression a reader of a number of Scotland's tabloid newspapers but these were the views of football watching BBC Alba viewers.

#### **4.4.10 - Interest/disinterest in learning Gaelic**

Although none of the participants were either Gaelic speakers (apart from the odd word or phrase), nor currently learning the language, when questioned a few indicated some interest in learning more Gaelic in the future, though others showed disinterest

Researcher: *Have you learnt any Gaelic from watching BBC Alba?*

NW: *Yeah, I think the more I watch, the more I'll pick up. More of the language, more of the words*

Researcher: *Do you have any interest in learning some Gaelic in the future?*

WY: *I probably would. Just out of my own self-interest, and to prove that I could do it, as well. Generally – the football obviously, but I've always had an interest in learning some of the Gaelic, at least phrases. Ah, but I just feel – it*



*could be better – subtitles – then the Gaelic word – to see what was just being said. I would like to see a wee bit of the Gaelic, alongside the English, just to learn a bit ya know.*

Another participant was not entirely convinced what purpose learning Gaelic would serve, and suggested a rather trivial motivation:

*I think it would be good to retain a few phrases, I could maybe learn a few phrases, just for a bit of fun at dinner parties and stuff, but I don't think it's worthwhile to become fluent in Gaelic – I don't know what purpose that would serve (OW)*

Another two participants did not really see themselves learning Gaelic in the future:

*Well, not really, not at my age – it's not that it's not for me, it's probably just something I wouldn't do now...ya know. I've read things before which say that you're far better off learning Chinese – that's where all the money in the world is these days. Within this country opposed to, say, French or German, but I really couldn't tell you. You know I've seen a lot of jobs advertised for Gaelic speakers. There are jobs there (RG)*

*I did Italian at University and languages were always something that I had an interest in. This might come across as ignorant – but it looks like a hard language to learn. With the romance languages I can, kind of understand most written down, but with Gaelic I don't think I could understand it at all, and I think it would be difficult language to learn in my retirement. And the thing is, you can go to different parts of Scotland, and because you know they can also speak English, there's less pressure on you to learn the language (DW)*

Both participants touch on the theme of usefulness of Gaelic as communicative tool and compare this with other languages. One participant describes other languages as potentially more useful in terms of worldwide economic capacity, though he does mention 'a lot of jobs...for Gaelic speakers'. The second participant cites demotivation due to lack of need for Gaelic while travelling, while the perceived difficulty of learning Gaelic compounds the disincentive.

#### **4.4.11 - Avoiding Gaelic**

Three respondents reported similar behaviour while watching BBC Alba:

*You can watch the football without understanding the commentary, but sometimes I **turn the sound down**. I tried it on the tablet, watching it, and putting the radio on but it doesn't come in sync (RG)*

*I sometimes tend to **turn the sound down**, but at half time I'll turn it up for the features will usually tend to be in English. I much prefer the football channels where they speak to the actual people involved. I'd much rather listen to the players and managers, than some pundits (KD)*

*And it was that point that I noticed that Alba transmit football matches, in some cases, even live. So that was an obvious advantage so I just basically watched it, eh, **turned the sound down** and listened to the radio commentary (FG)*

The apparent common behaviour of muting football match commentary may not be entirely surprising considering the proportion of those tuning in having little competency in the Gaelic language

The action of muting Gaelic television during sports broadcasts does not appear uncommon when a quick search of Twitter is conducted. Twitter reveals similar behaviour to the interviewees with a Twitter search:

Aberdeen game on **BBC Alba**. So watch the footy, turn tv **sound down** and listen to our Harry playing the tunes on the radio.

im working so can't make it. I will record **bbc alba** and watch with the **sound down!!**

Thistle vs Hearts, apparently live **BBC Alba**. **Sound down**, radio on. Who suits us best to win though? Maybe Hearts?

Alloa vs Dunfermline proving to be a much superior game... It's on **BBC ALBA**, so keep the **sound down**...

united game on **BBC Alba** if u got it fella! Just turn the **sound down!**

Will review the evidence - with **sound down** - on **BBC Alba!**

Source: [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) (25<sup>th</sup> Sep. 2016)

#### **4.4.12 - Indifference / Ambivalence / Hostility / to Gaelic**

The respondents interviewed for this study generally conveyed a range of positive attitudes towards the Gaelic language, however articulated also were some criticisms in regards to BBC Alba and the Gaelic language:

Although a respondent – OW - did have a close family member who was a native Gaelic speaker, this did not necessarily mean that he was supportive of efforts to support the Gaelic language:

*Well in fact my grandfather's first language was Gaelic, but when he came down to Edinburgh I think he did not speak it, and lost his way with the Gaelic. Maybe it was a bit of stigma, to speak Gaelic at the time – he did not want that attached to him, maybe. Just he'd mostly just speak English to me. I think it's clear that quite a lot of money has been put into Gaelic, signs, TV etc. BBC Alba do seem to get a lot of funding (OW)*

Another respondent articulated some hostility towards the channel:

*I have to say, sometimes, I get frustrated that BBC Alba have the rights to my football club's game. I'm a season ticket holder at Easter Road and I like going to the games on a Saturday afternoon, but over the last couple seasons they've changed kick off times of some games, meaning I've struggled to go the games, and then the alternative is watching it on Alba, which is better than nothing, but I can't understand it (Gaelic). That's a bit annoying to be honest, ya know what I mean? (EM)*

Another respondent describes other

*I'm not saying it's always been positive – especially down here you hear the odd comments “why do the BBC have that on – nobody talks that”, well actually they do. I try and stick up for it, but I get nowhere (RG)*

In common with many minority languages, efforts to maintain it evokes a degree of hostility or indifference through factors such as ignorance and prejudice from the majority language community, but also from the minority community itself, from the internalisation of negative public discourse causing speakers to question the worth of their language.

Despite some indications which, for example, frequently appear in the print media, overall, the Scottish public demonstrate general positivity towards the language despite the very small proportion of the overall population who speak the language. For example, a survey from 2011 revealed that 86% of Scots believe Gaelic should be taught in Scottish schools (TNS-BMRB: 2011) when in-reality, currently less than 5% of Scottish children receive any kind of Gaelic language education at present (2016). Somewhat similar trends to attitudinal positivity amongst non-speakers have been discovered through this thesis and these will be further discussed in the final chapter. This concludes thematic analysis of the interview data.

## **Chapter 5 – Discussion & Conclusions**

### **5.1 - Overview**

This final chapter compiles all content, and reexamines what has been discovered over the course of the research, supported by previous investigation and literature.

Combining both elements of the empirical research conducted, this chapter will focus on and develop analysis from chapters three and four together, from which overall conclusions will be drawn and recommendations provided. Overall, this chapter reassesses what has been discovered, and specifically, discusses the ways in which Gaelic broadcasting, namely BBC Alba, can be perceived as affecting Gaelic language ideologies and attitudes, and indeed, in what ways this may in turn be assisting with language maintenance and revitalisation. One of the main aims of this chapter is to revisit the research questions set at the start of this study and determine whether these have been answered. This will be discussed in relation to a language policy framework recognised within, and also outwith Scotland. Finally, it will be suggested that the contributions of this research will be capable of influencing current language policy, and while recognising the project's limitations, this chapter will outline potential future research possibilities unlocked as a result of this project.

Both quantitative and qualitative elements of the research revealed a number of correlations between Gaelic television and various language ideologies amongst BBC Alba audiences. This chapter will discuss the implications for the various research objectives, and then finally assess whether it would be accurate to suggest that the mere consumption of Gaelic television by Scots (overwhelmingly non-Gaelic speaking) can assist with efforts at minority language maintenance and revitalisation. By making this assessment, the possible contributions (as well as the limitations) of this research will be acknowledged and future complimentary research will be recommended.

### **5.2 – Summary of findings**

Minority Language Studies has developed into its own discipline since the turn of the millennium. Although there exist various studies which have combined minority language, sociolinguistics and media studies, most researchers have avoided the search for a cause-and-effect relationship between Minority Language Media (MLM) and the minority language in question. Indeed, Mike Cormack - in 2007 - one of the

Minority Language Media's foremost authors suggested that "we must abandon the idea that a straightforward media-language link can be found" (Cormack: 2007, p 64). Disregarding such assertions, a limited number of researchers have attempted to discover some kind of link, with Mairead Moriarty becoming the seminal example identifying a clear relationship, declaring: 'watching minority language television has a positive impact on language ideology and language attitudes' (Moriarty: 2007, p. 201).

