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**“A nation survives through its language and traditions.”
(Earl István Széchenyi, supporter of the Hungarian
language reform in the 19th century)**

Compounding, Preposed Adjectives and Intensifiers in Scottish Gaelic

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Abstract

This thesis deals with the topic of compounding in Scottish Gaelic, in particular the relationship between marked adjective + noun compounds (e.g. *deagh oidhche* ‘good night’) and their unmarked noun + adjective alternatives (e.g. *oidhche mhath*, literally ‘night good’). The first part of the thesis surveys the relevant linguistic literature on compounding, with a specific focus on compounding in Celtic languages, and the research question for the investigation is specified as follows: in which circumstances do Gaelic speakers use the marked adjective + noun constructions in contrast to the unmarked alternatives?

The investigation itself consists of two experimental studies. The first of these is a corpus study using a 2.5 million word, mainly 20th century subcorpus of *Corpas na Gàidhlig*, a 19 million word corpus of Scottish Gaelic texts covering a range of genres, dialects and historical periods. In the course of this study, all phrases in which these adjectives occurred were collected and analysed. To annotate data the freeware AntConc concordance package was used, followed by a statistic analysis of the annotated phrases. A range of hypotheses were developed as a result of the corpus study, for example: (a) the role of conceptuality, subjectivity and emphasis in the use of preposed adjectives as opposed to their plain counterpart; (b) the religious register of *ma(i)th* good; and (c) the role of contrast in the use of attributive plain adjective *aosta* compared with the highly productive use of the preposed adjective *seann-* to convey the meaning ‘old’.

The second experimental study involved interviews with native speakers, with the aim of providing further evidence relating to these hypotheses. 10 interviews were conducted with native speakers of Gaelic, mainly applying pictures and translations of the relevant adjectival phrases, investigating the meaning, stress pattern and hyphenation of these, as well as the default adjectives in loan words or with tangible nouns (e.g. vehicles, animals), etc.

This combined methodology revealed various factors that influence the choice between marked adjective + noun and unmarked noun + adjective constructions, including: (a) dialect (with the overall use of preceding adjectives in South Uist, but the preference for *math* ‘good’ in Lewis); (b) register (*ma(i)th* in religious texts); (c) conceptualisation in the vocabulary (by the preceding adjectives *deagh-* ‘good’ and *droch-* ‘bad’ qualifying abstract concepts, whereas the plain adjectives *math* ‘good’ and *dona* ‘bad’ tangible and countable nouns); (d) pragmatic factors such as the emphatic nature of *deagh-* as opposed to *math*; and (e) grammatical factors (see the use of *deagh-/droch-* in subjunctive clauses, particularly in time expressions).

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I declare that the thesis represents my own work except where acknowledged to others.

1. Introduction

This thesis reflects on two major topics: compounding and the function of adjectives that precede the noun they qualify as opposed to the usual NA pattern of the Scottish Gaelic language. Word combinations containing preceding adjectives include possible compound words; however, in order to understand these we need to broaden our insight on the function and application of preceding adjectives compared to their plain counterparts.

Compounding is an under-investigated area of Scottish Gaelic. It represents a fuzzy area in most (if not all) languages, since compounding is a permanently ongoing process, thus transitional cases will always be expected at certain points of time. A compound is a word that consists of two or more elements which exist as individual words themselves (or function as one such as in *cranberry*); however, which nonetheless has gained phonological and/or semantic unity. The present thesis focusses on a narrow selection of compound words in Scottish Gaelic, in order to provide a detailed study.

A small number of qualifiers which function as intensifiers in some cases, and also appear to create compounds (either as an adjective – or quantity noun as in *làn-spàine* + gen. ‘a spoonful of’, lit. ‘a fill of a spoon of’ – or as an intensifier) are also studied. The compoundhood of such word combinations is underlined by the frequent lenition caused by the initial element, the hyphenation in such phrases (a possible indicator of stress pattern), as well as certain meaning varieties such as *droch-shùil* ‘evil eye/baleful look’ (abstract, figurative meaning) vs *droch shùil* ‘a bad/dodgy eye’ (more literal meaning) and *sàr-dhuine* ‘gentleman’ or ‘chief’ (the highest individual from a group – specific meaning) vs *sàr dhuine* ‘an excellent man’ (a quality – simple adjectival phrase).

To summarise, the aim of this thesis is to investigate the difference between phrases containing preceding adjectives and phrases with plain adjectives (of the same meaning) (*deagh-* vs *math* for ‘good’; *droch-* vs *dona* for ‘bad’; and *sean(n)-* vs *sean* or *aosta* for ‘old’), the degree and meaning of the intensifiers *fìor*, *làn*, *sàr* and *sìor*, as well as to identify some rules and factors which determine compoundhood in such phrases. This study is based on a corpus study carried out on a subcorpus of the *Corpas na Gàidhlig* (The Corpus of Scottish Gaelic), as well as on interviews with 10 native speakers to check and refine the observations arising from the corpus study.

1.1. Methods

1.1.1. Corpus study

A subcorpus of 74 texts (73 in the case of intensifiers) was created from the 205 texts contained in the *Corpas na Gàidhlig*, which is a part of the DASG project¹, and which was established by Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh at the Department of Celtic and Gaelic, University of Glasgow, in 2008. The majority of texts involved in the study originate from the 20th century (or from the beginning of the 21st century). In order to collect data from the corpus, the freeware concordance package AntConc (version 3.2.4 for Windows) was used (developed by Laurence Anthony, Waseda University, Japan).

In the corpus study I wished to compare the use of the preceding and plain adjectives (A+N, N+A): *deagh-/math* for ‘good’, *droch-/dona* for ‘bad’, *sean(n)/-aosta/sean* for ‘old’; as well as to understand the use of the intensifiers *fìor* ‘truly, really’, *làn* ‘fully’, *sàr* ‘extremely, exceptionally’ and *sìor* ‘constantly’ (intensifier/A + A/N/V). For that purpose I collected all phrases containing these words occurring in a subcorpus of 74 texts from the 205 texts of the *Corpas na Gàidhlig* (The Corpus of Scottish Gaelic) (73 in the case of intensifiers). *Corpas na Gàidhlig* was established by Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh at the Department of Celtic and Gaelic, University of Glasgow, in 2008, as part of the DASG project (see Ó Maolalaigh 2013 a, b; 2016a on *Corpas na Gàidhlig* and DASG). I used the freeware software AntConc (concordance package, version 3.2.4 for Windows, developed by Laurence Anthony, at Waseda University, Japan) to collect data from the corpus. All of these sources were published in the 20th century (or at the beginning of the 21st century): the texts originate from 1859–2005 (the earliest material in one of the sources dates back to the early 19th century). They represent various dialects, most from the Outer Hebrides (ever more from Lewis towards later sources: the last 8 between 1990 and 2005 are all from Lewis). The registers also embrace a vast range of styles: poetry (poems and songs), prose (novels, short stories), essays, narratives (storytelling); religious hymns, prayers and biblical texts; some descriptions for museums, drama, history, riddles; a couple of academic texts, political and law texts; a handbook for home nursing, a war diary, one instance of literal correspondence.

Subsequently, I carried out statistic analysis on the occurrences of adjectival phrases (A+N or N+A). In the statistic analysis I use the following terms:

token: one occurrence of a certain phrase

type: all occurrences of the same phrase

¹ Digital Archive of Scottish Gaelic (Dàta airson Stòras na Gàidhlig)

I provided the *mean/average* of the occurrences for both preceding and plain adjectival phrases: $\bar{x} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N x_i$, where x_i is the occurrence, i.e. number of tokens for each type and N the number of all occurrences of all types, i.e. the total number of tokens. The *standard deviation* (the square root of *variance*): $\sigma = \sqrt{V(x)} = \sqrt{\frac{1}{N} \sum x_i^2 - \left(\frac{1}{N} \sum x_i\right)^2}$ indicates the expected occurrence of a type in general, i.e. how far it may fall from the average. The sum of these two (*mean + standard deviation*) gives the threshold value over which the frequency of a type is salient compared to the average. I also gave the type/token ratio (in percentage), which identifies *vocabulary richness* (type/token = vocabulary richness).

1.1.2. Interviews

In the interviews 10 informants were interviewed (6 from Lewis, 1 from Harris, 3 from South Uist). Each interview lasted for 30–40 minutes, and the test included 7 exercises, 3 in order to explore the meaning and use of preceding and plain adjectives, 3 on intensifiers, and 1 on stress and orthography. The exercises were mainly translations, a picture description, stress recognition (informants were asked whether they perceived any difference in meaning between the same phrases/word combinations when pronounced with initial and double stress), and continuum of strength (they had to place intensifiers on a scale depending on their strength). The exercises were constructed to investigate conceptuality in preceding adjectives vs tangibility in plain adjectives; the adjective used in relation to weather or more abstract meanings (e.g. in ‘good day’, ‘bad night’); the role of contrast in sentences containing both the preceding adjective *seann-* and the attributive plain adjective *aosta/sean* for ‘old’; the use of intensifiers with verbs; the degree of intensifiers; etc. The productivity of the different types of adjectives was examined by non-sensible or loan words, and the conceptualising role of preceding adjectives was studied by unusual collocates.

The disadvantages of explicit questions and translation lists are obvious: informants tend to use prestigious forms without realising it. Another problem could be that they start seeing a pattern or will not concentrate on the actual collocate, which could influence their word choice – either using the same kind of adjective spontaneously, or (probably less usually) changing it for variation. In neither case do we gain a reliable picture of actual everyday speech. To minimise this problem the translations were mixed up and a couple of irrelevant examples were applied in the questionnaire as an attempt to distract the attention from preceding adjectives.

Due to limitation of time and of the length of the test, some aspects of the interviews did not work out in the planned way and only a small number of the questions could be addressed from those emerging from the corpus study. Therefore the chapter on native speakers' judgements is not so high in proportion to the amount of data analysed in the corpus study. On the other hand, this part of the research has clarified many of the questions which were addressed in the interviews, and in some cases even questions that I did not specifically raised. These include an insight to dialectal difference between Lewis and the southern islands, the difference between the attributive plain adjectives *sean* and *aosta*, the emphatic nature of *deagh-*, the use of *dona* to express criticism, the use of *deagh-* in conceptual nouns and that of *math* in tangible ones. It has confirmed the compoundhood of certain expressions – such as *droch-shùil* for 'evil eye', *droch-rud* 'evil, badness' and *sàr-dhuine* 'chief'. It has proved to be essential in the final distribution of preceding and plain adjectives as well as in the recommendations on orthography. The majority of the results which emerged in the corpus study have a speculative nature – in this respect the overall advantage of the interviews is that they have provided a definite perspective of the few issues discussed through them. The advantages and disadvantages of both methods used are presented in the table below:

Table 1.

	advantages	disadvantages
corpus study	great amount of data analysed	results are speculative
interviews	personal differences are better reflected	limited number of participants; informants are more self-conscious, less natural ²

1.2. Structure of thesis

Concerning the structure of the thesis, in Chapter 2 the question of compounding is introduced with a general discussion on the subject, based on *The Oxford Handbook of Compounding* (2009). Chapter 3 discusses compounding in Celtic languages, starting with the description of Brittonic compounds (Welsh, Breton and Cornish), followed by the Goidelic languages: Irish, Manx, and a separate section on Scottish Gaelic. Finally a classification of Scottish Gaelic compounds is provided at the end of the chapter. The corpus study is presented in 4 chapters (4–7): the meanings and use of *deagh-* and *math*

² It has to be added that in this particular study the self-conscious aspect of the interviews might not lower the value of the results, as in the revitalisation of a language it may prove rather useful, especially in a semantic research: it may help to retain the colours of the language if the informant lays emphasis on any potential differences in meaning.

‘good’ (4), *droch*- and *dona* ‘bad’ (5), *sean(n)*- and *aosta/sean* ‘old’ (6), and the intensifiers *fìor*, *làr*, *sàr* and *sìor* (7) are surveyed and investigated. Chapter 8 summarises the main results of the corpus study, comparing the observed features with similar phenomena in other languages. Native speakers’ judgements gained from the interviews are presented in Chapter 9. In Chapter 10 findings are summarised, conclusions drawn, suggestions are made on orthography, and, finally, future areas of study are outlined.

1.3. Findings

Chapters 4–6 deal with the results of the corpus study on preceding adjectives and their plain counterparts. After having identified the relevant word combinations and having analysed them statistically, the most frequent ones were categorised according to dialect and register. The most suggestions concerning dialects were drawn with the help of the informants in the interviews on the differences of Lewis and South Uist dialects. With regard to register, the frequent occurrence of *ma(i)th* in religious texts has been observed.

Regarding semantics, two areas have been identified which seem to influence the choice for preceding adjectives over plain ones. One of these is abstraction (or conceptualisation), the other is emphasis. In the interviews pictures and loan words helped the understanding the conceptualising function of preceding adjectives, as well as translations of one phrase with two different meanings in the same sentence (e.g. *old language*, *old friend*). The difference in meaning of the different types of adjectives were investigated as well, during which certain answers of the informants proved the conceptual connotation of preceding adjectives. Particular interest was laid on the adjectives that are used together with time expressions. In the interviews pictures referring to mood or weather were shown to the informants, labelled with the phrases ‘good/bad day’ and ‘good/bad night’. Subjectivity appears to be a factor of choice for preceding adjectives in the case of certain words, referring to time or modality (e.g. *ùine* ‘while’, *latha* ‘day’, *rùn* ‘intention’).

In the corpus study grammatical structures such as coordinatives, listings (a sequence of adjectives placed after each other, qualifying the same noun), adverbial phrases were examined, and revealed the overall majority of plain adjectives in such environments, as well as in non-verbal expressions. By contrast, fixed constructions (such as *’s toil le* ‘like’, *tha cuimhn(e) aig* ‘remember’, etc) tend to contain preposed words (preceding adjectives or intensifiers). The adjectives’ occurrence in names, with loan words and verbal nouns were also studied. Stylistic variation also seem to play a role in choosing between the two types, for which both the corpus study and the interviews served with examples. In Chapter 7 the meanings and connotation of the ‘intensifier words’ *fìor*, *làr*, *sàr*, and *sìor* were

examined. In the interviews native speakers were asked to place these intensifiers on a scale according to their degree. The informants found these words of high register, apart from *fior* ‘quite, really’, which proves to be the most common intensifier in spoken Gaelic.