Following the success of Moriarty's 2007 thesis, this research set out to test the assertion that television could in fact have a positive impact on language ideology and language attitudes. Indeed, the overall primary research question as proposed is as follows:

***Primary Research Question:*** *What attitudinal impact (if any) is Gaelic broadcasting, specifically BBC Alba, having upon its audiences, and ultimately, what impact is this likely to have upon efforts to maintain and revitalise Gaelic language in Scotland?*

In order to respond to this objective this chapter returns to the research questions posed in Chapter One (1.2) and summarises the findings of both studies. This primary research question can be divided into two distinct elements: firstly (1) "What attitudinal impact [is] BBC Alba having upon its audiences [?]" 1; and secondly (2) "what impact is this likely to have upon efforts to maintain and revitalise Gaelic language in Scotland?"

### **5.2.1 - The Quantitative Element**

In terms of the quantitative element, using the data collected from the survey questionnaire this question can be responded to by providing a summary of the analysis already provided in Chapter 3. Some of the main findings which indicate 'attitudinal impact':

- Using comparisons with previously conducted research, the survey discovered that sports audiences repeatedly responded more favourably to questions about worthiness and quality of BBC Alba than the general public (3.3.11)

- There is strong support for the rights of Gaelic speakers from BBC Alba audiences, and levels of support are higher than previously discovered in other studies (3.3.12)
- There is a strong correlation between support for Gaelic services, including Gaelic medium education and BBC Alba audiences (3.3.13)
- There is weaker correlation between incidences of overt hostility and indifference towards Gaelic and BBC Alba audiences than have been found in previous attitudinal studies amongst the general population (3.3.14)

In terms of part two of the primary research question, this is a much more complex question which could be analysed in a number ways. Nevertheless, in terms of direct second-language learner outcomes; respondents overall supported Gaelic language learning:

- Significant proportions indicated that BBC Alba has encouraged a desire to learn Gaelic or improve Gaelic skills, although it is accepted that this does not necessarily result in such behaviour (see 3.3.11 - *The Theory of Planned Behaviour*)
- Parental wishes in favour GME attendance is higher amongst BBC Alba viewing sports fans than has been found in previous studies among the general public (3.3.13)

As discussed in Chapter 3, despite the Gaelic language's marginalized status in Scottish society, its position in contemporary Scottish society is at times vibrantly, and at other times, bitterly debated. The survey element demonstrated that amongst sport supporters, particularly football fans, views towards Gaelic are overwhelmingly (though, not unanimously) positive and supportive. Indeed, in many instances the survey revealed that non-Gaelic speaking sports viewers are more supportive of the Gaelic language than those from the general population, when compared to the results of other research from general population samples.

### **5.2.2 - The Qualitative Element**

From the research carried out during the second stage of data collection (interviews) a range of views on Gaelic language and television was revealed. Numerically, the

interviewees were largely recruited online, resided in the Lowlands of Scotland and were sports fans, as were those who completed the questionnaire. The participants could be said to broadly represent the overall BBC Alba audience, rather than the “core” (MG Alba: 2015) BBC Alba audience (The “core audience”– Gaelic speakers - represent between 5-10% of the overall BBC Alba audiences, while non-Gaelic speakers represent between 90-95% of BBC Alba audiences).

- Recruited as a sports audience, the main viewing attraction was clearly football; however documentaries, current affairs, music and children programmes were all cited as viewing incentives.
- A minority of participants expressed a desire to learn Gaelic, though others wished that BBC Alba was more accessible to English-only speakers with improved subtitling and with a ‘red-button’ type option (language choice commentary) facility for football in line with existing (2017) provision for Pro-12 league rugby matches.
- Awareness of the programming beyond the football matches was generally limited to football related programming (i.e. football documentaries such as *Gothenburg '83*, *Jock Stein* and *The Famous Five*) and fans forums and message boards were cited repeatedly for circulating information about other BBC Alba programming. A number of participants suggested that awareness of other programmes was limited, and football related programming could be better utilized to promote other programming – such as Gaelic learning programmes - whilst there are large captive audiences during football matches.
- The quality of programming was repeatedly highlighted, and although the lower budgets of BBC Alba are obvious – the format of football coverage was repeatedly praised – with a number of participants appreciating the ‘simple’ style of football broadcasts, compared with broadcasters such as Sky Sports, BBC 1 & 2 and BT Sport dedicating too much time to pundit analysis and also to advertisements.
- A small number of interviewees declared some limited Gaelic abilities, a heritage link to Gaelic language/culture/the Gàidhealtachd or/and a relationship to a Gaelic speaker(s), however, for most there was little



interaction with the Gaelic language on a regular basis, with BBC Alba providing an access to a language most participants would not have otherwise. That said, most participants were aware of urban Gaelic education, and a number had either considered or chosen Gaelic-medium education for their children or knew of other parents who had done so.

- Other awareness came from the linguistic landscape, with participants articulating a variety of views on Gaelic road signs, with most comments tending to indicate attitudinal negativity, especially in the cities, though some participants were supportive of a national system of Gaelic language road, rail and business signs.
- Ideologies connecting Gaelic language with identity, particularly national identity, were common amongst the participants. Accurately or inaccurately, the SNP were perceived as the political party especially supportive of Gaelic, with many believing that the Gaelic language would generally benefit from Scottish Independence.
- The language was repeatedly mentioned in terms of heritage and cultural importance to Scotland, and also specifically to the Highlands and Islands, but with Gaelic's relevance to some Lowland parts of Scotland, at times, questioned.
- There were mixed attitudes towards public expenditure on Gaelic language services (local authority & court translations etc.), with some believing more could be spent by government agencies, whilst others indicated other economic priorities for governments and local authorities.
- Whilst none of the interviewees had fluent Gaelic abilities, some indicated a desire to learn the language, although overall there was few examples of participants taking active steps to learn the language (see Chapter 4 for more regarding *The Theory of Planned Behaviour* in a language learning context).
- A number of interviewees described consuming BBC Alba's football coverage whilst muting Gaelic commentary. This reported behaviour is regularly shared on social media, especially Twitter amongst sporting

audiences, but it could be said that this should not be considered entirely surprising amongst those with little Gaelic abilities.

- Hostility or indifference towards the Gaelic language or/and BBC Alba was discovered amongst a limited number of the interviewees. A frustration articulated at assumed levels of funding was mentioned on several occasions, whilst the changing of kick-off times to suit the broadcaster to the detriment of fans were some of the other frustrations voiced.

### **5.3 - Policy Recommendations & Research Requirements**

As discussed previous, Moriarty's (2007) seminal study recorded a positive correlation between television and language ideologies. This provided this study with impetus to research whether similar could be revealed in the Scottish context. As a study with a similar research agenda to Moriarty's study this thesis also revealed correlations between attitudes and ideologies pertaining to Gaelic. When compared to other attitudinal studies (such as Graham & West [2011]; O' Hanlon & Paterson [2012]), BBC Alba sports audiences repeated responded with more favourable attitudes towards various aspects of the Gaelic language. It must be admitted, however, that although strong correlations exist, this should not be interpreted as causation, and would be misleading to suggest that BBC Alba has conclusively resulted in improved attitudes amongst the viewing population towards the Gaelic language, culture and efforts at its linguistic revitalization.

As discussed in Chapter 2 (2.4.6), research by Graffman (2014) indicated minority language broadcasters will have to find new ways of attracting young people (children between 10 & 14, and adolescents 14 to 18 were assessed using qualitative methods) to the language as this group has been found, on the whole, not to be interacting with available Gaelic media. It is admitted that any attempt to manipulate the media behaviours of young people is ultimately doomed to failure, however providing platforms and infrastructure is crucially important. In the future, it is more than likely that user-generated material will become increasingly dominant, though its impact upon minority languages is currently unknown. By all accounts MG Alba's 'FilmG' initiative has been an important success story in recent years (established in 2009), encouraging more Gaelic-speakers (especially young) than ever before to engage in

Gaelic film production. This concurs with research from Graffman (2014) in terms of young people engaging with media, through the generation of their own material, and although there is no research to suggest a longitudinal positive impact for Gaelic in Scotland, it will not be to the language's detriment.