As I have stated above, the investigated word combinations of this thesis include a number of compound words. Some of these are obvious compounds (exhibiting figurative or specific meaning) – some of these confirmed by native speakers (in giving the difference between phrases with both types), others conventionalised phrases. Parasynthetic compounds and structures of quantity in the case of *làn* (with the meaning ‘the fill of’) have also been identified during this study. In Chapter 10 certain recommendations on orthography are given based on both findings of the corpus study and the views of native speakers.

1.4. Accents and abbreviations

Where accents do not occur in original sources, these are silently added according to the principles set out in the Gaelic Orthographic Conventions. Where stress is relevant, I differentiate between three variants for stress marking: Type 1 for quoting the stress pattern as marked in original work, Type 2 for stress pattern not marked in the original source but deduced from the text, and Type 3 for probable stress patterns according to my own interpretation.

	equal stress	second element stress (with secondary stress on the first element)
Type 1	<i>'deagh 'charaid</i>	<i>,seann-'taigh</i>
Type 2	<i>DEagh CHAraid</i>	<i>seann-TAigh</i>
Type 3	<i>`deagh `charaid</i>	<i>,seann-`taigh</i>

In Chapter 9 Type 1 is used to indicate the informants’ pronunciation. In the discussion about adjectives, preceding adjectives (when referring to them separately) are marked with a hyphen to distinguish between the preceding and plain adjectival forms (i.e. *deagh-*, *droch-*, *sean(n)-* vs *math*, *dona*, *aosta/sean*).

The following abbreviations occur in the thesis:

<i>nom.</i> = nominative	<i>sy</i> = somebody
<i>dat.</i> = dative	<i>sg</i> = something
<i>gen.</i> = genitive	
<i>sg</i> = singular	
<i>pl.</i> = plural	

2. Compounding

This chapter deals with how compounds can be described in the world's languages, what we call a compound, and how this relates to other entities in the language. A classification of compound types is given by Scalise and Bisetto (2005/2009), which is followed by a discussion on how different theoretical frameworks handle compounding within linguistics. The discussions in this chapter are based on *The Oxford Handbook of Compounding* (2009).

2.1 Definitions

Before defining compounds it is important to define two basic concepts which play a major role in the discussion about compounds, i.e. compositionality and lexicalisation. An expression is **compositional** if its meaning can be derived solely from the meaning of its constituents and their syntactic relations. The *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Linguistics* (Matthews 1997/2007) gives two interpretations under the label **lexicalisation**: (1) “the representation of a notional distinction in the lexicon of a language”, i.e. a **conventional expression** and (2) “the change that a word undergoes when it is no longer derived by a productive morphological process“. The latter definition is essential in the formation of compound words, since, in the case of compounds, the whole phrase exists as one entry in the lexicon, and no more grammatical or morphological rules need to be applied on it.

Most commentators in the linguistic literature view compounds as the concatenation of two (or more) constituents (or *components*) that form one word/naming unit, ‘lexeme’ or ‘conceptual unit’. Their semantics and phonology are considered to be different (or partially different) from that of phrases, although they both appear to be situated along a cline. Di Sciullo (2009: 145) identifies the properties shared by compounds as follows:

- they include more than one constituent
- they are opaque syntactic domains (i.e. the syntactic relations between the parts of a compound are not obvious, cf *chess player*: is *chess* an object (somebody who plays chess) or a qualifier (a player of chess)?; *toy factory*: is it a factory (where toys are made) or a toy (of a factory)? (Giegerich 2009: 190))
- their semantics is not necessarily compositional
- their stress pattern does not generally coincide with those of words or phrases

Early generative approaches assumed that compounds are “related to ‘an underlying sentence whose syntactic relations they mirror’” (Marchand 1969: 55, cited by ten Hacken 2009: 63). Kürschner (1974), on the other hand, looking at a structure where N was modified by a relative clause concluded that, although compounds and relative clauses are

related, they cannot have the same deep structure, as their meanings are not the same (ten Hacken 2009: 69-70):

<u>relative clause</u>		<u>compound</u>
implies actual activity		implies habitual or professional activity
<i>a woman who cleans</i>	vs	<i>Putzfrau</i> ‘cleaning woman’
tense specification		habituality
<i>a woman who is</i>	vs	‘cleaning woman’
<i>cleaning/was cleaning/will be cleaning etc</i>		
specifies exact relationship in S		does not specify exact relationship [_{NP} N S]
<i>a boy who transfers newspapers</i>		<i>Zeitungsjunge</i> ‘newspaper boy’, lit. “newspaper’s boy”? (see syntactic opacity above)

By the end of the early period in generative grammar, the idea that compounds could be related to underlying sentences had been dismissed (ten Hacken 2009: 77).

Harley (2009: 130-1), in the framework of Distributed Morphology³, defines a compound as “a word-sized unit containing two or more Roots” (where “Roots carry the non-grammatical, encyclopedic semantic content of a given message”). In Cognitive Linguistics (Heyvaert 2009: 234, 240-2) an individual word is formed when a symbolic relationship between a semantic and a phonological unit becomes automatised, thus creating a symbolic unit. Within this theory, blending research treats compounds “as conceptual blends of two or more mental spaces [mental space: short-term memory packages of knowledge] that are integrated into a new blended space that contains information projected from both input spaces” (initially at any rate). Additionally, the blending “gives rise to emergent new meanings that could not be inferred from either of the mapped domains”. This is in line with the conception that a compound does not only show a unified construction but it also conveys a meaning that goes beyond the compositional meaning derived from its components.

2.2 Problems

We inevitably face several problems if we are to deal with compounds. The first problem we encounter is related to the very existence of compound words. There are various views in this respect: Spencer (2003) claims there are no such entities in the world’s languages.

³ In Harley’s words (2009: 130), “in Distributed Morphology, all identifiable morphemes are the realizations of terminal nodes of a hierarchical (morpho)syntactic structure. Abstract feature bundles are manipulated by syntactic operations (Merge, Move, Agree, etc.) into the appropriate tree structure, [...]. The derivation of this tree structure at some point splits into two subderivations [...] to create a semantically interpretable object (LF), and [...] a well-formed phonological representation (PF).”

Bauer (1998) argues for a cline with compounds at one end and syntactic phrases at the other. Other authors attempt to define a distinct category for compounds. In Olsen's view (2000), for instance, all noun+noun constructions are compounds. (Lieber and Štekauer 2009: 14) Another crucial point is to determine the means by which we can distinguish compounds from other (derived) words and phrases. Giegerich (2009: 180) (from a Lexicalist point of view) considers phrases and sentences fully transparent (their meaning can be derived directly from their structure) and fully productive (an infinite number of new phrases/sentences can be formed in accordance with the underlying grammatical rules). On the other hand, he sees lexicalisation (the emergence of a new naming unit) as a kind of continuum along time: he claims that new word coinages are often retained in a speech community, whereby "their meanings and often also their forms are prone to change [over] time", and as a result they can lose "the structural transparency they may initially have had". The *pro-one* test, for instance, provides a convincing device to draw the line between phrases and compound words on semantic grounds: cases where the full interpretation of the 'associated with' relationship involves argument structure or significant encyclopedic information, and the whole meaning cannot be deduced from the meaning of the components separately, do not belong in the syntax but are lexical. This means, that if the nominal base of an adjectival phrase cannot be replaced by *one*, we are dealing with a compound (cf. **Do you mean the presidential murder or the papal one?* vs *Do you mean the latest murder or the earlier one?*; **Is he a constitutional lawyer or a criminal one?* vs *Is he a rural policeman or an urban one?*). (This test, however, is only valid for a kind of 'attributinal' compound in which the relation between the two components is more complex than being simply 'ascriptive'.) (Giegerich 2009: 195)

At another linguistic level, in terms of semantics, we again find a blurred boundary between compounding and derivation: cf. Dutch *hoofd* 'head' meaning 'main' in a compound, *oud* 'old' – 'former, ex-' in compounds, or *boer* 'farmer'/*man* 'man' – 'trader, seller' as compound constituents. Some examples of these (provided by Booij 2009: 207-9) can be seen in Example 1:

Example 1.

- a) *hoofdingang* 'main entrance'
- hoofdbureau* 'main office'
- hoofdverdachte* 'main suspect'
- b) *oud-burgemeester* 'ex-mayor'
- c) *groente-boer* (lit. 'vegetables-farmer') 'greengrocer'
- melk-boer* (lit. 'milk-farmer') 'milkman'

vis-boer 'fishmonger'
kolen-boer 'coal trader'
les-boer (lit. 'lesson-farmer') 'teacher'
 d) *kranten-man* 'newspaper seller'
melk-man 'milkman, milk seller'
ijsco-man 'ice cream seller'

We can find such 'morphologically incorporated lexemes' also in non-head position:

Example 2.

- a) *kanker* 'cancer' > *kanker-school* 'bloody school'
- b) *meester* 'master' > *meester-werk* 'very good piece of work, masterpiece'
- c) *wereld* 'world' > *wereld-vrouw* 'fantastic woman'
- d) *steen* 'stone' > *steen-koud* 'very cold', *steen-rijk* 'very rich'
- e) *beer* 'bear' (+ linking particle *-e*) > *bere-sterk* 'very strong', *bere-leuk* 'very nice'

According to Booij (2009: 207-9), these lexemes are similar to affixes in that their specific, more restricted meaning is dependent on their occurrence in complex words, i.e. compounds. Crucially, this bound use of these morphemes is productive. Booij distinguishes such words from compounds, and (following Jackendoff (2002)) calls them 'constructional idioms' (also called affixoids or semi-affixes in the literature). In his words, a 'constructional idiom' is a partially lexically specified productive pattern. Booij (2009: 210-1) here notes also the atypical, right-headed compounds in Romance languages: the left constituents of these compounds are members of a restricted and definable set of words (e.g. Sp. *cine-club* 'cinema club', *tele-novela* 'television novel', *video-arte* 'video art'; It. *autocentro* 'car centre', *autoservizio* 'car service', *autolinea* 'bus route', *autoambulanza* 'ambulance', *autoconvoglio* 'convoy'; *telespettatore* 'television watcher'; there are similar words beginning with *radio-*, *foto-*). Another type of complex word that Booij (2009: 216) explains by 'constructional idioms' – halfway between compounds and affixed words – is that of particle verbs in Germanic languages.

The notion of 'constructional idioms' introduces the problem of uncertainty as to which constructions should belong to compound words. I do not regard the Dutch examples above as a particularly serious problem of compoundhood; however, particle verbs should definitely be discussed here, as they show both phrasal and lexical (word-like) features: the two parts of such complex verbs split, with other words intervening in main clauses (phrasal), yet they convey specific meanings (lexical). This type of verb is typical of Germanic languages among others. (Pre)particle words (Booij 2009: 215–6) have adverbial

or prepositional prefixes or suffixes (we can find them in Dutch, Frisian, German: e.g. *mit* ‘with’ + *nehmen* ‘to take’ > *mitnehmen* ‘to take with’; *Ich nehme mein Buch mit*. ‘I take my book with me.’). In Old Irish poetry compound verbs split in the same way. Phrasal verbs (Booij 2009: 212) are complex verbs like Dutch *piano-spelen* ‘to play the piano’, where the word combined with the verb is one of its arguments or conjuncts: *piano-spelen* → *Jan speelt heel goed piano*. ‘John plays the piano well.’ Note also German *Fussball spielen* → *Jürgen hat Fussball nie gespielt*. ‘Jürgen has never played football.’, or Hungarian *hazamenni* ‘to go home’ → *Haza kell mennem*. ‘I have to go home.’; *Haza akart menni*. ‘(S)he wanted to go home.’ – BUT: *Nem akart hazamenni*. ‘(S)he didn’t want to go home.’ English ‘phrasal verbs’ (such as *give in*, *see to*, *fly away*; *let sy down*, *make sg up*, etc) are different from what Booij calls phrasal verbs – they are particle verbs according to this categorisation, just like preverb+verb constructions in Finno-Ugric languages, e.g. Hungarian *meg-* [perfect aspect] + *állni* ‘to stand’ > *megállni* ‘to stop’, *szét-* ‘apart’ + *esni* ‘to fall’ > *szétesni* ‘to fall apart’, *be-* ‘into’ + *rúgni* ‘to kick’ > *berúgni* ‘to kick in’ or ‘to get drunk’, etc).

Other problematic cases include ‘phrasal compounds’ and ‘parasynthetic compounds’. The former are compounds which have a phrasal first constituent like [*floor of a birdcage*] *taste*, [*punch in the stomach*] *effect*, [*pipe and slipper*] *husband* (Scalise and Bisetto 2009: 47), or *bikini-girls-in-trouble* *genre* (Harley 2009: 129, 142). For Harley (2009: 142-4) these compounds have a ‘quotative flavour’ as if the phrases in them, though compositional, behave as an individual semantic unit. (It is also notable that in [*pipe and slipper*] *husband* (similarly to *two-year-old*, for example) *slipper* is without plural marker, supporting its word-internal nature.) ‘Parasynthetic compounds’ are formed by a non-compound complex base with a derivational affix (e.g. *green-eyed*) (Scalise and Bisetto 2009: 53). There has been much debate among generative linguists whether a word such as *coffee maker* has an underlying structure [coffee [make-er]_α] or [[coffee make]_β-er]. Selkirk (1982) argued, for instance, that the latter is not possible, as β is not a possible word. For Lieber (1983), however, the former is “[o]nly appropriate for compounds such as *apprentice welder*, where the first element is not the object of the verb”, while he analyses *coffee maker* with the latter structure. (ten Hacken 2009: 76)

After questions of existence and categorisation, we should ask how we interpret compounds. Early generative approaches raised the problem of how we reach the meaning of compounds like *pontoon bridge*. It was originally Lees’ (1960: 123, cited by ten Hacken 2009: 59-60) example, who noted that ‘it is not even obvious which interpretation is the

most commonly used’ because the different meanings cannot be distinguished semantically:

Example 3.