### 5.3.1. - Future Research

- BBC Alba should continue to broadcast high-profile live sport, attracting the masses to Gaelic language, not only learners or existing Gaelic-speakers. Through such exposure viewers develop greater awareness of the Gaelic language in Scotland which subsequently consolidates positive language ideologies.
- This research revealed a desire for more 'red-button' (subtitling language choices) programming from both interviews (i.e. 4.4.2 & from the questionnaire qualitative response box). Despite this, the researcher believes that BBC Alba should resist any further pressure from sports associations or federations (see 3.3.8) to expand the provision of the 'red-button' English audio commentary option further than is currently available for Pro-12 rugby matches. Such allowances contribute to BBC Alba assuming the role of a 'repository' (MacAskill: 2016) for programming which would not be otherwise shown on other channels. The sometimes presumed benefits of English subtitling for Gaelic learners are disputed by Dr Eithne O' Connell (see 2.3.6.3 & 2.3.7.1) declaring that English subtitles are of little benefit to Gaelic learners and merely consolidates English skills. Overall the further expansion of the red-button facility would undermine the Gaelic television channel's *raison d'être*: contradicting MG Alba's slogan "*A' toirt Gàidhlig thugaibh*" (Bringing Gaelic to you [plural]).
- Gaelic learning was mentioned in this interviews by a number of the participants, however, opportunities for Gaelic learning are not advertised to viewers of sports programmes. Perhaps one of easiest ways to exploit such viewers from the language regeneration perspective would be to increase the exposure of Gaelic to passive sports viewers with Gaelic

subtitles. It is therefore recommended that optional subtitles should be introduced, available in both Gaelic and English. Though MG Alba has repeatedly indicated that such would be dependent on a much improved funding situation (which MG Alba strategically campaigned for from 2016 until February 2017. BBC funding for BBC Alba was increased by £1m in February 2017 – considerably less than campaigned for). It is uncertain whether Gaelic subtitles will now materialise which would allow both Gaelic learners and native speakers to improve on their Gaelic skills, whilst the other option of English subtitles would continue to allow access for non-Gaelic speakers to Gaelic audio programmes.

- The major methodological shortfall of this project is the inability to conduct longitudinal research. A research project with data collection period spanning several years could determine whether minority language television exposure (stimuli) has direct and tangible impact upon a sample population. As discussed previously, this has never been achieved in Scotland, nor in any other minority language context where a dearth of empirical data remains and many research questions remain unanswered.
- Although Graffman (2014) provided a snapshot of media behaviour of young bilinguals in Sweden and Scotland further research is required examining the ways speakers of minority languages use new, emerging and developing media technology, and whether such technology is inevitably a destructive force negatively affecting the lesser-used language or whether there are opportunities from a minority language maintenance & revitalisation perspective.

### **5.3.2 - Concluding Comments**

Overall, this study has provided an attitudinal profile of BBC Alba audiences, reflecting on attitudes towards the channel and ideologies towards the Gaelic language, and specifically, current efforts to maintain and revitalise the language in Scotland. The theoretical framework which this thesis adheres to stipulates that favourable attitudes towards Gaelic across society as a whole are vital for the

language's ultimate long term survival. In much of urban Scotland, before the launch of BBC Alba there was a general understanding amongst the overall population of the mere existence of the Gaelic language in certain geographical areas, however Gaelic has often been associated with a rural and remote dying way of life. It could be argued that the mere broadcast of Gaelic television to the masses in ways which had not occurred before BBC Alba has had a significant change in the way that language is considered by society as a whole.

Although a number of respected sociolinguists, in particular Joshua Fishman, have questioned the ability of the media to support a minority language unless other more central needs are firstly met, it must be accepted that Gaelic in Scotland has weakened to such an extent in the 'heartland' Gàidhealtachd communities that the well-recognized models of 'Reversing Language Shift' are now realistically not possible in the Scottish Gaelic context without unprecedented social and political transformation. Therefore, it is argued by this author that in an ever increasing digital society that digital media of various formats will play an ever more important role in the future of any modern Gaelic language community, which will exist across all of Scotland in a 'digital Gàidhealtachd', rather than a geographical one.

This author would argue based on the empirical data for this project and also sourcing from previously gathered data that BBC Alba has contributed significantly towards the normalisation of Gaelic in Scottish society. It is recognized that minority language television in the current (2017) form of BBC Alba has supported language maintenance by raising awareness of Gaelic as a contemporary, modern and everyday spoken language, fostering a wider acceptance of the language and also positively affecting language ideologies amongst the larger non-speaker population. Although BBC Alba is far from the only factor responsible for Gaelic language revival, it could be argued that it has played the most important role influencing the collective sociological imagination of contemporary Scottish society.

Word count: 44,179 (body), 51,620 (including appendices).

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1**

#### **Sample Transcript**

**Key: R = researcher; P= participant**

R – Thanks very much for coming to speak to me today.

P – No bother.

R - Can you please start off by telling me a wee bit about yourself?

P – Sure, I’m from Edinburgh, but I live in Glasgow and I support Hibernian and I’ve had a big smile on my face since the 21<sup>st</sup> of May!

R – Well, being a Hibs fan myself I can certainly relate to that! Emm...I’m now going to ask you about a few questions about BBC Alba - the Gaelic television channel. Can you tell me when you first started watching BBC Alba?

P – Well probably when they started doing the football. I think that’s when it came to a lot of people’s attention. There was games on. I’m a big football fan and there’s a tsunami of football coverage out there. Particularly English football and there’s just so much of it, but basically when Hibs were on BBC Alba – that’s when I would watch it, and of course we’ve been on a lot over the past couple years. Ironically because of Bruce, there was some other programme called “Partick” and it seemed to feature everyone in that Gaelic world, including Bruce, and I looked at that one night because he’d been mentioning it. But other than that I’ve never watched much.

R – So, it was the football that drew you in and that’s what most appeals to you?

P – Yeah, well I’m not a Gaelic speaker so...emm...actually you know, I’ve got three children and it’s rare that I get to my television! But to be honest – it’s just the football and it’s Hibs effectively that has taken me into that world.

R – So from watching that the channel because of the football, you haven’t been encouraged to watch any other programmes?

P – Eh not really, because em I've not really been aware of watching it and something coming up saying, some kind of trailer for something else, that I can really remember at all. I don't know if that's because there aren't any, or because or it wasn't something that appealed, or...I genuinely can't remember. Because I'm not a Gaelic speaker, I'm kind of watching it and your brain kind of fuzzes out a little bit, because it's a language you don't understand and then you may hear a bit of commentating in English, so you can pick up again. Other than that it tends to be the picture that you're seeing and you're not quite aware of the words around it and whether there's been after programmes mentioned in Gaelic, I've not really been aware of it

R- So you think that they may be missing a trick...if there was I suppose explicit opportunities for Gaelic learning?

P – Yeah, well I think it would be an obvious opportunity, I would reckon so. Well there's a lot of people that I know – or at least I've spoken to, who have watched football on BBC Alba and I don't think they watch anything else. And I don't know if that's a lack of interest or the extent to which they're just unaware of programmes of interest, about I dunno...I did watch something else funnily enough...that programme about Hibs – the Famous Five – there we go! And again, I was aware of that, through Hibs.net actually, not through a particular trailer on television or anything

R – I suppose they have got a bit of reputation for doing football related programmes amongst football fans?

P – Well I have to say that I wasn't aware of those other programmes, but the Famous Five programme – Xxxx actually knew the presenter, I'm not sure what his name was, some guy who used to be a very good footballer himself, apparently...it wasn't you was it?

R: No, no - So it's that small world, so I saw it advertised on Hibs.net rather than directly from the channel itself.

R – What do you think of the quality of the programmes?

P – I think it's pretty good. It's a recurring comment on Hibs.net which is - the coverage is much than watching Sky – I dunno if that's because the commentators annoy everyone! But the coverage is always good. It's also because there's no

adverts. But there's also usually a feature at half time where they're speaking in English to a player or whatever and I think it's usually decent and is of quite a lot of interest. But because of the games that they (BBC Alba) get the game are maybe not the most glamorous, it's generally I believe lower league – but the coverage it's self is decent.

R – So now moving on a bit, I would like to ask you some questions about the Gaelic language – do you understand or speak any Gaelic whatsoever?

P – No...well the odd word but nothing much at all.

R – OK that's absolutely fine – and eh, do you feel that Gaelic is important to Scotland's cultural heritage>

P – I do - I do strongly. Emmm...in terms of something historical, which has died away – I think it's important to bring it back. My views are influenced by my colleague – XXXX – to be honest – 'cause he gets involved in a lot of stuff and he talks about it and everything. And, because I work in public health I've been to talks and people have been talking about analysing census data and the use of Gaelic has come up. I couldn't for a minute pretend to have specific interest in Gaelic, but in terms of general interest in Scottish culture – I think it's very important.

R – So you've mentioned your one colleague who speaks Gaelic – apart from him – have you ever heard Gaelic being spoken – either in Glasgow or outwith the city?

P – Not much to be honest, but because my colleague is on regularly on BBC Alba and speaks about our work - I occasionally click on videos but I don't understand a word of it. Apart from that not much. But ironically in Ireland – there was a guy over from Scotland who was speaking to Scottish Gaelic to a girl who had Irish Gaelic and he was speaking kind of gingerly, but it was great to watch. So , apart from that not much...and when we go on holidays in Scotland it tends not to be to Gaelic speaking areas so I've not really put myself in position where I'm likely to hear it, to be honest.

R – Do you think you would like to learn Gaelic the future? Is it something that interests you?