- a) bridge supported by pontoons
- b) bridge floating on pontoons
- c) bridge made of pontoons
- d) pontoons in the form of a bridge

Levi (1978: 158, cited by ten Hacken 2009: 67) identifies a closed set of possible meanings for his ‘complex nominals’, whose ambiguity is reduced in practice by ‘judicious exploitation of semantic clues, lexicalisation, and pragmatic or extralinguistic (encyclopaedic) knowledge’. These possible meanings in compounds can potentially overlap. Allen (1978: 92, cited by ten Hacken 2009: 72-3) (lexicalist approach) suggests a range of possible and impossible meanings, of which the semantics of the compound constituents rules out the impossible meanings (if it is not an appropriate ‘filler’ of the relevant ‘slot’ for the head constituent). For example, a *water rat* drinks water (besides living near water, which possibly is the reason that it is called so) but it cannot be powered by water, in contrast with *water mill*; whereas the most common reading of *coffee mill* – ‘grinds coffee’ – is an impossible reading for both *water mill* and *water rat*. The effect is still stronger in non-lexicalised compounds (discussed in section 1.3.1), which do not have any common meaning thus the listener is forced to take into consideration all possible and exclude all impossible meanings. In Conceptual Semantics (cf. Lees, Levi and the Gleitmans) words like *pontoon bridge* or *boxcar* have multiple meanings: as the learner is given no evidence which is the “correct” meaning, “all [possible] semantic combinations are stored in memory as part of the meaning of the compound” thus making it more stable in perception and memory, as we have seen in Example 3 – we have more cues to help us remember (Jackendoff 2009: 116-7).

2.3 Similarity to idioms

Kavka (2009: 32), from the point of view of idiomatology⁴, defines a compound as “[a]n expression coming into existence through the combination of two or more simplex words (constituents), finally representing a unit that is syntactically and meaningfully invariable in the current context” (e.g. white lie, goldfish, highbrow, common sense). He argues that compounds and idioms show striking similarity: they are highly conventionalised, context-

⁴ According to Kavka (2009: 21) idiomatic expressions are “multi-word chunks consisting of constituents which are bound together lexically and syntactically”.

bound expressions, representing new naming/semantic units. Compounds are non-compositional just like idioms, although this non-compositionality is rooted in their invariability only but not necessarily in the non-literal nature of their meanings. Indeed, if we consider an idiom “as a concatenation of more than one lexeme whose total meaning is not totally arrived at from the meanings of its constituents”, the only difference we can recognise between an idiom and a compound is that the total meaning of compounds can in some cases actually be derived from the meanings of their constituents. Consequently, not all compounds are genuine idioms. (Kavka 2009: 26-28)

2.3.1. Continuum

Once again, compounds as well as idiomatic expressions are invariable, since their constituents are bound together lexically and syntactically (Kavka 2009: 21). In Cognitive Linguistics, lexicalisation does not depend on symbolic complexity. As Langacker (1991: 45) notes, “lexicon items can take the form of morphemes, words, phrases, or even longer sequences” – Langacker (1987: 35) calls the latter sufficiently lexicalised structural units ‘conventional expressions’. These can be as follows:

- ‘formulaic sequences’ (*take it for granted that*)
- collocations (*great idea*)
- clause-like units (*kill two birds with one stone; I’ll do the best I can*)

Compounds can be either lexicalised or non-lexicalised (Heyvaert 2009: 236). As Lieber and Štekauer (2009: 17) put it, “compounding is a gradient, rather than a categorical phenomenon, with prototypical examples and fuzzy edges.” Kavka (2009: 28-29) accounts for this feature of gradience by the scalar nature of compositionality. He regards compositionality as being characterised by variability and literalness. Variability refers to the lexical and grammatical features of a complex expression. In line with this, an *idiom proper* is completely invariable (e.g. *kill two birds with one stone, kick the bucket, spill the beans*), whereas in a *collocation* one constituent can be replaced by another word (cf. *brilliant idea; checkered history/career*), and, finally, a free combination is a fully productive syntactic phrase (e.g. *open the door*). As has been mentioned above, (lexicalised) compounds (e.g. *white lie, common sense*) are invariable, similar to idioms. In compounds, literalness shows a gradient character as well: between literal and non-literal compounds we can identify further stages, illustrated in Example 4 (Kavka 2009: 29):

Example 4.

1. literal compounds: *door-knob, playground, colour-blind, Anglo-Saxon, dark-blue, green-painted*

2. intermediate group: *apple-tree*, *stone-fish*, *horse-fly*, *lifeboat*
3. compounds with literal + figurative meanings: *dark room*, *dark horse*, *dead duck*, *dead wood*
4. non-literal compounds: *red tape*, *blue joke*, *lazybones*

Kavka distinguishes non-literal meaning from figurative meaning: there are compounds like *dark room* or *dead wood*, which have both a literal and a figurative meaning, while compounds such as *red tape* or *lazybones* are truly non-literal. As for the other intermediate group, *stone-fish* and *horse-fly* represent halfway metaphorical compounds, however, I do not see why *door-knob*, *playground* or *colour-blind* would be more literal than *apple-tree* or *lifeboat*.

Thus, combining the features of variability and literalness, we arrive at the cline of compositionality: a fully compositional collocation would be *common sense*, a partially compositional compound: *goldfish* (with metonymy between the metal gold and the colour of the fish), and a non-compositional one: *white lie* (where the meaning of the compound cannot be derived from the meanings of its constituents and their relation). Neither is it more clear how idiomatic expressions can be distinguished from free combinations since this end of the scale is not less blurred – compare *plastic/green door*, *front door* and *black coffee*. In cases of metonymy (*White House*, *dark room*) the role of context can be decisive. (Kavka 2009: 21-30)

In light of this, we have to maintain that there is no clear distinction between compounds and phrases, and no clear semantic categories of compoundhood. Compounds, along with idioms, are placed on a continuum with free combinations (i.e. syntactic phrases) at one end, and proper idioms at the other. Nevertheless, as Taylor (2002: 100, cited by Heyvaert 2009: 237) notes, ‘strict compositionality [...] turns out to be the exceptional condition’ concerning compound words:

Example 5.

1. fully compositional: *black bird* as a phrase
2. the compound *blackbird* is more precise in content than anything that can be deduced from *black* and *bird* alone
3. *blackboard*: it is not exactly a board and not necessarily black

2.4. Lexicalisation (and compositionality)

According to Lexicalism, “all constructions originating in the syntax are semantically transparent and the outcomes of fully productive processes – non-transparent or non-productive constructions (*red herring*, *court martial*) are by definition lexical” (Giegerich

2009: 186). Not all languages have compounds – their productivity changes from one language to another (Kavka 2009). The fact of the matter is that the more productive compounding is in a language, the less lexicalised compounds it has (Lieber and Štekauer 2009:7). An interesting question of compounding is then, “[h]ow it is possible to reconcile the productivity of compounds with their rampant idiosyncrasy” (i.e. productivity with lexical listing), as, from a morphosyntactic point of view, listed (in the lexicon, i.e. conventionalised) compounds look exactly like productive ones (Jackendoff 2009: 109).

One possible answer to this question may be provided within the Lexicalist framework: Giegerich (2009: 181) calls for the Elsewhere Condition to explain the alternation between listed and productive instantiations of compounding: “of two rival forms competing for example for the same meaning, the ‘listed’, irregular form will take precedence over its regular, rule-driven rival”. In other words, lexicalised forms if any, will always be more prominent than their productive counterparts. Also, if a compound has a lexicalised meaning, the language users will tend to refer to it, although it can still be overridden by pragmatic factors in a particular situation. ten Hacken (2009: 59) argues for a cline from regular to lexicalised compounds. He maintains that *flour mill* and *windmill* are ambiguous, since the semantic relation between *flour* and *mill* is not the same as between *wind* and *mill*. A word like *grapefruit* is not fully compositional, so we cannot simply replace it by the meaning inferred from the concatenation of its constituents. Finally, in *cranberry* one constituent is not understood by speakers anymore. (Among longer expressions, examples for lexicalisation can be *kick the bucket* or *bite the dust*, as opposed to phrasal *throw the shovel*, *chew the gum*. Though syntactically they are identical, semantically they are different: the meanings of idioms “are introduced as a whole from the lexicon rather than being composed online from the individual parts”. (Jackendoff 2009: 107))

Indeed, as I have mentioned above, lexicalised compounds are never fully compositional. Jackendoff (2009: 115) proposes the following categorisation:

Example 6.

- a) cranberry morphemes: *cranberry*, *bassethorn*, *iceberg* – one of the constituents is not interpretable in the particular language at the particular time
- b) strawberry morphemes: *strawberry*, *cottage cheese*, *tea cozy*, *hillbilly*, *French toast* – there are real words within these compounds that play no role in the compound’s meaning (i.e. contemporary speakers may be unaware of the original connection between these words)

Di Sciullo (2009: 176-7), working in the framework of Asymmetry Theory (which derives compounds in a different workspace from phrases), claims that morphological compositionality differs from semantic compositionality in that “the substantive features of the parts of a morphological object are not sufficient in the interpretation of the whole object”. She also adds that the interpretation of the constituents falls into the realm of encyclopedic knowledge (cf. *mousetrap*, *hairbrush*: we know what these are used for, thus we can infer their meanings). She also mentions the compound *cranberry* with no (current) independent meaning of the morpheme *cran*, and *stepsister*, in which *step* has a different meaning outside the compound.

According to Levi (1978, cited by ten Hacken 2009: 67), “[l]exicalisation depends on direct storage after earlier use”. Also, compositionality changes with time – as Kavka (2009: 23) explains it, “the originally literal multi-word expression can become fixed, showing lower and lower degrees of variability, which may result in it having a figurative or even non-literal meaning”. Eventually, “many frequently used and familiar free combinations can be viewed as candidates for compound status” (Kavka 2009: 27).

Compositionality, though, may not be our only and most informative device to describe the contribution of compound constituents to the whole meaning of the word. Speakers are not always aware of the components within a familiar, fully compositional expression (cf. *butterfly*), and also, they can be aware of them in a structure that shows only partial compositionality (e.g. *hay fever*, *strawberry*). Or one component of a compound may be intuitively more salient than the other, as, for example, *screw* in *screw driver*. ‘The extent to which speakers are cognizant [...] of the contribution that individual component structures make to the composite whole’, Langacker (1987: 457, cited by 2009: 237-8) calls ‘analysability’. Dirven and Verspoor (1998, cited by 2009: 244) determine a cline of transparency/analysability:

1. fully productive/transparent: analysable and transparent (*apple tree*)
2. partially analysable/transparent: “the components may still be analysable but the semantic link between them has become less apparent” (*blackbird*)
3. ‘darkened compounds’: no longer analysable, the semantic link between the components is non-transparent (all metaphorical/metonymical compounds belong here, e.g. *red tape*)

2.5. Novel compounds (productivity)

As we have seen, not all compounds are lexicalised. As a matter of fact, compounds are very often built on the fly, making compounding a recursive, productive phenomenon in

various languages (cf. *bike girl* for a girl who left her bike in the vestibule, or *apple juice seat* for a seat in a restaurant or bar where usually apple juice is served) (Jackendoff 2009: 108-9). Thus, “[t]he task for the language learner is to learn the lexicalised compounds and to acquire the principles for interpreting novel compounds”. These two processes should be interdependent (Jackendoff 2009: 110).

Jackendoff (2009: 119; following Busa (1997)) notes that novel coinages may often be very specific in meaning with a ‘current’ interpretation (just like the afore-mentioned *bike girl* or *starch bowl* in a recipe). The curiosity of the relationship between lexicalisation and productivity is what has been pointed out in Cognitive Linguistics: “[t]he more deeply entrenched [i.e. lexicalised/automatised] and specific a unit is, the more likely it will be activated to create novel units.” (Highly entrenched expressions are what Langacker (1991: 45) calls ‘conventional units’.) (Heyvaert 2009: 235-6)

2.6. Metaphoricity

Metaphoricity helps us distinguish between *mushroom soup* (subordinate ground compound: traditional ‘root’/‘primary’ compound) and *mushroom cloud* (appositive compound: a type of attributive compound, where the non-head is (typically) a noun expressing a property of the head through a metaphor or metonymy) (Scalise and Bisetto 2009: 52; see section 2 for compound types). Levi (1978, cited by ten Hacken 2009: 65) also gives some examples where metaphor interacts with compounding: *bottleneck*, *hairpin turn*. In Cognitive Linguistics “metaphor and metonymy are [seen as] basic cognitive abilities that enable the language user to extend the conceptual categories associated with existing linguistic categories”. In a metaphor the structure of one conceptual domain (very general area of conceptualisation) is mapped onto another domain (e.g. in the case of *I’m crazy about her*, the domain of ‘madness’ is mapped onto the domain of ‘love’). In metonymy, on the other hand, one conceptual category is mapped onto another within the same domain or frame (e.g. *crown* is mapped onto ‘monarch’ within the domain of ‘monarchy’). Other examples for conceptual metaphors/metonymies include *The kettle is boiling*. (metonymy); *We arrived at the conclusion*. (metaphor – seeing ‘conclusion’ as a destination); or the idiom *spill the beans* (in which the brain is considered as a container). (Heyvaert 2009: 240; Kavka 2009: 24)

2.7. Context

Experiments by Gleitman and Gleitman (1970), Ryder (1994), Štekauer (2005) showed that facing novel compounds in isolation, speakers often give answers that do not agree with the principles of compounding that can be gained from listed compounds.

Jackendoff's (2009: 110-1) explanation is that during the interpretation of a compound "[t]he general principles yield to a vast range of possible meanings" unlike in the case of syntactic phrases, as a result of which the language user must make use of the semantic details of the constituent words as well as the discourse and extralinguistic context. Consequently, without context semantic plausibility is stronger than the grammatical principles. Context also helps deciding between literal, figurative or non-literal meaning, thus it is especially significant in cases of metonymies (*White House*) and other figures (*stonewall*) (Kavka 2009: 28). (Here 'context' is understood in its broader sense including all the linguistic, situational and cultural knowledge of speakers.)