P – Well, my background is in languages – I did Italian at University and languages were always something that I had an interest in. This might come across as ignorant –



but it looks like a hard language to learn. With the romance languages I can, kind of understand most written down, but with Gaelic I don't think I could understand it at all, and I think it would be difficult language to learn in my retirement. And the thing is, you can go to different parts of Scotland, and because you know they can also speak English, there's less pressure on you to learn the language. And it's a chicken and egg thing, if you don't an arena which requires the use of Gaelic. And I don't know how you get to that position where you can force people to want to do it, if you know what I mean.

R: Sure, yep.

R: So, in terms money spent on Gaelic – how supportive are you, of your tax money being spent on Gaelic?

P: Well I suppose, Gaelic is very important in terms of Scotland's history and culture, so I'm extremely supportive of money being spent on Gaelic to bring it to a higher level. In the same way that I believe Welsh has been well supported by Welsh language television.

R: Have you ever taken an interest in how much is spent on Gaelic?

P: Not really, I can't imagine people are complaining about how much is spent on Gaelic – I don't get that feeling. I couldn't tell if a lot is spent on it or not, I suspect not. I know there's been a concerted effort by the Scottish Government, in terms of train station names, at a very low level. But I don't get the impression that millions and millions are being spent on it. I see Airdrie is now Gaelic on a train station sign but that's about it! And I would support more money going into it, to see the language survive.

R: From your understanding, is it worthwhile to spend money in the Gaelic heartlands, or do you think Gaelic should be equally supported in the cities, where I suppose, there are places which are seeing a significant increase in demand for school places, such as Glasgow?

P: I think as an important part of Scottish culture, I would support it wherever there is demand. I think it's good for society generally.

R: What do you think the public should expect when dealing with the council in Gaelic – as in should the public have a right to deal with the council in Gaelic and expect a response?

P: In principle I do believe that, yes. In times, when there is cuts, it would be a hard thing to achieve and the *Daily Express* would have a field-day, I'd expect!

R: What about a Gaelic speaker being a witness in court?

P: Yes, forget what I just said. I was trying to think out the practicalities of it, but this is about rights and any minority language should have the right.

R: And along the same line, in terms of the right to Gaelic-medium education, where you are located in Scotland?

P: Yes in theory – but my understanding is that, there are [sic] a whole shortage of Gaelic teachers so there are other issues, but in principle, yes.

R: Have you seen Gaelic signs...and road signs around, and if so how do you feel about their erection in places around Scotland – in the Highlands eh – and also down here in central belt...?

P: Yes, but only if they're in both languages. I've seen this in Donegal when you come to a junction and there's a sign with a worrying looking symbol and then there's some Gaelic that we didn't have a scooby what it meant.

R: Is Gaelic amodern language/ - as in, what are classified in schools as 'modern languages' – are 'modern languages' more important than Gaelic? Would you see them as equals?

P: Well as a non-English living language, then yes, I would class them equally.

R: Who holds the main responsibility for the future of the Gaelic language?

P: With all these things there has to be political involvement. Without out political involvement and investment – nothing will happen, in any walks of life. I would assume it was political leadership allied to particular communities who have expertise and interest in keeping it alive.

R: Completely hypothetically, if you had the opportunity to send your own children to Gaelic-medium education, would you?

P: Hypothetically, yes because of my age! But yes, some of fiends have children in GME including an English friend. That was quite illuminating for me – I wasn't quite sure of the background of the children, being completely non speakers. I think people have a perception that because it's a Gaelic school, you must speak Gaelic as a parent, but obviously that's not the case, so yeah absolutely yes, I would.

P: How do you view the future for the Gaelic language?

R: I think fairly optimistic – I think for a while very little was being done and it going to a bad place and I would assume because of the greater awareness of it that it will at least stay present levels, in terms of children going through Gaelic school, but I am talking out my arse 'cause I don't know. Lehman's perspective is that it will stay at current levels.

R: is there anything else you'd like to say?

P: Well to go back to BBC Alba – they're potentially not exploiting an opportunity in making football people more aware of other things that are going on which might get them more interested in Gaelic generally. Everybody, I know who watches BBC Alba watches it for the football, and very little else. But there's an opportunity there to create better exposure of what else is there, exploit the audience, in terms of other Gaelic programming, I suppose. You know when you've got that captive audience, there's an opportunity to expose the audience to other programming and I'm not aware of that happening, in English, that would draw them in further. To a degree I think people might zone out when the Gaelic is on you don't understand. But when if something flags up straight afterwards advertising other programmes that people would be interested in but I'm not aware of this happening. But for 90 minutes during the football you've got people's attention and I think they could make more of that, to engage with people to encourage other Gaelic programming.

Absolutely, I think that more people are aware of Gaelic because of BBC Alba but it's taking it to that next level and potentially getting the audience more involved in other programmes and potentially other Gaelic things. Apart from station signs and other superficial things, down here you don't see or hear it – it's not particularly visible. So

that's [BBC Alba) is the main medium in which people are aware of it [Gaelic)] – that's the main way people come into contact with it [Gaelic]. And again, they [BBC Alba] should perhaps do more with it [use it better as an opportunity to promote Gaelic].

R: Well, thank you very much indeed. That's all the questions I have for you today, and I really appreciate you giving up your time to speak with me today, thanks again. Cheers.

P: No bother at all.

**End of interview & transcription data.**

## **Appendix 2**

### **Interview Guide**

***For the reader:** \*\* This guide informs the interviewer, however it is not a list of questions asked to the interviewee, but rather a guide in order to direct the interview through the topics of interest. Questions will not be in the order listed, and are arranged differently as the interview progresses. \*\**

### **Personals:**

Thanks for participating.

Can you tell me about yourself?

Where you're from / where you live now?

### **BBC ALBA**

When did you start watching....?

What brought you to watching BBC Alba in the first place?

What appeals to you about the channel?

What programmes do you watch?

How long do you tend watch the channel? i.e. is it just for specific programmes or do

What do you like about the channel?

What do you dislike about the channel?

How do you think they could improve the channel?

### **Gaelic and BBC ALBA**

Can you speak/understand any Gaelic?

How often have you come into contact with Gaelic?

Have you seen it on signs/heard it anywhere etc.?

Have you learnt any Gaelic as a result of watching BBC ALBA?

Would you like learn/learn more Gaelic?

Do you think BBC ALBA does enough to help viewers learn Gaelic?

Is Gaelic something you've come more aware of because of BBC ALBA?

Have you ever turned the sound down on BBC ALBA?

Does BBC ALBA provide worthwhile programmes or would you rather that the BBC spent resources in another way?

Does BBC reflect Gaelic culture well?

### **The Gaelic language**

Do you think the Gaelic language is important?

Have you heard about the teaching of Gaelic in schools?

What do you think about this?

What do you think the future holds for the Gaelic language in Scotland?

### **Final remarks**

Is there anything else you'd like to comment on relating to BBC Alba, the Gaelic language or any related subjects?

### **Appendix 3 – Survey Questionnaire Qualitative Data**

“The following box allows you to add any further comments you have about Gaelic language or Gaelic media in Scotland”

#### **Open-Ended Responses:**

I am not a native speaker, but have two children in gme in Inverness, and I am trying to learn.

I feel it is extremely important to enhance and protect the Gaelic language in Scotland. I think it should be compulsory to learn basic Gaelic through primary and secondary school.

Have an red button option like s4c for an English language option on certain shows, sport/documentaries

The deliberate destruction of Gaelic language and culture by 18th/19th C Governments needs to be redressed by present authorities and individuals.

Instead of a separate Gaelic TV service a Gaelic interpretation could be provided by radio. This would allow for a much further use of Gaelic in the homes where its used or spoken. And I suspect it would be cheaper.

Its important we don't forget our roots and we should be proud of our language and Scottish heritage

Gaelic is spoken by less than 2% of the Scottish population, similar to that of other Celtic nations and regions. It's importance to those people is as important as it should remain.

Waste of public money

let the language die out

I am not a Gaelic speaker but recognise the importance of it and I'd like to see usage increased. It needs to become more of a working language. Maybe it should become more compulsory up to P7 for example - even wee bits of it in primary schools to raise awareness amongst kids. How can businesses in Scotland be encouraged to use it more without huge costs or more red tape?

From a football perspective , BBC Alba has been a fantastic addition to the coverage . The preparation that goes into providing an insight into reach Scottish club surpasses what BBC Scotland, STV or Sky offers. The increased number of live games is very encouraging and I hope it continues to increase.

While I don't speak Gaelic, I do recognise it as part of a wider cultural and national identity and would be sad to see it die out. I think the only way to effectively promote the language would be at a national level through government initiatives.

We are a diverse country and each person should be able to speak what ever language they like. However we live in Scotland / UK where english is spoken public information and dealing with public organisations should be carried out in English. To cater for all other languages just causes problems and additonal expense.

Why are there more newco rangers games than Celtic games on that pathetic channel? Please stop the gibberish and get the games on BBC1 in English.