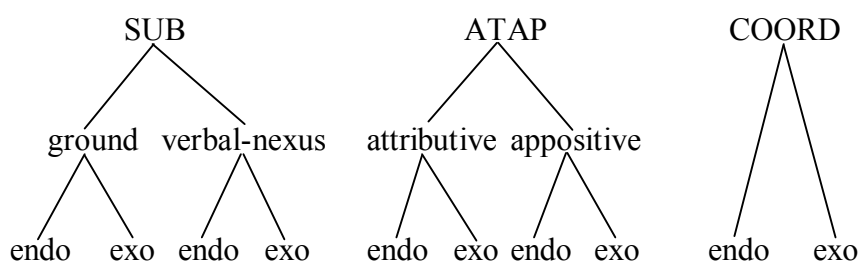
2.8. Classification of compounds

Citing Scalise and Bisetto (2009: 35-6), "the classifications of compounds that appear in current linguistic literature often lack interlinguistic homogeneity for the following reasons":

- terminology is often associated with a single language (cf. 'root' and 'synthetic' compounds in Anglo-Saxon linguistics vs verbal compounds in Romance languages)
- classifications have often built upon inconsistent criteria
- certain lexical categories are discussed, whereas others are neglected (such as preparticle/phrasal verbs (e.g. *make up*), or verbal compounds characteristic of Romance languages (e.g. It. *portacenere* 'ash tray'))

Based on the most prominent of these problems, the heterogeneity (and inconsistency), Scalise and Bisetto (2005; 2009: 50) proposed the following classification (and tested on a broad range of languages):

Figure 1.



The main nodes in Figure 1 represent the grammatical relationship between the compound constituents (subordination, attribution, coordination). The highest subnodes stand for their semantic relations: subordinative compounds can be ground or verbal-nexus, while the attributive (ATAP) class include real attributive and appositive compounds. Finally, all

categories can be further divided into endocentric and exocentric compounds. Before giving further details of each group we should look at the distinction between these latter. Kastovsky (2009: 332) defines endocentric and exocentric compounds as follows:

endocentric compounds: “the head is contained in the compound itself, and the compound as a whole refers to a referent specified by the head” (e.g. *church-goer*, *blackbird*)

exocentric compounds: “[t]he compound implies some referent which is not directly referred to by one of its constituents” (*paleface*, for example, “is not a face but a person having pale face”; similarly, *Eurasia* is neither Europe nor Asia but a continent that consists of the two together – whereas a *woman doctor*, which is considered to be an endocentric compound, is a woman and a doctor independently)

Maintaining the multiplicity of criteria while keeping it consistent, Scalise and Bisetto (2009: 44-6), determined the 1st level of their classification depending on the grammatical relation between constituents:

- subordination (SUB): head-complement relation (e.g. *taxi driver* (i.e. ‘the driver of a taxi’), *apron string*; *cutthroat*, It. *lavapiatti* ‘wash+dishes=dishwasher’)
- attribution (ATAP): noun-head modified by an adjective, noun or verb – the non-head conveys a property of the head (e.g. *blue cheese* (i.e. ‘a cheese which is blue’); *snail mail* (i.e. ‘mail that is slow as a snail’), *key word*)
- coordination (COORD): constituents connected by the conjunction ‘and’ (e.g. *bittersweet*, *poet-novelist*, *learner-driver*, *woman doctor*; *Austria-Hungary*, *mother-child*, Sanskr. *candra-ditya-u* ‘moon and sun’ etc.)

(Compounds on the left of the semi-colon are endocentric, those on the right are exocentric.) According to Scalise and Bisetto, coordinate compounds can be considered to be characterised by two heads from a semantic point of view.

The 2nd level of the classification is based on the semantic/interpretative relation between the constituents (Scalise and Bisetto 2009: 50-2):

- subordinate compounds
 - ground compounds: traditional ‘root’/‘primary’ compounds – “[t]he semantic relation is determined by the semantic-encyclopedic information associated with the component lexemes” (e.g. *windmill*, *mushroom soup*; *sans papiers*, *lavapiatti*)
 - verbal-nexus compounds: traditional ‘synthetic’/‘secondary’ compounds – the interpretation is determined by the verb: it selects its non-head semantically

(both head-argument or head-conjunct relation are accepted) (e.g. *bookseller*, *tree eater*, *street seller*; *pickpocket*)

- ‘attributive’ compounds → ATAP class
 - attributive compounds: the non-head is or functions as an adjective – it expresses a quality of the head constituent (e.g. *nursery school*, *blue-eyed*; *redskin*)
 - appositive compounds: the non-head is typically a noun expressing a property of the head through a metaphor or metonymy (e.g. *snail mail*, *swordfish*, *mushroom cloud*; Norwegian *kryssord* ‘crossword=crossword puzzle’, Chinese *rén shé* ‘people snake=illegal immigrant’)
- coordinate compounds

Concerning coordinate compounds, specific discriminations can be made regarding the semantics of the compounds’ constituents – they can be:

- synonyms (Ch. *liǎnmiàn* ‘face+face=face’)
- antonyms (It. *saliscendi* ‘go up + go down=lift’)
- reduplicates (It. *lecca-lecca* ‘lollypop’)

Their meaning can be:

- additive (*Austria-Hungary*, *Baden-Württemberg*)
- redundant (*palm tree*, *hound dog*)

True Sanskrit ‘dvandas’ (with dual or plural inflection) were formations that referred to two separate/individual things/people at the same time (e.g. *candradītyau* ‘moon and sun’, *simha-vyāghra* ‘lion and leopard’), while Germanic ‘copulatives’ refer to single entities that show two properties (e.g. *poet-novelist*) – these latter are better referred to as ‘pseudo-dvandas’ (Scalise and Bisetto 2009: 42). Among endocentric coordinates, besides the afore-mentioned *poet-novelist*, where one person has two properties in parallel, another compound type should be treated separately in my opinion: this can be exemplified by *learner-driver* or *woman doctor*, in which cases the non-head is semantically subordinated to the head. (Also, the exocentric compound type *mother-child* can be seen as slightly different from the additive type *Austria-Hungary*, since it conveys a ‘between’ relationship, rather than a ‘both’ interpretation (cf. Lieber 2009: 92).

Lieber (2009: 89, 91) distinguishes four semantic groups within coordinate compounds:

- simultaneous (endocentric): e.g. *producer-director*, *rossoneri* ‘red-black (pl.)’ (of a football team)

- mixture (endocentric): e.g. *blue-green*
- relationship (exocentric): e.g. *mother-child*
- collective (exocentric): e.g. Georgian *dá-dzma* ‘*sister-brother=siblings*’

Scalise and Bisetto (2009:51) note that the ATAP class stands in between the two other classes in that “they have properties that may draw them nearer to the one or the other class”, which again points to some kind of scalarity in compounding. Lieber (2009: 97, 98) considers attributive compounds as a default compound type: it “arises in the absence of any formally fixed relation between the compounding elements” – when the semantic features of the components “are too disparate to be interpreted as coordinates and lack the sort of argument structure that gives rise to subordinates”.

All categories can be further divided into endocentric and exocentric compounds.

2.8.1. Exocentric vs endocentric compounds

In the framework of onomasiology exocentricity is seen as an elliptical shortening following the word-formation process: as Štekauer (2009: 286) puts it, *redskin* refers to a redskin person and *sabretooth* to a sabretooth tiger, and this seems to be supported by the fact that it forms its plural as *sabretooths* instead of irregular **sabreteeth* (Štekauer 2001, cited by Grzega (2009: 224)). Heyvaert (2009: 245) cites Benczes (2006), according to whom ‘[t]he main difference between endocentric compounds such as *apple tree* and exocentric compounds such as *hammerhead* is creativity: the latter represent a type of nominal construction that has been coined by a more imaginative, associative and creative word formation process, based on conceptual metaphor and metonymy’.

Lieber (2009: 100) points out that exocentricity is not a unified phenomenon: as she illustrated by a lexical semantic approach, different mechanisms underly exocentricity in each of the classes identified by Scalise and Bisetto (2005, 2009). In subordinate compounds the compound has an implicit external argument (*pickpocket* ‘someone who picks pockets’ vs *lorry driver*, *city employee*). (This is eventually also true for coordinate compounds of the type *mother-child* – but not of the type *dá-dzma* ‘*sister-brother=siblings*’.) “In the case of attributive compounds, exocentricity is a function of metonymic interpretation” (*birdbrain* vs *dog bed*). Finally, in coordinate compounds, the semantic features of the constituents are overlapping only to a certain point, where they become countervalued (Georgian *dá-dzma* ‘*sister-brother=siblings*’, *mother-child* (relationship/discussion/party etc.) vs *scholar-athlete*, *blue-green*: a sibling cannot be a sister and a brother at the same time, neither can anyone be their own mother, thus these compounds are forced to refer to an external head) (Lieber 2009: 89–100). Kavka (2009:

31–2) also maintains that words like *greybeard*, *highbrow*, *blockhead*, *lazybones*, *pickpocket* or *bluebell* “become non-compositional due to the figurative reference mostly to people, and their meanings are based on underlying metaphorical or metonymical concepts”.

2.9. Criteria for compoundhood

2.9.1. Features (in different languages)

It is a typical property of compound words that the head constituent determines the syntactic category of the whole compound, as well as features like the gender and declension class for nouns, and conjugation class for verbs (Booij 2009: 203-4). There are other properties that can reflect the compoundhood of a word. In English, not showing very much inflection, phrases and compounds in many cases cannot be distinguished morphosyntactically: cf. *black bird* vs. *blackbird* (Giegerich 2009: 184). In other languages, however, where nominal inflection is prominent, various strategies can be discovered by which semantically connected words may be linked together. The most obvious signs of compoundhood in such languages include:

- a) the head of the compound bears inflection, the non-head does not
- b) the non-head bears a compound-specific inflection

With regard to the first case (a), Bloomfield (1933) states that in coordinate compounds, normally ‘only one of the nouns can be pluralized, and, in those languages where gender is relevant, it is precisely that noun that confers the gender on the compound formation’. Scalise and Bisetto (2009: 46) notes, however, that in Italian compounds like *cantanti-attori* ‘singers-actors’ both constituents are actually pluralised.

Concerning the second possibility (b), the compound-specific inflection of the non-head is sometimes referred to as a ‘linking element’. According to Lieber and Štekauer (2009: 13-4), “a *linking element* is a meaningless extension that occurs between the first and second elements of compounds”. They may historically trace back to case or number markers (cf. English *sales-oriented*, *children’s hour*, German *Liebesdienst* ‘favour’, *Universitätsbibliothek* ‘university library’); however, in synchronic grammar they are meaningless, and often do not correspond to any of the current inflectional forms of the nouns they occur on. There are plenty of examples in the literature for linking elements such as *–s*, *–e* or *–o*. (Slenderised forms in older Gaelic compounds (such as *muic-* instead of *muc* in *muic-fheadail* ‘pork’, lit. “pig-meat”) belong in this category.)

In Frisian N+N constructions the modifier is case-marked (with the genitive *–s*): *kening-s-dichter* ‘king’s daughter’. (Hoekstra (2002, cited by Booij 2009: 215) calls these ‘lexical

phrases’, and argues that they could be analysed as constructional idioms.) In Swedish N+N compounds, besides the frequent addition of *-s*, special ‘liaison forms’ can be encountered in the case of nouns ending in *-a*: this vowel is “typically, though not always deleted when the noun functions as a modifier” (e.g. *nöjesresa* ‘pleasure trip’ < *nöje* ‘pleasure’ + *resa* ‘trip’, *skivshållare* ‘disk-holder’ < *skiva* ‘disk’ + *hållare* ‘holder’, *näringslivsminister* ‘Minister of Industry and Commerce’ < *näring* ‘industry’ + *liv* ‘living’ + *minister* ‘minister’)⁵ (Mellenius 1997, cited by 2009: 304).

A German example for a) is *Schwarzdrossel* ‘blackbird’ vs the phrase *schwarze Drossel* ‘black thrush’ (Giegerich 2009: 184), for b) with phonological alternation: *Händ-e-druck* ‘handshake’ < *Hand* ‘hand’ (Berman 2009: 300). In the Dutch expressions *hog-e hoed* (lit. ‘high hat’) ‘top hat’ and *zwart-e doos* ‘black box’, the adjectives are inflected but they cannot be modified (Booij 2009: 214-5). Like this, they represent another intermediate category on the compound–phrase continuum (an instance of Jackendoff’s (2002; cf. also Booij 2009: 207) constructional idioms. A similar situation can be encountered in Modern Greek, where *aghri-o-ghatos* ‘wild cat’ is “a real compound consisting of the non-inflected adjectival root *aghri* followed by a linking element *-o* and the noun *ghatos*”. However, “*psixros polemos* ‘cold war’ is qualified as a construct rather than a compound” since the adjective is inflected and it agrees with the noun (Ralli and Stavrou 1998, cited by Booij 2009: 215). Apart from the linking element and the lack of inflection, another feature of compounds in Modern Greek is that a particular form of the root noun occurs in them: e.g. *ríz(i)* ‘rice’ + *γάλ(a)* ‘milk’ > *rizóyalo* ‘rice pudding’ (the accents mark stress; *-i/-a* are parts of the stem while *-o* is the inflectional ending; note also the change of the stress pattern) (Berman 2009: 300). In Slovak, likewise, *rýchlovlak* ‘express train’ is a compound as the non-head (*rýchly* ‘fast’) is devoid of any inflectional morphemes and displays a linking element *-o*, whereas *rýchly vlak* ‘fast train’ is a syntactic phrase since the adjective is inflected to agree with the noun (Lieber and Štekauer 2009: 5).

In Hebrew the head noun (the left-hand constituent in Hebrew) appears in a special form, the so-called ‘construct state form’: *beyt xolim* (lit. ‘house sick’) ‘hospital’ (*beyt* is the ‘construct state form’ of *bayit*) (Borer 1988, cited by Booij 2009: 215). These morphophonological alternations on the bound stem form of the initial head noun, according to Berman (2009: 300), include suffixation and stem-internal changes.

⁵ The two latter examples were suggested by Tamás Heckenast in a personal conversation.