I wish I had learned the language

I have no exposure to Gaelic and disagree with any view that it should be seen as the second language of Scotland. Scots is more extensively used in its various dialects through out the country and doesn't have half the privilege that Gaelic has. More Scots and less Gaelic please.

BBC Alba provide a valuable service in covering Scottish football that does not get coverage elsewhere - e.g. lower division games, Challenge Cup etc. This is a big opportunity to engage viewers in Gaelic - perhaps by teaching a few words during each game. At the moment viewers gain no understanding of Gaelic from Alba's football coverage

Gaelic is important to Scotland. We should do something similar to what the Canadians do with French and Quebec. Give Gaelic speakers equal rights as English ones.

my first experience of Gaelic came from vinyl records and trips to Oban I think Gaelic is a heritage worth keeping alive.



Believe that Gaelic is important in Scotland due to its historical importance. However I don't think it should be forced on anyone in any way, though we should cater to the gaelic speaking community.

Gaelic is a language for the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, if the people in this area want to keep this language alive then I have no problem with it at all. I feel though introducing it to other parts of Scotland won't work mainly due to it not being spoken widely by the local community unlike the above where people who speak it can quickly develop the new learners ability to understand the language. It can maybe be used as a trial in certain areas to see how the local children adapt to it , out of a class of 30 you will probably find maybe a few will find it interesting this is my opinion . Good Luck with your survey

I strongly believe that Gaelic should be a subject taught in high schools across Scotland. It is bizarre to me that we have another language of our own yet keep it so far away from young people across Scotland and instead promote French, German and Spanish.

A lot of my family originated in the West Coast and as a child I spent a great deal of my holidays around the Lochcarron area. Friends I had in the area all took Gaelic at school, road sign's were in Gaelic and some of the older people in the villages spoke it so I was familiar with it. Whilst I think it's important and respect and encourage the people who want to maintain and promote it, I don't feel it's something that would affect me greatly. I enjoy BBC Alba only for the football as I can't iunderstand any of the other programmes.

It disnae baether me ata' fit fowk spik tae their freens an' neebers wi. Bit fan names are pit on road signs they national language should be at the tap.nae hauf way doon.

Seems a bit pointless when the world has expanded its horizons to keep a very insular language going. Native Welsh is the same. Having said that, if people want to carry on and try and help the language expand, go for it.

I spend a lot of time up North , and if it had been more accessable i would certainly have made more of an effort to pick it up , as opposed to just a few words .

Although I don't speak Gaelic I would be disappointed if it disappeared. It is important that it continues but just who is responsible for that I don't know. I suppose the opportunity for all children to learn Gaelic should be available in the not too distant future.

I believe that Gaelic should be a natural language for all Scottish people whether they be indigenous or immigrant. We should follow the lead of Wales in encouraging our own language

My father in law speaks Gaelic fairly fluently so I hear him use it / read books to further develop his Gaelic. I personally think it is a good thing to promote the language, and learning at school should be promoted by local authorities as an optional 2nd language, offering those who do want their children to learn Gaelic the option, without making it compulsory.

I attended Tollcross Primary School in Edinburgh, which has a dedicated Gaelic language wing, so a few of my friends can speak Gaelic. I wish my parents had placed me in the Gaelic speaking section of the school, because whilst I have a mixture of Scottish and American heritage, I still believe that Gaelic should be more widely taught in Scotland to preserve it and watch it blossom again. This is why I tune into BBC Alba, thankfully some of the programming has subtitles, but by and large I enjoy what is on offer. If I ever have children, they will learn Gaelic, because to me, it is important to have people in Scotland that can speak that language.

Gaelic needs to be more widespread in all walks of life.

My grandson has recently started a Gaelic speaking nursery/primary school and I am trying to find ways to encourage further learning at home. Currently BBC Alba TV is a good option. I am also trying to learn a few words/phrases myself.

Maybe the government should provide free educational resources for adults and children to speak Gaelic. I'd like one of those language CD's for a start.

Living in Edinburgh there was not the opportunity to learn Gaelic even as an elective at school. I think it is a very interesting language and there needs to be more emphasis on it outwith the Highlands and Islands otherwise I will be diluted over generations.

The more people get involved with Gaelic and the more programs on TV and radio the stronger Gaeldom will become.

## **Bibliography**

All author names, places and publishers are given as printed and in the Harvard style of referencing. All M', Mc and Mac surnames are treated as Mac for the alphabetical listings.

## **References**

Alexander, D., (2014), "Gaelic TV, radio can thrive in UK", Scotsman.com accessed on 19 August 2014 at <http://www.scotsman.com/news/danny-alexander-gaelic-tv-radio-can-thrive-in-uk-1-3514016>

Allen, D., (2014), 'I swear, fans are a bunch of chanters', *Herald*, accessed on 25 February 2014 at <http://www.heraldscotland.com/comment/columnists/i-swear-fans-are-a-bunch-of-chanters.23503183>

Agheysi, R. and Fishman J. A., (1970), 'Language Attitude Studies: A Brief Survey of Methodological Approaches', *The Journal of Anthropological Linguistics* Vol. 12, No. 5 (May, 1970) 137-157

Amezaga, J. and Arana, E., (2012), *Minority Language Television in Europe: commonalities and differences between Regional Minority Languages and Immigrant Minority Languages* Vol. 17 - Núm. 32 ISSN: 1137-1102 pp. 89-106  
<http://www.ehu.es/zer/hemeroteca/pdfs/zer32-05-amezaga.pdf>

Atkinson, D. and Holmes, K. A., (2010), 'Code switching, identity and ownership in Irish radio comedy', *Journal of Pragmatics* 43 (2011) pp. 251–260

Aitchison, J. and Carter, H., (2004), *Spreading the Word: The Welsh language 2001*, Ceredigion: Y Lolfa Cyf

Amorrortu, E., (2002), 'Language Planning and Linguistic Attitudes in the Basque Case', delivered at II Simposio Internacional sobre o Bilingüismo /Second University of Vigo International Symposium on Bilingualism, Vigo 23-26 de outubro de 2002 / Vigo, October 23-26, 2002, Universidade de Vigo (Galicia, Spain) Accessed on 20 November, 2012 at:  
<http://webs.uvigo.es/ssl/actas2002/04/01.%20Estibaliz%20Amorrortu.pdf>

Ajzen, I., (1991), 'The theory of planned behavior', *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 50, 179–211

Azurmendi, A., (2013), Reforms to the European regional minority-language television corporations in the current context of crisis accessed at [http://www.revistalatinacs.org/068/paper/981\\_Navarra/15\\_Azurmendien.html](http://www.revistalatinacs.org/068/paper/981_Navarra/15_Azurmendien.html)

Baker, C. (1992), *Attitudes and Language*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters

BBC News, (2009), Motorists 'misread' bilingual signs accessed on 5<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2017 at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/highlands\\_and\\_islands/7928902.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/highlands_and_islands/7928902.stm)

BBC News (2011), *Gaelic TV channel BBC Alba attracts more viewers*, accessed on 03/10/16 at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-15384139>

BBC News (2012), *English-Gaelic road signs 'not a crash risk'* accessed on 5 Dec. 2012 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-19436867>

BBC Trust, , (2010), *BBC Alba review Final conclusions*, accessed on 29 April 2003 at: [www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/our\\_work/alba/alba\\_review.pdf](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/our_work/alba/alba_review.pdf)

BBC Trust, (2011) *Service review: The BBC's national radio stations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales* accessed on 20/11/2015 at [http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/our\\_work/nations\\_radio/2011/radio\\_nan\\_gaidheal\\_findings.pdf](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/our_work/nations_radio/2011/radio_nan_gaidheal_findings.pdf)

BBC Trust (2015), *BBC Alba Service Licence*, Issued July 2015, accessed on 04/10/16 at [http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/regulatory\\_framework/service\\_licences/tv/2015/alba\\_jul15.pdf](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/regulatory_framework/service_licences/tv/2015/alba_jul15.pdf)

Beyer, S., (2005), 'Origins and development of language attitudes towards the Irish language in the Republic of Ireland', Master's Thesis, Birkbeck University

Blain, N. and Hutchison, D., (2008), *The Media in Scotland*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press

Bòrd na Gàidhlig, (2007), *National Gaelic Language Plan 2007-2012*, Plana Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig, Inverness: Bòrd na Gàidhlig

Bòrd na Gàidhlig, (2012), *National Gaelic Language Plan 2012/2017 Growth & Improvement*, accessed on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2014 at <http://www.Gaidhlig.org.uk/bord/en/national-plan-for-gaelic/>

Bòrd na Gàidhlig (2016), *Gaelic Education* accessed on 21/09/15 at <http://www.gaidhlig.org.uk/bord/en/our-work/gaelic-education/>

Browne, D. R., , (1996), *Electronic Media and Indigenous Peoples*, Ames: Iowa State University Press

Bryant, J. and Oliver. M. B., (2009), *Media effects : advances in theory and research*, Oxon: Routledge

Cabarrubias, J. and Fishman, J. A., (1983), *Progress in language planning: International perspectives*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co.

Carmichael, A., (2013), *Gaelic ‘enormously important to Scottish culture’* accessed on 13/12/17 at <http://www.scotsman.com/heritage/people-places/gaelic-enormously-important-to-scottish-culture-1-3147337>

Chalmers, D. and Danson, M., (2006), ‘Language and economic development – complimentary or antagonistic?’ in McLeod, W. (ed.) *Revitalising Gaelic in Scotland*, Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press

Chalmers, D. and Danson, M., (2009), *The Economic Impact of Gaelic Arts and Culture within Glasgow: A report for Glasgow City Council*, accessed on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2013 at <http://www.douglaschalmers.com/Consult.htm>

Chalmers, D., (2010), ‘The need to integrate policy and practice – a decade of empirical evidence’, in *Coimhearsnachd na Gàidhlig an-diugh / Gaelic Communities Today*’ ed. by Gillian Munro, Dunedin Academic Press 2010.

Chalmers, D., Danson, M. (2010, May), ‘BBC Alba the impact of the new Gaelic television channel’, Paper presented at the Mercator Network International Conference Media Convergence and Linguistic Diversity: Aberystwyth, Wales.

Chalmers, D., (2010), 'Eòrpa - Taking Europe from the Periphery to the Core?', in *Centres and Peripheries: Metropolitan and Non-Metropolitan Journalism in the Twenty First Century*, ed. by David Hutchison. Cambridge Scholars Publishing: February 2011

Chalmers, D., Danson, M., Lang, A. and Milligan, L., (2013), 'The Contribution of BBC Alba to Gaelic: A Social and Economic Review', in *Social media and MLs: Convergence and the Creative Industries*, (2013), Jones, E. H. G., Uribe-Jongbloed, E., Multilingual Matters: Bristol

Cooper, R. L. (1996 [1989]) *Language Planning and Social Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cormack, M., (2000), 'MLs, Nationalism and Broadcasting: The British and Irish Examples', *Nations and Nationalism*, 6: 383-398.

Cormack, M., (2004), 'Gaelic in the Media in Scottish Affairs', no.46, winter 2004, accessed on 25/03/13 at [http://www.scottishaffairs.org/backiss/pdfs/sa46/SA46\\_Cormack.pdf](http://www.scottishaffairs.org/backiss/pdfs/sa46/SA46_Cormack.pdf)

Cormack, M., (2005), "Developing Minority Language Media Studies", accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2014 at <http://www.aber.ac.uk/mercator/images/CormackText.pdf>

Cormack, M., (2006), 'The media, language maintenance and Gaelic', in McLeod, W., (ed.) *Revitalising Gaelic in Scotland*, Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press

Cormack, M., (2008), *Gaelic, the media and Scotland*, in Blain, N., Hutchison, D., (2008), *The Media in Scotland*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press

Cormack, M. and Hourigan, N., (2007), *Minority Language Media: Concepts, Critiques and Case Studies*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Cormack, M. (2010). 'How can the creative industries contribute to language vitality in a multiplatform environment?', Paper presented at the Mercator Network International, Conference Media Convergence and Linguistic Diversity: Aberystwyth, Wales.

Cotter, M., Dunn, F., and Ó Maolalaigh, R. (2010) 'A' Ghàidhlig ann an Oilthigh Ghlaschu: Ùidh, Comasan agus Beachdan', Roinn na Ceiltis is na Gàidhlig, Sgoil nan Daonnachdan, Colaiste nan Ealan, Oilthigh Ghlaschu., Glasgow. Accessed on 20th Nov, 2012 at: <http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/42741/1/ID42741.pdf>

Crystal, David., (2000). *Language death*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

De Bres, J., (2008), *Planning For Tolerability: Promoting Positive Attitudes and Behaviours Towards The Māori Language Among Non-Māori New Zealanders*, PhD thesis, Victoria University of Wellington: Wellington accessed on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 at <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/41336054.pdf>

Darquennes, J., (2007), 'Paths to Language Revitalization', accessed on 8/04/13 at: <http://www.fundp.ac.be/pdf/publications/66002.pdf>

Dunbar, R., (2001), 'Minority Language Rights in International Law', in *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, Vol. 50, Issue 1 (January 2001), pp. 90-120 50 Int'l & Comp. L.Q. 90

Dunbar, R., (2006), 'Gaelic in Scotland: the legal and institutional framework', in McLeod, W., (ed.) *Revitalising Gaelic in Scotland*, Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press

Dunmore, S., (2015), 'Bilingual life after school? Language use, ideologies and attitudes among Gaelic-medium educated adults', PhD Thesis accessed on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at <https://www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk/handle/1842/10636?show=full>

Edwards, J., R., (2010), *Minority Languages and group identity: Cases and Categories*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing

Eagly, A.H. and Chaiken, S. (1993), *The Psychology of Attitudes*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt, Brace, & Janovich

Fishman, J. A., (1991), *Reversing Language Shift*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Fishman, J. A., (2001), *Can threatened languages be saved?*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters



Gardner, R. C. and Lambert, W. E., (1972), *Attitudes and Motivation in Second-Language Learning*, Massachusetts: Newbury House Publishers

Garrett, P., (2002), *Attitudes to Language – Key topics in sociolinguistics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University press

Glaser, B. G. (1998), *Doing Grounded Theory: issues and discussions*, Mill Valley, CA., Sociology.

Glaser, K., (2007), *Minority Languages and Cultural Diversity in Europe: Gaelic and Sorbian Perspectives*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters

Graffman, K., (2014), *Media behaviour among young Gaelic-speakers – A comparative study in Scotland, Sweden and Finland, Report for MG Alba*, Stockholm: Inculture

Haugen, E., (1959). 'Planning for a standard language in Norway', *Anthropological Linguistics* 1 (3), 8–21

Hepburn, I., (2011), *Bouquets and BARB wires* & Hepburn, I., (2012), *Gael Forced*

*Herald, The*, (2008), 'The Gaelic Job', non-authored *Herald* article published on Saturday 2 February 2008 , accessed on 14 January 2014 at <http://www.heraldscotland.com/the-gaelic-job-1.834005>

*Herald, The*, (2013), 'Letters to the editor: Disloyal to memory of Burns to spurn Scots language for investment in Gaelic', Accessed on 25/10/13 at <http://www.heraldscotland.com/comment/letters/disloyal-to-memory-of-burns-to-spurn-scots-language-for-investment-in-gaelic.19984233>

*Herald, The*, (2013), 'Viewing figures for Gaelic TV channel up 200,000', accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> July at <http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/home-news/viewing-figures-for-gaelic-tv-channel-up-200000-x.21536397>

Hogan-Bruna, G., (2011), 'Language planning and media in minority language and plurilingual contexts', in *Current Issues in Language Planning* Volume 12, Issue 3, 2011

Hohenthal, A., 'Measurement Techniques - What is a Language Attitude?',  
Department of English, University of Turku, Finland  
<http://www.postcolonialweb.org/india/hohenthal/6.1.html>

Holmes, H. K., (2002), *Minority Language Broadcasting: Breton and Irish*, Bristol: Multilingual Matters

Holmes, H. K., (2010), 'Language trends: Reflexivity in commercial language policies and practices', *Applied Linguistics Review*, 2010, 1(1): 67-84.