2.9.2. Phonological criteria

For English, left-hand stress is often a mark of compoundhood; however, it is not a necessary nor sufficient condition for distinguishing compounds from phrases, as there are compounds with right-hand or double stress, and, though Giegerich (2009: 185, 190) argues that phrases invariably bear right-hand stress – and thus expressions like *polar bear*, *mental institution* (with fore-stress) are compounds –, regarding their morphosyntactic structure, they may just as well be phrases (cf. also *apple 'pie* vs. *'apple cake*; or *ice cream*, the stress pattern of which varies among speakers) (Lieber and Štekauer 2009: 11). According to Plag's (2006, cited by Lieber and Štekauer 2009: 10-1) experiments, stress assignment in novel compounds sometimes seems to depend on analogy to familiar N+N constructions, with the head determining the analogical pattern (cf. *street* and *avenue*, or *sonata* and *symphony*: compounds of the former are typically left-stressed, and the latter are typically right-stressed: e.g. *'Fifth Street* vs *Fifth 'Avenue*; *'Moonlight Sonata* vs *New World 'Symphony*). (The former pair of examples are from Bauer 1983, cited by Lieber and Štekauer 2009: 10.)

Lieberman and Prince (1977, cited by Giegerich 2009: 184) claim that the stress pattern in larger compound constructions such as *labour party finance committee* appears to reflect their lexical status compared to the stress patterns of simple nouns like *aróma*, *introducción* (where acute accent stands for primary stress, grave for secondary stress). Giegerich (2009: 187-88, 190) discusses 'stress doublets' – noun+noun constructions in which the stress pattern determines the meaning: *'toy factory* vs *toy 'factory*, *'woman doctor* vs *woman 'doctor*, *'steel warehouse* vs *steel 'warehouse*, *'dancing girl* vs *dancing 'girl*. End stress in such compounds accounts for ascriptive attribution, and fore-stress for a semantically more complex, 'associative' attribution, he argues. In noun+noun compounds, thus, he considers the stress pattern as determinative of compoundhood.

Stress patterns are also important for example in German, Danish, Modern Greek, Polish, Hebrew, Ket, etc. In Swedish a fall-and-rise intonation contour is characteristic of compounds. Among other phonological criteria we find distinctive tonal patterns (Bambara, Hausa, Konni), vowel harmony (Chuckchee), fricative voicing (Slave) or voicing (Japanese), vowel deletion (Hebrew) or vowel reduction (Maipure, Baniva). (Berman 2009: 300)

2.9.3. Morphological and syntactic tests for distinguishing compounds

In regard to morphology, phrasal compounds in English can be attached to derivational morphemes, which indicates their word status: e.g. *feeling a bit 'rainy day'-ish*, *a bit 'don't*

bother’-y, the general ‘*bikini-girls-in-trouble*’-ness of it all (Harley 2009: 143). Their quotative nature makes them behave as individual semantic units similar to simple nominals and other, non-quotative compounds.

Giegerich (2009: 193-7) summarises the phonological, semantic and syntactic criteria of compoundhood (in English): as regards the phonological criterion, “noun-phrases have end-stress while compounds have end-stress or fore-stress”, which means that every complex expression with fore-stress will be a compound in English. According to the semantic criterion, all opaque or more complex (not transparent) word-coinages will be regarded as compound. Concerning the phonological and semantic criteria, “fore-stressed constructions may or may not be fully transparent, as may end-stressed constructions”; still, for different reasons though, these both must be lexical. (Giegerich 2009: 195-6)

Now turning to the syntactic tests, there are three of them broadly discussed in the literature: the test of coordination, that of independent modification, and the replacement of the pro-form *one*. According to the test of coordination compounds should not be liable to coordination as opposed to syntactic phrases: e.g. *short and long journeys* vs **cran- and strawberries*. With regard to independent modification, when a compound is modified, the modifier will refer to the whole expression, and it is rather odd to interpret it as modifying the constituents independently: e.g. a *small bird-watcher* is interpreted as ‘small [bird-watcher]’ and not ‘[small bird] watcher’ (unless the stress pattern is changed). Finally, the basis for the pro-*one* test is that the base of syntactic phrases can be replaced by the proverbial form *one*, whereas the generic of compounds cannot be replaced by it (examples are provided below).

From these tests, *coordination* cannot be regarded as a reliable test for compounding: it even affects prefixes and suffixes: cf. German *be- und entladen* ‘to load and unload’, *ess- und trinkbar* ‘edible and drinkable’, *mütter- und väterlich* ‘motherly and fatherly’. Likewise, a number of English compounds can be perfectly coordinated: *clock- and watchmaker*, *pallet makers and suppliers*, etc. (Giegerich 2009: 193)

Independent modification is a better test, as it nicely distinguishes between phrases and compounds in many cases: e.g. *a brilliantly white board* (phrase) – **a brilliantly white-board* (compound). The test’s limitations are that some adjectives are not modifiable: cf. **obviously dental decay*; and that ascriptive constructions are structurally ambiguous: “[i]t is unclear whether the adjective modifies the whole compound or only the first constituent”: *young boy actor*, *educational toy* ‘factory, *elderly woman* ‘doctor. However, in the case of ‘associative attributions’, it is definitely the entire compound the adjective modifies: *educational* ‘toy factory, *elderly* ‘woman doctor. This means that adjectival

modification is a possible diagnostic: if the adjective modifies the entire expression, it *is* lexical. The problem is that this test will distinguish synthetic compounds and associative noun+noun constructions only, but tells nothing about cases like *boy actor*. (Giegerich 2009: 193-5) Counterexamples are also well-attested: e.g. *open door policy*, *severe weather warning* etc. Giegerich (2009: 197) argues that the whole construction may in these cases be lexicalised phrases. Once again we have to state that lexicalisation is a gradient phenomenon (cf. Spencer's (1988) example: *Baroque flautist* vs **wooden flautist*).

Replacement by the pro-form 'one' (a red book and a blue one) is not possible in synthetic compounds: **a watchmaker and a clock one* but it is in 'ascriptive attributions' (*a basic flat and a luxury one*) (which, incidentally, may indicate the phrasal status of the latter). In the case of associative-adjective constructions, the test suggests that those with argument structure or requiring encyclopedic information are lexical (i.e. compounds) – compare: *Is this a feline disease or a bovine one?* (simple qualifier – head relationship) vs **Do you mean the **presidential murder** or the papal one?* (where the president/Pope is the object of the murder) **Is he a **constitutional lawyer** or a criminal one?* (encyclopedic information is required for the interpretation of these expressions) (Giegerich 2009: 194-5)

2.10. Compounding within Linguistics

2.10.1. Generative Linguistics

Another interesting question about compounding is where compounds belong in linguistics. Scalise and Bisetto (2009:34) very appropriately state that compounds are halfway between morphology and syntax: they are conventional naming units such as words; however, new compounds can be derived productively just like syntactic structures and sentences. Generative approaches treat compounding as a morphological phenomenon together with other word-formation processes. Jackendoff (2009) and Di Sciullo (2009) regard morphological processes as similar to syntactic ones but not exactly the same. Lieber (2009) and Giegerich (2009), from a Lexicalist point of view, situate compounding in the lexicon. However, Booij (2009), in the framework of Constructional Morphology, maintains that compounds belong both in syntax and the lexicon. Finally, Harley (2009) gives a purely syntactic approach to compounding.

Jackendoff (2009:107-9) works in the framework of Parallel Architecture within Conceptual Semantics. According to the model of Parallel Architecture, phonology, syntax and semantics are on a par: they are all separate, but are nonetheless interconnected. The meanings of compounds “are introduced as a whole from the lexicon rather than being

composed online from the individual parts” (just like those of idioms). On the other hand, new compounds can be created like sentences, which means that they cannot all be stored in the lexicon. Additionally, “[c]ompounds show evidence of a little internal syntactic structure, whether completely or partially lexicalized, or totally novel”. Jackendoff (2009:128) claims that, by virtue of the Parallel Architecture, all complexity can be kept out of the grammar, and it is only the *meaning* of compounds that is complex.

Di Sciullo (2009:154-62) also maintains that morphological and syntactic derivations have similar properties from a more generic point of view but they have different outcomes. She argues that compounds cannot be purely ‘lexical-semantic objects’ as they show similar ‘object/adjunct asymmetries’ as syntactic expressions, nor can they be purely syntactic for they tend to be opaque cross-linguistically. Compounds have different derivational properties from phrases, including linear order, stress assignment and compositionality. The model of Asymmetry Theory “does not reduce morphology to syntax but it allows similarities between the two subsystems to follow from their parallel architecture” (Di Sciullo 2009:164).

In Lexical Semantics the grammar has a lexicon, and word formation is treated in this lexicon rather than within the syntactic component (Lieber 2009:70). Giegerich’s (2009:178-200) Lexicalism is an extended version of Lexicalist Semantics. Thus morphology is integrated in the lexicon: it “produces members of lexical categories (words) while the outcomes of syntax are members of phrasal categories” (Giegerich 2009:178). In this model, the lexicon is held to have a dual function: it is both a repository of words (which may or may not have internal structure) and an active component of the grammar. The latter component is what we traditionally call ‘morphology’. Which compounds belong in this ‘morphology’ (i.e. in the lexicon), is less clear, however. The attribute – head relationship is a default pattern, therefore it belongs in the syntax (“non-default patterns are more likely to be lexical”). However, syntax cannot operate on the elements of words as they are “the atoms of syntactic structure”. As a result, this theory cannot account for the attribute – head relationship (which is definitely compound according to the tests) (Giegerich 2009:183, 192). Let us recall syntactic tests such as independent modification, or replacement of the head by the pro-form *one*: coordination reaches deep into the lexicon, for independent modification ascriptive noun+noun constructions are ambiguous, while the ‘pro-one’ test draws somewhere across the ascriptive/associative attribution (only synthetic compounds and associative noun+noun compounds are definitely compounds according to these tests; cf. Giegerich 2009:192-5). Giegerich (2009:199) concludes that “[c]ompounding, viewed as a single phenomenon of

word formation, is hugely productive and also in other ways the most syntax-like of all word formation”; which means that while there may be a sharp divide between the lexicon and the syntax – as Lexicalism maintains – modules will nonetheless overlap.

As for an alternative view, Construction Morphology represents “a model of the grammar in which there is no separation [between] syntax and the lexicon” (Booij 2009:216). According to Michaelis and Lambrecht (1996:216, cited by Booij 2009:202), ‘in Construction Grammar, the grammar represents an inventory of form-meaning-function complexes, in which words are distinguished from grammatical constructions only with regard to their internal complexity.’ Compounding is a construction at the morphological level with a systematic pairing of form and meaning. Booij (2009:204) claims that “morphology is not a module of the grammar on a par with the syntactic or the phonological component”. Rather, “morphology is word grammar” – it deals with phonological form, formal structure and meaning. Booij (2009:206-7) also argues that abstract schemas and individual instances coexist: “the fact that there is a productive rule for the formation of a certain linguistic construct does not imply that the outputs of that should not be listed in the lexicon.”

In Distributed Morphology, morphology is treated within syntax, and Harley (2009:129-44) considers compounding as a process of syntactic incorporation. Kavka (2009:32-3), on the other hand, claims that compounding cannot be treated strictly as isolated phenomena (of either the grammar or the lexicon), as the role of the context should not be dismissed.

Jackendoff (2009:111-4) mentions another possible source for compounding. Bickerton (1990) proposes that language capacity evolved in two stages: modern language was preceded by ‘**protolanguage**’. He assumes that this ‘protolanguage’ had a vocabulary and pragmatics, but no syntax or morphology as such. As Jackendoff suggests, “protolanguage is a cognitive ‘scaffolding’ on which modern language was built, both in evolution and in development”. According to Bickerton (1990, cited by Jackendoff 2009:111), “in situations where the complexity of modern language is disrupted or impaired, elements of protolanguage still emerge”. These include pidgin languages, the two-word stage of language learning, agrammatic aphasia, the language acquired by late first-language learners such as Genie (Curtiss 1977), and what apes can learn in sign language. Jackendoff adds to the list the degree of language competence achieved by the right hemisphere (Baynes and Gazzaniga 2005), the ‘home sign’ created by deaf children of non-signing parents (Goldin-Meadow 2003) and the language of some immigrant second-language learners (Klein and Perdue 1997). He also suggests that “[r]elics of earlier stages of the language capacity might have remained as pockets within modern language”, and

that compounding may be one of these relics with its rudimentary grammatical structure and semantic interpretation based on pragmatics and contextual information rather than grammar (and with direct mappings between semantic roles and linear order of words in phonology (cf. the compound *guard dog*, which can be understood as ‘*a dog that guards*’ (V+N) as well as ‘*a dog that serves as a guard*’ (N+N)). The early appearance of compounding in language acquisition and the fact that the ‘Basic Variety’ language used by immigrants lacks morphology but not compounding (cf. Klein and Perdue 1997), imply that compounding should be a protolinguistic piece of morphology. Another explanation could be, Jackendoff (2009: 114) adds, that compounding is a similar phenomenon to discourse, since “the semantic relations that link discourse together are not marked syntactically either”.

2.10.2. Other linguistic frameworks

An onomasiological approach of word-finding focuses on an extralinguistic entity (a concept) and the need of a speaker to find a form that can denote this entity. “The cognitive and conceptual side of word formation thus play a more prominent role than formal aspects. [...] The boundary that separates a *compound* from other word-formation processes differs from model to model.” (Grzega 2009: 217–8) Dokulil, Horecký, Blank and Koch keep the process of compounding apart from affixation, whereas Štekauer’s word-formation model does not make such a distinction at all. Grzega (2004; 2009: 231) “does not distinguish between the traditional forms of compounding and affixation either, but [he] uses the term *composites* in order to distinguish the junction of morphemes from other types of name-giving processes (such as blending, clipping, semantic change, borrowing)”.

Dokulil (1978, cited by Štekauer 2009: 275) notes that compounds tend to express the content more explicitly than affixed words – compare, for example, *rychovlak* ‘fast train’ vs *rychlík* ‘fast-SUFFIX’, or *černozem* ‘black-soil’ vs *černice* ‘black-SUFFIX’ –, which, according to Štekauer, is an important factor conditioning meaning-predictability.