Hutchinson, R., (2005), *A Waxing Moon–The Modern Gaelic Revival*, Edinburgh Mainstream Publishing

Hutchison, D., (2011), 'The media and literature in contemporary Scotland: challenges and opportunities', *International Journal of Scottish Theatre and Screen*, Volume 4 Number 2, 2011 of  
<http://journals.qmu.ac.uk/index.php/IJOSTS/article/view/132/pdf>

Jamieson, B., (2012), 'A blind mission of self-destruction', in *The Scotsman* (online) accessed online on 11/01/2013 <http://www.scotsman.com/the-scotsman/scotland/bill-jamieson-a-blind-mission-of-self-destruction-1-2727664>

Johnson, S., Milani, T. M., (2010), *Language Ideologies and Media Discourse: Texts, Practices, Politics*, London: Continuum

Jones, G., (1999), 'Minority Languages and Cultures in the Face of Globalisation', Paper presented at a workshop 'Media in Multicultural and Multilingual, Contexts' at the University of Klagenfurt 11-14 November 1999, Mercator Media Project, University of Wales Aberystwyth, accessed on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2014 at <http://www.aber.ac.uk/~merwww/images/Klag.pdf>

Jones, E. H. G., (n.d.), *Linguistic Minorities and Audiovisual Translation*, accessed on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2015 at:

[http://www.aber.ac.uk/~merwww/images/linguistic\\_minorities\\_and\\_audiov.pdf](http://www.aber.ac.uk/~merwww/images/linguistic_minorities_and_audiov.pdf)

Jones, E. H. G., and Uribe-Jongbloed, E., (2013), *Social Media and Minority Languages Convergence and the Creative Industries*, Bristol: Multilingual Matters

Kendall, K. A., et al (2008), *Sustaining Linguistic Diversity: Endangered and MLs and Language Varieties*, Washington: Georgetown University Press

Kirk J. M. and Ó Baoill. D. P., (2002), *Language planning and education : linguistic issues in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and Scotland*, Queens University: Belfast

Lang, A., (2010), 'BBC Alba: the impact of the new Gaelic television channel', Paper presented at the Media Convergence and Linguistic Diversity, Aberystwyth, Wales

Lemish, D. and Rice, M. L., (1986), 'Television as a talking picture book: a prop for language acquisition', *Journal of Child Language* Volume 13.2, pp 251-274

Lysaght, R., (2009), 'Language Image in National Minority Language Television Idents. TG4 (Teilifís na Gaeilge, Ireland) and Whakaata Maori (Maori Television, New Zealand)', *Estudios irlandeses = Journal of Irish Studies* 4, pp. 45-57

MacAskill, K., (2016), 'Let us see ourselves and the world through our own TV lens', accessed, on 12/09/16 at [http://www.heraldscotland.com/opinion/14726620.Kenny\\_MacAskill\\_\\_Let\\_us\\_see\\_ourselves\\_and\\_the\\_world\\_through\\_our\\_own\\_TV\\_lens/?ref=rss](http://www.heraldscotland.com/opinion/14726620.Kenny_MacAskill__Let_us_see_ourselves_and_the_world_through_our_own_TV_lens/?ref=rss)

McCallum Media Monitor, (2010), *Media Evaluation of Pre-Launch and Launch Publicity Concerning BBC Alba* "Prepared on Behalf of Media House", accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2013 at: [http://www.press-cuttings.com/dynamicdata/data/docs/180110\\_BBC%20Alba%20EVALUATION%20PART%201%20of%202.pdf](http://www.press-cuttings.com/dynamicdata/data/docs/180110_BBC%20Alba%20EVALUATION%20PART%201%20of%202.pdf)

MacCaluim, A., (2007), *Reversing Language Shift: The Social Identity and Role of Adult Learners of Scottish Gaelic*, Belfast: Clò Ollscoil na Banriona

McCoy, G., Maolcholaim, S., (2000), *Aithne na nGael: Gaelic Identities*, Belfast, Queen University Belfast

McDowell, W. H., (1992), *The History of BBC Broadcasting in Scotland 1923 – 1983*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press

MacEwan-Fujita, E., (2006) ‘Gaelic Doomed as Speakers Die Out? : The Public Discourse of Gaelic Language Death in Scotland’, in *Revitalising Gaelic in Scotland: Policy, Planning and Public Discourse*. Wilson McLeod (ed.) pp. 279-293. Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press.

MacEwan-Fujita, E., (2008), ‘Working ‘9 to 5’ Gaelic: Speakers, Contexts, Ideologies of an Emerging ML Register’, in Kendall, K. A., et al (2008), *Sustaining Linguistic Diversity: Endangered and Minority Languages and Language Varieties*, Washington: Georgetown University Press

McIntyre, M., (2009), *The Revival of Scottish Gaelic through Education*, Amherst: Cambria Press

McKenna, K, (2016), ‘BBC Alba must not be allowed to wither for lack of cash’, accessed on 12/09/2016 at <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/sep/11/bbc-alba-not-allowed-to-wither-lack-of-funds>

MacKenzie, G. H., (2015), ‘Minority language education, cultural transmission, attitudes and identities: a sociological profile of former Gaelic-medium education (GME) pupils in the Scottish Gàidhealtachd’, Unpublished Masters of Research Thesis: Edinburgh Napier University

MacKinnon, Kenneth (1981), *Scottish Opinion on Gaelic: A report on a national attitude survey for An Comunn Gàidhealach*, Hatfield: Hatfield Polytechnic.

MacKinnon, K., (1991), *Gaelic: A past & Future Prospect*, Saltire: Edinburgh

MacKinnon, K, (1997), ‘*Identity, Attitudes and Support for Gaelic Policies: Gaelic Speakers in the Euromosaic Survey 1994-95*’ accessed on 24/08/15 at [http://www.sgrud.org.uk/anfy/gaelic\\_articles/euromosaic\\_identity\\_belf.htm](http://www.sgrud.org.uk/anfy/gaelic_articles/euromosaic_identity_belf.htm)

MacLennan, I. (2003) '*BBC craoladh nan Gaidheal: Co sinn?*', in *Towards our goals in broadcasting, the press, the performing arts and the economy: Minority languages in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and Scotland*, edited by: Kirk, J. and O Baoill, D., Belfast: Cló Ollscoil na Banríona, 67-72

McLeod, W., (2005), *Gaelic in Edinburgh: Usage and attitudes (a research report)*, Research on Language Policy and Planning, Celtic and Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh

McLeod, W., (2006), *Gaelic in contemporary Scotland: contradictions, challenges and strategies*, Edinburgh: The University of Edinburgh

MacLeod, M.,(2007), 'Measuring Gaelic Language Planning', *Scottish Language*, vol 26, pp. 61-78.

MacLeòid, D. I., (2011), *Dualchas an Aghaidh nan Creag: The Gaelic Revival 1890 – 2020*, Inbhir Nis: Clò-Beag

McMonagle, S., (2012), 'The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages: Still Relevant in the Information Age?', *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe* 12, 1-24

Mastro, D., (2009), 'Effects of Racial and Ethnic Stereotyping', in Oliver, M. B. and B., Jennings (eds), *Media effects: advances in theory and research*, New York: Routledge, pp. 325-41

May, T. (2001), *Social Research Issues, Methods and Process*, 3rd Edition, Buckingham: Open University Press

MG Alba (2012), *Aithisg Bhliadhnail & Aithris nan Cunntasan*, accessed on the 12th of September 2014 at <http://www.mgalba.com/downloads/reports/annual-report-11-12.PDF>

MG Alba (2014), *Aithisg Bhliadhnail & Aithris nan Cunntasan*, accessed on the 12th of September 2014 at <http://www.mgalba.com/downloads/reports/annual-report-13-14.pdf>

MG Alba (2015), *Aithisg Bhliadhnail & Aithris nan Cunntasan*, accessed on the 4th of

December 2016 at <http://www.mgalba.com/downloads/reports/annual-report-14-15.pdf>

MG Alba (2016), *Aithisg Bhliadhnaile & Aithris nan Cunntasan*, accessed on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December 2016 at <http://www.mgalba.com/downloads/reports/annual-report-15-16.pdf>

Miller, P., (2013), 'Subtitled dramas: Gaelic could have the last word', in *The Herald* accessed on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2013 at <http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/home-news/subtitled-dramas-gaelic-could-have-the-last-word.20449139>

Milligan, L., (2010), 'BBC Alba – the impact of the new Gaelic television channel', II Mercator Network International Conference presented within a panel on BBC Alba with Alison Lang, Douglas Chalmers & Mike Danson, [http://www.academia.edu/1667983/BBC\\_Alba - the impact of the new Gaelic television channel](http://www.academia.edu/1667983/BBC_Alba_-_the_impact_of_the_new_Gaelic_television_channel)

Milligan, L., Chalmers, D., Danson, M., Lang, A., (2011), 'BBC Alba's contributions to Gaelic language planning efforts for reversing language shift (RLS)', *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 12:3, 349-361

Milligan-Dombrowski, L., (2013), 'Additional language education and language development goals: the example of Gaelic (learners) education in Highland Council, Scotland', *British Educational Research Journal*, <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3040>

Moriarty, M. (2007). 'Minority language television as an effective mechanism of language policy: A comparative study of the Irish and Basque sociolinguistic contexts', Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Limerick.

Moriarty, M. (2009), 'Normalising language through television: the case of the Irish language television channel, TG4', *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* 4. 2 (Jul 2009): 137-149.

Moriarty, M., (2010), 'The effects of language planning initiatives on the language attitudes and language practices of university students: A comparative study of Irish and Basque', *The Journal of Language Problems & Language Planning* 34:2, 141–157

- Moring, T 2007, 'Functional completeness in minority language media'. in M Cormack & N Hourigan (eds), *Minority language media: concepts, critiques and case studies*. Multilingual Matters, Clevedon, pp. 17-33. Multilingual matters, no. 138
- Moring, T., Lojander-Visapää, C., Nordqvist, A., Vincze, L., Mänty, N., (2011), 'A Comparative Study Of Media, Media Use And Ethnolinguistic Vitality', *Bilingual Communities*, University of Tartu, Provided by Directory of Open Access Journals
- Müller, M., (2006), 'Language use, language attitudes and Gaelic writing ability among secondary pupils in the Isle of Skye [and Plockton]', in McLeod, W., (ed.) *Revitalising Gaelic in Scotland*, Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press
- Munro, G, Taylor, I, Armstrong, T., (2011) *The State of Gaelic in Shawbost: Language Attitudes and Abilities in Shawbost*. Teangue, Isle of Skye: Bòrd na Gàidhlig
- Musk, N., (2008), *Master's Course Spring Term: Language & Culture*, accessed at <http://liu.se/ikk/medarbetare/nigel-musk/nigel-musk-arkiv/1.254008/LangPolicyLangPlanning.pdf>
- Nagpal, J., Nicoladis, E., (2010), *Positive attitudes are not enough: ML survival in the Canadian Prairies Alberta*, University of Alberta, Accessed 19th Nov. 2012 <http://www.immi.se/intercultural/nr24/nagpal.htm>
- NRS (National Records of Scotland), (2013), 'Scotland's Census: Ethnicity, identity, language and religion: Gaelic language skills by sex and age', accessed on 3rd March 2014 at <http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ods-web/standard-outputs.html>
- O' Connell, E. (2016) in *Gaelic Broadcasting: issues, challenges and the way forward: Conference Report*, Edinburgh University accessed on 17<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2018 at [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/broadcasting\\_conference\\_report\\_-\\_english\\_version.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/broadcasting_conference_report_-_english_version.pdf)
- Ofcom (2014), *Audience opinions - BBC Alba, PSB Annual Report* - accessed on 20/09/16 at [http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/broadcast/reviews-investigations/psb-review/psb3/Annex\\_3.iii-\\_Audience\\_opinions\\_BBC\\_Alba.pdf](http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/broadcast/reviews-investigations/psb-review/psb3/Annex_3.iii-_Audience_opinions_BBC_Alba.pdf)

O' Hanlon, Paterson, L., Reid, S, Ormston, R, (2012) 'Public Attitudes to Gaelic in Scotland' accessed at <http://www.scotcen.org.uk/media/176045/public-attitudes-to-gaelic-in-scotland-2012.pdf>

Ó Laoire, M., (2000), 'Language Policy and the Broadcast Media: A Response', *Current Issues in Language & Society* 7. 2: 149-154.

Oliver, J., (2002), 'Young People and Gaelic in Scotland: Identity Dynamics in a European Region', PhD thesis, University of Sheffield, available electronically through ESCUS (The European Social and Cultural Studies Centre):<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/escus/papers.html#Theses>

Oliver, J., (2005), '*Scottish Gaelic Identities: Context and Contingencies*', *Scottish Affairs*, no. 51, 1-24

Oliver, J. (2011), 'Articulating 'Home' from 'Away'', *Cultural Identities, Belonging and Citizenship, Anthropology in Action*, Volume 18, Number 2, pp. 9-18

Oliver, J., (2006), 'Where is Gaelic? Revitalisation, language, culture and identity', in McLeod, W., (ed.) *Revitalising Gaelic in Scotland*, Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press

Ortega, A, Amorrortu, E., (2010), 'The Attitudes of Non-ML Speakers to ML Revitalization: What are Non-Basque Speakers Prepared to Do for Basque?', Conference Paper at: *Reversing Language Shift – How to Re-awaken a Language Tradition, Carmarthen, Wales XIV Conference of the Foundation for Endangered Languages*, with University of Wales Trinity Saint David, 13-15 September 2010, Accessed 19th Nov. 2012 at <http://www.slideshare.net/UNESCOmhok/the-attitudes-of-nonminority-language-speakers-to-minority-language-revitalization-what-are-nonbasque-speakers-prepared-to-do-for-basque>

Onwuegbuzie, A.J , and Leech N. L., (2005), 'Linking Research Questions to Mixed Methods Data Analysis Procedures', *The Qualitative Report* Volume 11 Number 3 September 2006 474-498, accessed on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2014 at <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR11-3/onwuegbuzie.pdf>

Puzey, G., (2012), *Two-way traffic: how linguistic landscapes reflect and influence the politics of language* in D. Gorter, H. F. Marten, L. Van Mensel (eds.), *Minority*



Languages in the Linguistic Landscape. New York: Palgrave Macmillan: 127–147,  
Accessed on 20th Nov, 2012 at:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/nana.12347>

Ritchie, J., Lewis, J. (2003), *Qualitative Research in Practice*, London: Sage

Roberts, A., (1991), 'Parental Attitudes to Gaelic-Medium Education in the Western Isles of Scotland' *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 12. 4: 253-269.

Robson, C. (2002) *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Ross, D., (2012) 'Key target is missed in bid to save Gaelic'. *The Herald*. Glasgow. Retrieved 26 July 2016.

Scottish Government, The, (2008), *Implementing the Action Programme for Nitrate Vulnerable Zones in Scotland: Farming Practices and Awareness*, accessed on 21/09/16 at <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2008/01/07105336/3>

Scottish Government, The, (2010), *Scottish Government Response to Bòrd na Gàidhlig's Action Plan to Increase the Number of Gaelic Speakers*, accessed on 8/04/2013 at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/04/bord-na-gaidhlig>

Scottish Government, The, (2010), *BBC Alba Review – Scottish Government response*, accessed on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2010 at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/ArtsCultureSport/arts/Archive/Broadcasting/Broadcasting>

Scottish Government, The, (2013), *Deagh naidheachd airson Craoladh Gàidhlig* accessed on 16<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2013 at <http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/Deagh-naidheachd-airson-Craoladh-G%C3%A0idhlig-531.aspx>

Shoba, J. A., (2010), 'Scottish classroom voices: a case study of teaching and learning Scots', *Language and Education*, Vol. 24, No. 5, 385–400

Sierp, A., (2008), 'Minority Language Protection in Italy: Linguistic Minorities and the Media', *Journal of Contemporary European Research* (JCER) Vol 4 Issue 4, accessed on 8/04/13 at [www.jcer.net/index.php/jcer/article/download/158/125](http://www.jcer.net/index.php/jcer/article/download/158/125)

Social Media Research Group, The (2016), *Using social media for social research: An introduction*, accessed on 18/12/17 at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/524750/GSR\\_Social\\_Media\\_Research\\_Guidance\\_-\\_Using\\_social\\_media\\_for\\_social\\_research.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524750/GSR_Social_Media_Research_Guidance_-_Using_social_media_for_social_research.pdf)

Sproull, A Chalmers, D. (1998), *The Demand for Gaelic Artistic and Cultural Products and Services*, Proiseact nan Ealan: Inverness.

Strubell, M, (2000), 'Linguistic diversity: Which language model for Europe?', Paper prepared for the symposium Humanities and Philology Studies 2000, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Barcelona

*Stornoway Gazette*, (2013), 'BBC Alba to focus on drama and children's programmes', Published on 07/07/2013 accessed on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> July at: <http://www.stornowaygazette.co.uk/news/local-headlines/bbc-alba-to-focus-on-drama-and-children-s-programmes-1-2992273>

Stuart-Smith, J. (2006), 'The influence of the media', in *The Routledge Companion to Sociolinguistics*, ed. by C. Llamas, L. Mullany, and P. Stockwell, 140-48. London: Routledge

Stuart-Smith, J., Timmins, C., Pryce, G., and Gunter, B. (2013), 'Television can also be a factor in language change: evidence from an urban dialect', *Language*, 89 (3). pp. 1-36

Talbot, M., (2007), *Media Discourse: Representation and Interaction*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press

*The New Statistical Account of Scotland* (1831-1845). 15 Volumes, Edinburgh. Electronic version: <http://edina.ac.uk/stat-acc-scot/>

Thomas, E. M. and Roberts, D. B., (2011), 'Exploring bilinguals' social use of language inside and out of the Minority Language classroom', *Language and Education* Vol. 25, No. 2: 89-108

Trudgill, P., (1984), *Language in the British Isles*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Uribe-Jongbloed, E., (2014), '*Minority language media studies beyond eurocentrism: Cormack's seven conditions revisited*', *Catalan Journal of Communication & Cultural Studies*, Vol. 6 No. 1: 35-54

Watson, M. and MacLeod, M., (2010), *The Edinburgh Companion to the Gaelic Language*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

West, C. and Graham, A., (2011), *Attitudes Towards the Gaelic Language Scottish Government Social Research August 2011*, (TNS-BMRB) Accessed on 25/01/13 at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/355445/0120038.pdf>

*West Highland Free Press* (2014), 'Freagairt do draghan mu MG ALBA', 11<sup>th</sup> September 2014