The Cognitive perspective on composite structures rejects the typical ‘building-block’ view of compositionality (hence the term ‘components’ in place of ‘constituents’). Nevertheless, Cognitive Linguistics does not view the lack of compositionality as an argument in favour of the morphological rather than syntactic nature of compounding. “The integration of two or more components into a composite structure is argued to depend on (semantic and phonological) ‘correspondences’ established between substructures within the component elements.” (Heyvaert 2009:237-8)

Psycholinguists suggest that morphological information might be useful for interpreting complex words. It remains a question, however, whether morphology is explicitly represented in the system, or the morphological structure emerges from representations of form and meaning. For instance, Bybee (1995) suggests that morphology is best represented in terms of links between whole-word representations of morphologically related words (Gagné 2009:259-60). Experiments of family size (the number of derived words and compounds formed from a simple word) appears to support this view: response times to a simple noun are shorter when it occurs in a large number of derived words and compounds in a language (Schreuder and Baayen 1997). “[T]he existence of the family-size effect suggests that the mental lexicon might consist of networks of morphological relations. In other words, complex words share aspects of form and meaning and this information influences the ease which a word can be processed with” (Gagné 2009:263). Berman (2009:299) refers to Gagné and Spalding (2006) on the one hand, stating that compounding is ‘a common way of introducing new words into the lexicon’, and to Dressler (2005), on the other, when she writes that it can also be seen as ‘the part of morphology which is closest to syntax’.

After having raised questions of compounding from a general perspective, in the next chapter we turn to the world of Celtic compounds.

3. Compounding in Celtic languages

This chapter starts with a definition of compounds (and other, related entities), which will be helpful in the classification of compounds. These categories are then looked at in Brittonic languages (Welsh, Cornish and Breton), followed by Goidelic languages: Irish and Manx, then a more comprehensive summary of Scottish Gaelic compounds, with a whole section on their classification.

3.1. Definition of compounds

In my definition, a compound is a phonological or semantic unit consisting of two or more elements, all of which are either meaningful in themselves or gain individual sense within the compound (cf *cranberry*, where the first element is not meaningful for current speakers but still identifies a particular type of *berry*). Thus, the specific⁶ of a compound creates a more accurate concept by giving it a permanent feature, which distinguishes it from the base: e.g. *taigh-samhraidh* is a house which is usually used during summer periods (it does not refer to just any house). I consider as compounds words with modifying nouns/particles and elements that cannot be used independently, but have definite semantic meanings (like *ban-* meaning ‘female’, *leth-* ‘half’; *mac-* ‘formation of’, or Welsh *prif-* and Gaelic *prìomh-* meaning ‘chief’, etc). On the other hand, I do not regard prefixed words such as those in Example 7 as compounds (not even those which have abstract meanings, like *ana-cainnt* ‘verbal abuse’ or many words with *co-*); most of which negate the word they are attached to, *ion-/so-* indicate suitability/capability (‘-able/-ible’) for a purpose, *do-* unsuitability/incapability (‘un-/in- ... -able/-ible’), and *co-* has a meaning ‘together’, often in a reductive, emphatic sense: cf *cruinneachadh* ‘gathering; collection’ → *co-chruinneachadh* ‘assembly, gathering; collection’; *còrdadh* ‘agreement, pact’ → *co-chòrdadh* ‘agreement, accord, alliance’; *ceangail* ‘connect, bind, tie, unite’ → *co-cheangail* ‘connect, bind together’; *farpais* ‘competition’ → *co-fharpais* ‘competition, contest’.

These words contain pure grammatical affixes, which function as prepositions: semantically, prefixes convey only logical meaning but no conceptual meaning, just like the suffix *-mhor*, for instance, in *tlachdmhor* ‘pleasant’ (from *tlachd* ‘pleasure’) or *ceòlmhor* ‘musical, melodious’ (from *ceòl* ‘music’). Logical meanings that a prefix can show include negation, intensification, the aspect of perfectness, collectiveness, etc.

⁶ The **specific** of a compound is the modifying/qualifying part of a compound, the **generic** is the modified part of a compound, which determines the gender and declension of the compound (i.e. the *head*).

Example 7.

- a) *mì-mhodhail* ‘rude, impolite’ (< *modhail* ‘polite’), *mì-chàilear* ‘unpleasant, disagreeable’ (< *càilear* ‘attractive, pleasing’), *mì-thoilichte* ‘unhappy’ (< *toilichte* ‘happy’), *mì-thlachd* ‘displeasure, resentment’ (< *tlachd* ‘pleasure’), *mì-fhortanach* ‘unfortunate, unlucky’ (< *fortanach* ‘fortunate, lucky’)
- b) *neo-chiontach~neo(i)chiontach* ‘guiltless, innocent’ (< *ciontach* ‘guilty’), *neo-nàdarrach* ‘unnatural’ (< *nàdarrach* ‘natural’), *neo-ghlan* ‘not clean, impure’ (< *glan* ‘clean, pure’)
- c) *`dìochuimhnich* ‘forget’ (< *cuimhnich* ‘remember’); *`dì-`chuimhnich* ‘not remember’?⁷
- d) *an-fhoiseil* ‘restless, uneasy, troubled’ (< *fois* ‘rest, leisure, peace’), *an-ìochdmhar* ‘unmerciful pitiless’ (< *ìochdmhar* ‘kind’), *ana-ceartas* ‘injustice’ (< *ceartas* ‘justice’), *ana-creideas* ‘disbelief’ (< *creideas* ‘faith, trust’), *ana-cainnt* ‘verbal abuse’ (< *cainnt* ‘speech, language’)
- e) *eu-dòchas* ‘hopelessness, despair’ (< *dòchas* ‘hope’), *eu-domhainn* ‘shallow’ (< *domhainn* ‘deep’), *eucòir* ‘unkind’ (< *còir* ‘honest, kind’), *euslaint* ‘ill-health, sickness’ (< *slàinte* ‘health’)
- f) *ion(-)mholta* ‘praiseworthy’ (< *molta* ‘praised’)
- g) *so-thuigse* ‘comprehensible’ (< *tuigse* ‘understanding, insight’), *so-lùbadh* ‘flexible’ (< *lùbadh* ‘bending’), *so-thuigsinn* ‘intelligible, clear’ (< *tuigsinn* ‘understanding’), *so-leughadh* ‘legible’ (< *leughadh* ‘reading’)
- h) *do-thuigse* ‘incomprehensible’, *do-fhaicsinneach* ‘invisible’ (< *faicsinneach* ‘visible’), *do-dhèanta* ‘impossible, impractical’ (< *dèanta* ‘done’), *do-sheachanta* ‘unavoidable, inevitable’ (< *seachanta* ‘avoided’), *do-àireamh* ‘innumerable, countless’ (< *àireamh* ‘number’)
- i) *co-sheirm* ‘harmony’ (< *seirm* ‘(musical) sound’), *co-shìnte* ‘parallel’ (< *sìnte* ‘stretched’), *co-fhaireachdainn* ‘sympathy’ (< *faireachdainn* ‘feeling’)

I am not certain about the position of *ath-* - it may be a prefix in some cases (e.g. *ath-leasachadh* ‘reformation’, *ath-aithris* ‘repeat’, *ath-fhàs* ‘regrowth’) in the sense ‘again, re-’, and a semantic modifying particle⁸ in others (such as *’athaodach* ‘new clothing’, *’atharrach* ‘alien’). Besides semantics, note also the different stress patterns in the two cases: there is no stress on *ath-* if it occurs as a prefix, whereas a compound containing *ath-*

⁷ I have no evidence for this distinction.

⁸ or *semantic modifier* – see section 3.7.3 – used fairly productively and adds a specific transition to the semantics of a word, such as *ban-* ‘female’, *lèth-* ‘half (of something)’ or *ath-* ‘new, other (something)’ (typical in *constructional idioms*, see section 2.2 on these)

bears initial stress: a sign that the whole expression represents one single concept (note *'atharraís* ‘mimick, imitate’ as opposed to *ath-'aithris* ‘repeat’). The same phonological distinction would suggest that *'athbharrach* ‘second crop’ was a compound in contrast with *ath'latha* ‘next day’, *ath-'shamhradh* ‘next summer’. In these latter examples we encounter a productive use of *ath-*. However, it still shows a slightly abstract meaning ‘next’.

From a semantic-grammatical point of view, compounds can be divided into two major classes: *productive* and *idiosyncratic* (*dubh fhacal* ‘riddle’, for instance, is idiosyncratic from two aspects at least: semantic opacity and unusual grammatical order) – this correlates considerably with the *lexical–novel* distribution: the idiosyncratic nature of a compound is a good sign of lexicalisation, whereas novel compounds often follow productive rules. Compounds made up “on the spur of the moment”, in Breatnach’s words, refer to the productive, rule-based usage of Ir. *sean* (for instance) (Example 8a) in contrast with lexicalised words like those in Example 8b) (Breatnach 1947: 80):

Example 8.

a) novel:

sean-'chearc ‘old hen’

sean-'asal ‘old donkey’

sean-'hata ‘old hat’

(characteristic feature of the area in Ring (Co. Waterford))

seana-'thigh ‘old house’ (i.e. a house which is old)

b) lexicalised:

'sean-bhean ‘old woman’

'sean-duine ‘old man’

'seana-thigh ‘old, vacated house’

Here, lexicalised *'sean(a)-thigh* is more abstract in meaning than productive *sean(a)-'thigh*. If novel compounds show more abstract meanings, they are typically used in a particular situation or by a particular speaker, which means that they are idiosyncratic in meaning; however, even in this case, they tend to follow strict rules, which can be represented by the parallel structures of the following examples: *'bodach 'oidhche* (lit. “old man of night”) was observed for *cailleach oidhche* ‘owl’ (lit. “old woman of night”) by Ó Murchú (1989: 296) in East Perthshire (referring to a male owl?); innovative *deasghluasad* ‘ready movement’ and *snasghluasad* ‘elegant movement’ follows the existing word *gradghluasad* ‘quick, sudden movement’ in Fearghas MacFhionnlaigh’s poem, *An Tuagh* (1948; 2003).

Metaphors also play a crucial part in compound words such as *teine 'adhair* (lit. “fire of sky”) ‘lightning’. Principally, metaphoric compounds are very common among plant names: e.g. Ir. *cailleach dhearg* (lit. “red hag”) ‘poppy’, where *dearg*, according to Moylan (1996: 325), “may suggest a negative association attached to the flower”; ScG *meuran na mnatha* ‘sìthe (lit. “the fairy-woman’s thimble”) ‘red fox-glove’, *bròg na cuthag* (lit. “the

cuckoo’s shoe” ‘violet’) (if these “long” constructions with the definite article can be considered compounds – see discussion in section 2.7.4 about this matter). Another Irish example from Kilkenny is *domhan toir* (often *domhan thoir*) with the original meaning ‘the East, the Orient’, which, however, can also refer to ‘great distance’ (Moylan 1996: 323). Words like *baile-mòr* “big town” for ‘city’ and *leth-`cheann* “half-head” for ‘cheek’ are somewhere between strictly literal and fully abstract compounds (just as Breatnach’s (1947: 79) Irish example *leath-doras* ‘a half-door’ (not ‘half of a door’) is “only partly dependant upon the meanings of its components”).

In a theoretical sense, in classifying compounds, there will inevitably be cases in which it cannot be decided whether they are collocations or compounds (both being scalar entities); moreover, there are (mostly productive) compounds that cannot be considered proper idioms, which are by definition abstract and invariable (cf Kavka 2009: 26, discussed in section 1.3) - e.g. *deagh-bhlasta* ‘really tasty’. In summary, a composition which refers to a specific meaning as a whole, rather than being constructed freely by a regular grammatical rule, is a good candidate for compoundhood. However, grammatical productivity cannot be ignored when dealing with compounds, and, eventually, rule-based constructions are just as real compounds as idiosyncratic, lexicalised ones.

3.2. Constructional idioms

In a number of cases one part of a compound word is best treated as a *constructional element*. According to Booij’s (2009: 207–11) definition, as a subtype of multi-word expressions, constructional idioms are bounded constituents that are productive only in complex words. By analogy with idioms, I call the whole structure a *constructional idiom* and use the expression *constructional element* to describe its constituents. As Jackendoff puts it, a constructional idiom is “a productive idiomatic pattern with both variable and lexically fixed positions” (Jackendoff 2002). Booij’s (2009: 207) examples include *hoofd* with the usual meaning ‘head’ in composite words, in which it reflects the meaning ‘main’: *hoofdingang* ‘main entrance’, *hoofdbezwar* ‘main objection’, *hoofdverdachte* ‘main suspect’, etc. I consider the following cases as belonging in this category:

1. preceding adjectives (where productive)

(I do not refer to intensifiers like *fíor* ‘really, very’, *lán* ‘fully’ etc here.)

In the case of preceding adjectives, *seannduine* ‘an old man’ is a real compound for phonological reasons (due to initial stress), *seann-`taigh* ‘previous house’ is a real compound for semantic reasons (in contrast with *taigh aosta* ‘an old house’). *Seann`chearc* ‘an old hen’, on the other hand, is produced by a productive mechanism, thus

the preceding adjective *seann-* can here be considered a constructional element (due to double stress). Similarly, '*athaodach* 'new clothing' and '*atharrach* 'alien' are real compounds (just as '*athoidhch* 'tomorrow night', for phonological reasons at least), whereas '*ath-*'*oidhche* 'the next night', '*ath-*'*shamhradh* 'next summer' and '*ath-*'*bhliadhna* 'next year' are constructional idioms.

Corr- is a very good example of a constructional idiom here, as it is productive and is not used independently.

2. modifying words like *ban-* 'female', *leth-* 'half-', *ath-* 'next' (not as a prefix – in the meaning *re-*; see section 2.1 for examples)
3. *neach-* signifying professions (e.g. *neach-teagaisg* 'teacher', *neach-ealain* 'artist') and *luchd-* producing collective nouns (e.g. *luchd-turais* 'tourists', *luchd-obrach* 'workers, staff', *luchd-ionnsachaidh* 'learners')
4. constituents conveying abstract meanings (*mac-* 'son' in the sense 'formation/creation of, originating from' in *mac-talla* ("son/creation of a hall" >) 'echo' and *mac-meanmna* ("son/creation of mind" >) 'imagination'); though this construction is not productive now, it shows its specialised meaning only in complex words, which, in my view, makes it a constructional idiom

Regarding *neach*, it does occur in phrases where it undertakes a rather pronominal function (with the meaning 'the one, anyone'), such as *neach sam bith* 'anybody', *neach iomraiteach* 'a personality, celebrity' (i.e. 'someone who is well-known, famous'), *neach saorthoileach* 'volunteer' (in the latter instance in fact its function is quite similar to that of a constructional element).

I am not certain about the following cases – classified as prefixes by Gillies (1902: 152-3): *iom-* 'around; about' in *iom-ghaoth* 'whirlwind' may be a constructional element in the sense that it is productive, used only in complex words (just like prefixes are), but adds a special semantic meaning to the head word (in this case it refers to a wind which moves around). *Sìor-* 'ever' can also be found in a number of words, such as *sìor-uaine* 'evergreen' (< *uaine* 'green'), *sìor-mhaireannach* 'perpetual, everlasting' (< *maireannach* 'permanent, enduring') and '*sìor-*'*chruinneachadh* 'gathering continually' (< *cruinneachadh* 'gathering'). Here, the double stress would suggest that *sìor-* 'ever' were a mere intensifier (and in the case of *sìor-mhaireannach* 'perpetual, everlasting', it does appear so). However, its deeper semantics in the other two cases would raise it to the level of constructional elements (a crowd that gathers continually, does not stop gathering, and a tree that is evergreen, does not stop being green). *Bith-* in *bith-bhuan* 'everlasting' may be

a prefix or, rather, an intensifier; however, it also may be understood as an idiosyncratic V+A compound ('to be' + 'lasting').

3.3. Proper names

Proper names are very similar to compounds in many respects: they are specific and they often consist of constructions made up by several words. They also show phonological and syntactic properties similar to compounds. For example, due to loss of normal stress, vowels can be elided in compounds (cf Irish *i n-aonturas* 'deliberately' [ə N'e:Ntrus] < *turas* [torus]) and proper names (e.g. *Baile Átha Cliath* [b'l'a: k'l'iə] 'Dublin' < *baile* [bal'ə], *Lá Fhéil Brighde* 'Feast/Day of Brigid' [L'a:l' b'r'i:d'ə] < *féil* [f'e:l']) (de Búrca 1958: 69). Also, placenames tend to be stressed regularly as one word: cf Welsh *tre+bach* > '*Drefach*, *llan+mor* > '*Llanfor*, *llan+Mair* > '*Llanfair*, which are regarded as improper compounds (i.e. the specific follows the generic in these words) (Thorne 1993: 344). Gaelic placenames also behave as one word, since in the genitive they are lenited just as other, single proper names: compare ScG *taigh Sheumais* 'James' house' and *Bun-Sgoil Thaigh an Uillt* 'Taynuilt Primary School' (lit. 'Primary School of Taynuilt')⁹. Similarly, in Manx *Oie'll Voirrey* meaning 'St Mary's Eve' (Carval singing session) is treated as one word when in plural: *Oie'll Voirreeyn* 'Carval sessions' (Kelly 1870: 36).

3.4. Compounds in Brittonic languages

In Brittonic linguistic literature proper and improper compounds are distinguished. In *proper compounds* the first element qualifies the second giving a specifier–generic constituent order. In compounds like these initial mutation occurs in every possible case (together with various phonological changes), which reflects the close connection between the two elements. This type of compound can be created by any combination of a noun and an adjective, i.e. the head noun/adjective can be, in turn, modified by a noun or an adjective (Morris-Jones 1921: 18–20, 80–4; Thorne 1993: 840–4; Hardie 1948: 55–6). The type consisting of two adjectives may have no head (exocentric coordinate compounds; cf Br. (=Breton) *melen-ruz* 'orange', lit. "yellow-red"). In Welsh (=W.) also verbal head is possible (e.g. *croesholi* 'cross-examine' or *cyflym redeg* 'run quickly'; see in Example 9). (Note also Cornish N+A *yn ebren dorgell-du* 'in a vault-black sky', which is most

⁹ The latter example was suggested by David Robinson in a personal conversation

probably a poetic, thus novel usage in William Morris' poem *Nos Gwavek* (Winter Night).)¹⁰

Example 9.

N+N W. (*craig* 'rock' + *lle* 'place' >) *CReigle* 'rocky place' (**Th, M-J**); C. (= Cornish) (*gwin* 'vine' + *lann* 'enclosure' >) *gwinlann* 'vineyard'

A+N (often loose compounds) Br. *hend-dall* ('blind' + 'road' >) 'cul-de-sac' (**H**); W. (*glas* 'green' + *bryn* 'hill' >) *GLasFRyn* 'green hill', (*glas* + *llanc* >) *GLaslanc* 'youth' (abstract) (**Th, M-J**); C. (*gwyn* 'white' + *gwaf* 'winter' >) *gwynwaf* 'white winter', (*arluth*) *arthnef* '(lord of) high heaven'

A+A W. (*du* + *coch* >) *DUGoch* 'dark red' (lit. "black red") (**Th, M-J**); (*llwyd* 'grey' + *glas* 'blue' >) *LLwydlas* 'greyish blue' (if not exocentric without a head) (**Th, M-J**)

N+V (mostly loose) W. (*llygad*+*rythu* >) *llygadRYthu* 'stare', (*clust*+*feinio* >) *clustFEinio* 'listen closely', (*croes*+*holi* >) *croesHOli* 'cross-examine' (**Th, M-J**)

A+V (loose compounds) W. *CYflym redeg* 'run quickly', *PRysur weithio* 'busily working' (**Th, M-J**); *cyflym yrrodd* 'he drove at speed' (**M-J**)

Proper compounds can be further divided into strict and loose compounds according to their stress patterns: *strict compounds* show regular word stress indicating their word status (e.g. W. *GWinllan* 'vineyard', *PEnrhyn* 'headland', *FFfermdy* 'farmhouse', with penultimate stress, which is the regular word stress in Welsh), *loose compounds* have stress on both elements, or secondary stress on the initial element (the specifier) (e.g. *CAmARgraff* 'false impression', *PRifAThro* 'head teacher') (Morris-Jones 1921: 80–4; Thorne 1993: 840–4).

In *improper compounds* the second element modifies the first, which means that the generic precedes the specifier. In such compounds mutation occurs only when the first element of the compound triggers initial mutation in general (for instance after a feminine noun: W. *greigdda* (N+A) 'good woman', *heulwen* (N+N(gen.)) 'sunshine' (where *haul* 'sun' was formerly a feminine noun), but not in *tref-tad* 'heritage', *pen-cerdd* 'chief of song', etc), i.e. mutation is grammatically driven. Stress is regular, which again suggests that they are regarded as single words. Nevertheless, improper compounds are newer constructions and thus have normal word order. The two typical types are N+A and N+N(gen.); furthermore, there are also instances of a noun qualifying an adjective, i.e. an

¹⁰ I have taken all the Cornish examples from Tim Saunders' (2006) collection of recent Cornish poetry, of the title *Nothing Broken*. Welsh examples are from Morris-Jones (1921: 80–4) (**M-J**) and Thorne (1993: 840–4) (**Th**), Breton examples are from Hardie 1948 (**H**).

A+N type (cf the Breton examples below). (Morris-Jones 1921: 80–4 (**M–J**); Thorne 1993: 340–4; Hardie 1948: 55 (**H**))

Example 10.

N+A W. (*troed+noeth* >) *troednoeth* ‘barefoot’, (*hin+da* >) *hindda* ‘fair weather’ (**M–J**)

N+N(gen.) W. (*gwaith+ty* >) *gweithdy* ‘workshop’ (**M–J**); Br. *penn-ti* ‘master’ (lit. ‘head of the house’) (**H**)

A+N Br. *ruz-tan* ‘fire red’, *melen-koar* ‘wax yellow’, *melen-aour* ‘golden yellow’ (**H**)

A+A Br. *ruz-beo* ‘vivid red’, *mezo-mik* ‘dead drunk’, *fresk beo* ‘very fresh’ (lit. “vivid fresh”) (**H**) (rather collocations?)

In both proper and improper compounds, it is always the generic that determines the gender and grammatical category of the compound (e.g. *penn-askel* ‘wing-tip’ (m) < *penn* ‘end’ (m) + *askel* ‘wing’ (f) (**H**); *glaslanc* ‘youth’ is a noun because *llanc* is a noun (**Th**)). The generic bears inflection, except in loose compounds, where (in A+N compounds) the adjective is often made plural agreeing with the noun (e.g. *gweithdy* ‘workshop’ (sg) > *gweithdai* ‘workshops’ (pl), but *nefolion leoedd* (from *nefol leo* (sg)) (**M–J**) (Morris-Jones 1921: 84 (**M–J**); Thorne 1993: 341 (**Th**); Hardie 1948: 55 (**H**)).

Prefixed words have the same distinction of stress as compounds do. Prefixes can be prefixed to nouns, adjectives and verbs, and trigger their typical mutations on the first sounds of these. ‘Constructional idioms’ appear to be rather general in Celtic languages. In Breton, for example, we encounter prefixes determining the gender of the noun that follows, similarly to Gaelic *ban-* (*tad-/tar(v)-* ‘male’, *mamm-* ‘female’: e.g. *tar-gaz* ‘tomcat’, *tar-moualéh* ‘male blackbird’, *mamm-voualéh* ‘female blackbird’), and also prefixes giving the singular of nouns (*penn-* ‘head’, *loen-* ‘beast’: e.g. *eur penn-denved* ‘a sheep’, *eul loen-kezek* ‘a horse’). These expressions function as nouns according to the mutations they trigger on their determined noun: it appears to trigger the same mutations as the determined noun in N+N compounds (e.g. “soft mutation” after a feminine noun: *askel-grochen* “wing of skin”, i.e. ‘bat’ < *askel* (f) + *krochen*; *poan-benn* “pain of head”, i.e. ‘headache’ < *penn* ‘head’) (Hardie 1948: 45, 55). A number of prefixes conveying abstract meanings (like the Dutch examples *hoofd-* ‘head’ for ‘main’, *boer-* ‘farmer’ for ‘trader’, for instance (cf Booij 2009: 207–8)) also exist in Celtic languages: e.g. *penn-* (lit. “head”) in Brittonic languages (W. *pencerdd* ‘chief poet’; Br. *penn-kear* (lit. “headtown” >) ‘capital’, Cornish *penntir* ‘headland’) or *ceann-* (id.) in Goidelic languages (ScG *ceann-bhaile* ‘capital city’, *ceann-íeadhna* ‘clan chief’ (lit. “head of the people”), *ceann-bliadhna* ‘anniversary’ (lit. “head-year”, i.e. special/important year), *ceann-latha*

‘deadline’ (lit. “head-day”); Ir. *ceannline* ‘headline’, *ceannlitir* ‘capital letter’, *ceannródaí* ‘pioneer’). Regarding other types of constructional idioms, *dem-* ‘half-’ in Breton can be used in names of colours or before verbal adjectives (e.g. *dem-chlaz* ‘bluish’ (lit. “half-blue”), *dem-zu* ‘brown’ (lit. “half black”); *dam-glevet* ‘half-heard’) (H). In Welsh *lled-* ‘half-’ appears before adjectives (e.g. *lledwag* ‘half empty’); however, its productive usage resembles intensifiers (e.g. *LLed DDa* ‘rather good’ (M–J)), just like W. *pur* (e.g. *PUR DDa* ‘very good’ (M–J)), Gaelic *fior* (e.g. *fior mhath* ‘really good’) or *lán chinnteach* = Ir. ‘*láin-*’ *chinnte* ‘absolutely certain’ – note double stress, just as in *buileach cinnteach* ‘absolutely certain’ where *buileach* is a proper adverb. (*Hanter-* is another Brittonic word for ‘half-’ (cf Br. *hanter-vreur* ‘half-brother’, *hanter-tiegez* ‘spouse’ (lit. “half-household”) (H); C. *hanterkans* ‘half-hour’, *hanter-wiskys* ‘half-dressed’).) (Morris-Jones 1921: 80–4 (M–J); Hardie 1948: 58–9, 173–6 (H))

There is a great number of preceding adjectives in Brittonic languages. Adjectives very often show two different meanings according to their position in relation to the noun they specify (Breton examples from Hardie 1948: 61–2, Welsh from Morris-Jones 1921: 80–4):

Example 11.

Br. *choz varch* ‘bad horse’ vs *march koz* ‘old horse’

W. *gwir grefydd* ‘true religion’ (i.e. genuine) vs *hanes gwir* ‘a true story’ (i.e. true to fact)

yr unig beth ‘the only thing’ vs *dyn unig* ‘a lonely man’

The same phenomenon can be observed in Romance languages: cf Spanish *niño pequeño* ‘little boy’ vs *pequeño niño* ‘baby boy/son’, French *fille petite* ‘small girl’ (i.e. a girl who is small) vs *petite fille* ‘little/young girl’ and *petite-fille* ‘granddaughter’, where the normal N+A order indicates a simple grammatical phrase, whereas the idiosyncratic A+N order refers to a more abstract construction, which may be considered a compound. Regarding Brittonic examples, A+N constructions are very often loose. However, there is a considerable number of examples for strict compounds as well: W. *GAu BRoffwyd* ‘false prophet’, *PRif DDinas* ‘chief town’ vs *PRifford* ‘highway’, *HEn ddyn* ‘old man’ (Morris-Jones 1921: 80–4; Thorne 1993: 840–4).

3.5. Irish (and Manx) compounds

3.5.1. Types of compounds

The above discussed proper-improper distinction can be drawn also in Goidelic languages. Thus, when the first element modifies the second (i.e. the specifier precedes the generic), we may refer to these as *proper compounds*, and those word compositions in which the

second element modifies the first (i.e. the specifier follows the generic – just like in syntactic phrases), can be called *improper compounds*. As regards the elements' syntactic category, again, just as we have seen in Brittonic languages, the most common types consist of nouns and/or adjectives – where both the noun and the adjective can function as either generic or specifier (although compounds with noun specifier as first element are not so frequent) (cf Example 12a). From Ros Goill Lucas (1979: 217–8) mentions also compounds with a verbal noun (or participle) as second element. (The examples below are listed by Lucas (1979: 205, 217–8) from Ros Goill (Co. Donegal) (**RG**) and by de Bhaldraithe (1953: 254–6) from Cois Fhairrge (Co. Galway) (**CF**).)

Example 12a: Irish proper compounds

A+N: (*fíor* 'true, real' + *uisce* 'water' >) *Fíoruisce* 'pure water, springwater' **RG**

(*ceart* 'right' + *lár* 'centre' >) '*ceart*-, *lár*' 'very centre' **CF**

(*fada* 'long' + *sgéal* 'story' >) '*faid*-, *sgéal*' 'long-drawn-out story' **CF**

(*fuair* 'cold' + *cúis* 'cause, reason' >) '*fuair*-, *chúis*' 'apathy' **CF**

A+A (1): (*mór* 'big' + *sáthach* 'quiet' >) '*mór*-, *sháthach*' 'very quiet' **CF**

(*dearg* 'red' + *rua* 'red' >) *DEarg-rua* 'intensive red' **RG**

(*dubh* 'black' + *gorm* 'blue' >) *DÚghorm* '(navy) blue, dark blue' **RG**

(*trom* 'heavy' + *glas* 'green' >) '*trom*-, *ghlas*' 'dark green' **RG (p. 205)**

(*éadrom* 'light' + *gorm* 'blue' >) '*éadrom*-, *ghorm*' 'light blue' **RG (p. 205)**

(*dubh* black + *breac* speckled >) '*duibh*-, *bhreac*' 'dark and speckled' **CF**

(*liath* grey + *gorm* blue >) '*liath*-, *ghorm*' 'grey-blue' **CF**

A+denominal A (2): (*géar* 'sharp' + *súil* 'eye' + *-each* >) *GÉarshúileach* 'sharp-eyed'
RG

(*trom* 'heavy' + *croí* 'heart' + *-och* >) *TRomchroíoch* 'heavy-hearted' **RG**

(*fad* 'long' + *ceann* 'head' + *-ach* >) *FADcheannach* 'long-headed; shrewd' **RG**

(*sean* 'old' + *aimsir* 'time' + *-tha* >) *SEanaimseartha* 'old-fashioned' **RG**

(*fuair* 'cold' + *cúis* 'cause, reason' + *-each* >) '*fuair*-, *chúiseach*' 'indifferent' **CF**

N+Part.: (*teangaidh* 'tongue' + *ceangailte* 'tied up' >) *TEangaidh-cheangailte*
'tongue-tied' **RG**

A+Part.: (*úr* 'new, fresh' + *saillte* 'salted' >) *ÚR-shaillte* 'freshly salted' **RG**

V+Part.: (*smol* 'decay' + *caite* 'worn' >) *SMol-chaite* 'decay-worn' **RG**

N+N: (*cúl* 'back, rear' + *fiacail* 'tooth' >) *CÚlfhiacail* 'molar, backtooth' **RG**

(*taobh* 'side' + *balla* 'wall' >) '*taobh*-, *balla*' 'sidewall' **RG**

(*muc* 'pig' + *feoil* 'meat' >) '*mu(i)c-feoil*' 'pork' **CF; RG**

N+A: (*drum/droim* ‘back’ + *nochtaithe* ‘bare, naked’ >) ‘*drum-, nochtaithe* ‘bare-backed’ **CF**

(*béal* ‘mouth’ + *leathan* ‘broad, wide’ >) ‘*béil-, leathan* ‘broad-mouthed, yawning’ **CF**

(*béal* ‘mouth’ + *osglaithe/oscailte* ‘open’ >) ‘*béal-, osglaithe* ‘wide open’ /of door/ **CF**

(*ceann* ‘head’ + *dána* ‘daring, confident’ >) *CEanndána* ‘headstrong, stubborn’ **RG**

N+VN: (N) (*bonn* ‘sole’ + *bualadh* ‘beating, striking’ >) ‘*bonn-bhualadh* ‘sores on soles of feet’ **CF; RG**

(V) (*cúl* ‘back, rear’ + *éisteacht* ‘listening’ >) *CÚléisteacht* ‘eavesdropping’ **RG**

(*cúl* ‘back, rear’ + *caint* ‘speech, talk’ >) *CÚlchaint* ‘backbiting’ **RG**

A+VN: (V) (*geal* ‘light, bright; happy’ + *gáire* ‘laughing, smiling’ >) *GEal-gháiri* ‘beaming’ **RG**

(*trom* ‘heavy; difficult’ + *mearú* ‘distracting’ >) *TRom-mheabhrú* ‘grieving’ **RG**

Double adjectives can be divided into two classes: in the first class (A+A (1)) we see compounds either with the generic functioning as the head, or exocentric compounds with two heads (or no head) – these compounds often represent colour names. In the other class (A+A (2)) the head adjective is suffixed so that it often cannot appear in this form outside the compound (e.g. ‘*géarshúileach* ‘sharp-eyed’; compare with *green-eyed* in English).

Among improper compounds, the authors of Irish monographs mention the type consisting of two nouns with the second in the genitive (the examples are from Lucas 1979: 16, 61). To this we can add the type N+A:

Example 12b: Irish improper compounds

N+N(gen.) *scian`phóca* ‘pocket-knife’ (lit. “knife of pocket”)
scáth`fearthainne ‘umbrella’ (lit. “cover of rain”)
lán`mara~lán`mhara ‘tide’ (lit. “fullness of the sea”)

N+A *lán-árd* ‘high tide’ (*árd* ‘high’)

Regarding semantic classification, subordinate compounds include *scian-phóca* ‘pocket-knife’, *scáth fearthainne* ‘umbrella’ (lit. “cover of rain”) from improper compounds, and perhaps the examples containing participles: ‘*teangaidh-cheangailte* ‘tongue-tied’, ‘*úr-shaillte* ‘freshly salted’ and ‘*smol-chaite* ‘decay-worn’, and the ones with verbal nouns: *bonn-bhualadh* ‘sores on soles of feet’, ‘*cúléisteacht* ‘eavesdropping’ and

'cúlchaint ‘backbiting’ among proper compounds. Attributive compounds are all A+N compounds (e.g. *'fíoruisce* ‘pure water, springwater’, *'faid-,sgéal* ‘long-drawn-out story’), the N+N compounds *'cúlphiacail* ‘molar, backtooth’, *'taobh-,balla* ‘sidewall’ and probably *'mu(i)c-fheoil* ‘pork’ as well. The N+A compound *béal-,osglaithe* ‘wide open’ can also be listed among attributive compounds, just as some double adjectives: *'mór-,sháthach* ‘very quiet’, *'trom-,ghlas* ‘dark green’ and the complex A+A type such as *'géarshúileach* ‘sharp-eyed’. Among N+A adjectives we encounter some exocentric attributive compounds as well: *'drum-,nochtaithe* ‘bare-backed’, *'béil-,leathan* ‘broad-mouthed, yawning’, *'ceanndána* ‘headstrong, stubborn’. A+A compounds also include coordinative examples: see *'duibh-,bhreac* ‘dark and speckled’ and *'liath-,ghorm* ‘grey-blue’. *'Dearg-rua* ‘intensive red’ and *'dúghorm* ‘dark blue’ may be placed somewhere between attributive and coordinate compounds, as this intermediate case is discussed below, in section 3.5.1.1.

Following the discussion above about words with first constituents that do not appear independently, we need to distinguish three different classes for prefixes, intensifiers and constructional idioms. Prefixed words and words preceded by the intensifier *ro* ‘too’ are not compounds, as they are modified grammatically. Words with ‘constructional elements’ – preceding adjectives, abstract intensifiers, or semantic modifiers such as *ban-*, *leas-* and *leath-* – represent a specific type of compound. However, the question is not as simple as that. Preceding adjectives may either show productive usage or have specialised meanings. ‘Emphatic prefixes’ (intensifiers) behave in a rather similar way in having both a literal meaning and an intensifying function. The prefix *ath-* may function as a prefix in some cases and a modifying word in others.

3.5.1.1. Irish constructional idioms

Constructional idioms tend to contain adjectives, or, less frequently, nouns. In Lucas’ (1979: 204) words, “[t]he prefixes *corr-*, *droch-*, *leath-*, *sean-* can be prefixed to nouns in general”, referring to the productive usage of the modifying word *leath-* ‘half-’ and the preceding adjectives *droch-* ‘bad’, *sean-* ‘old’ and *corr-* ‘odd’ (to which list we can add *deagh-* ‘good’ as well (cf Quiggin 1906; de Bhaldraithe 1945, 1953; Ó Cuív 1944)); nevertheless, in the case of certain nouns the same elements convey specialised meanings. (In Irish *corr-* does have a postnominal counterpart: cf *'corr'dhuine* ~ *'corr,dhuine* ‘oddball’ vs *duine corr* ‘an odd person’.) (The examples are from Mhac an Fhailigh (1968: 62) (**E** = Erris), Lucas (1979: 204, 205) (**RG** = Ros Goill), Breatnach (1947: 80) (**R** = Ring), de Bhaldraithe (1945: 63, 1953: 241) (**CF** = Cois Fhairrge) and Ó Cuív (1944: 68) (**WM** = West Muskerry).)

Example 13: Irish preceding adjectives

a) literal meaning (productive usage):

'droch- 'fhiacra ‘bad teeth’ **RG**

'droch- 'chladach ‘dangerous shore’ **E**

DRoch-dhaite ‘pale’ (lit. “bad-coloured”) **RG**

,deagh- 'chomhairleóir ‘good counsellor’ **WM**

,deigh- 'ghníomh ‘good deed’ **WM**

sean- 'chearc ‘an old hen’ **R**

SEannduine [ʃaNəN'ə] ‘old man’ **RG**

'corr-uair (~'corr- 'uair **CF** **'53**) ‘an odd time’ **RG**; ‘occasionally’ **E**

b) abstract (specialised) meaning:

ar an droch- 'uair ‘unfortunately’ (lit. “on the bad hour”) **RG**

'droch- ,ainm ‘bad reputation’ (lit. “a bad name”) **WM**

DEagh-CHaint ~ *'deagh- ,chaint* ‘smart talk; witty speech’ (lit. “good talk/speech”)

CF

SEan-fhocal ‘proverb’ (lit. “old word”) **RG**

seanmháthair ‘grandmother’ (lit. “old mother”)

COrrmhéar ‘index finger’ (lit. “odd finger”) **RG**

(Note that some of the examples are from Munster (**R**, **WM**), which means they have a different stress pattern to the one expected – discussed below in section 3.5.2.) If productive, preceding adjectives can be regarded as constructional idioms (with abstract meanings (or initial stress) they can be considered real compounds), and thus form parts of compounds. Lucas (1979: 204) lists *'seannduine* [ʃaNəN'ə] ‘old man’ among the second group, together with abstract compounds. In my view, this compound does not show an abstract or nonliteral meaning; however, it could be regarded as a real compound due to phonological reasons: its initial stress and the nasalisation of the dental in the second element: /n/+/d/ > /N/. (Note that *'sean(-)duine* [ʃandiN'i] has the more general meaning ‘old person’ rather than ‘old man’¹¹.) Lucas (1979: 205) considers *'droch- 'aoibh* to have both a literal and an abstract meaning: *drochaoibh* ‘bad mood’ (*drochaoibh a bheith ort* ‘to be in a bad mood’) (< *aoibh* ‘smile’, cf *aoibh an gháire a bheith ort* ‘to be smiling’) vs ‘bad person’. To be quite precise, neither of these meanings is fully literal (compositional) – however, the latter is an exocentric compound: it is not only incapable of being deduced

¹¹ Information from Professor Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh.

from the meanings of its constituents, but it also refers to something outside the compound's meaning.

The most evident instances of constructional idioms are *semantic modifier words*, such as *leath-* ‘half-’, *ban-* ‘female’ and *leas-*. *Leas-* is connected to names of relatives (e.g. *leas-mháthair* ‘stepmother’ (de Búrca 1958: 74; Ó Cuív 1944: 68), *leas-dhearbhbhráthair* ‘half-brother’, *leas-mhac* ‘stepson’ (Lucas 1979: 205), and it is also encountered in the word *leas-ainm* ‘nickname’ (Breatnach 1947: 80). According to de Bhaldraithe (1953: 4) *ban-* survives only in *banríon* ‘queen’ and *baintreach* ‘widow’ (Quiggin (1906: 153) and Ó Cuív (1944: 67) mention also *banaltra* ‘nurse’). However, in words like *banchara* ‘lady friend, girlfriend’ (< *cara* ‘friend’), *banchliamhain* ‘daughter-in-law’ (< *cliamhain* ‘son-in-law’) it may still be considered as a productive constructional idiom. Besides nouns (cf Example 8), *leath-* can be used with adjectives as well, as in *LEath-aosta* ‘middle-aged’ (lit. “half-old”) **RG**, *LEath-theth* ‘lukewarm’ (lit. “half-warm”) **RG**, *leath-réidh* ‘somewhat indifferent’ (lit. “half-relaxed” – cf *tóg go réidh é* ‘take it easy’) **E** (Lucas 1979: 204, 205 (**RG**); Mhac an Fhailigh 1968: 62 (**E**); Breatnach (1947: 74) (**R**)).

Example 14: *leath-*

- a) literal: *LEith-bhliadhain* ‘half-year’ **E**
- b) abstract: *ar leath-taoibh* ‘sideways’ (lit. “on half-side”) **R**
LEath-rud ‘half-wit’ (lit. “half thing”) **RG**
LEath-scéal ‘excuse’ (lit. “half story”) **RG**

Mac Cana (2003: 180–81) compares Irish *leth-/leath-* with the Welsh word *lled* (both originating from the noun meaning ‘half’ – *leth* and *lled*, respectively). He points out that they function as an intensifier before adjectives: e.g. *lled lawn* means more than ‘half-full’, *yn lled dda* ‘rather well’. He claims that the “semantic loading is evident in the use of Irish *leth/leath*” (e.g. *Bhí sé leath-mhall* = *Bhí sé mall go leor/go maith* ‘He was late enough’, where it is “at some point on the semantic scale between ‘very late’, and ‘too late’, *an-mhall* and *ro-mhall*”).

Ath- can be considered a prefix when it has the sense of repeatedness (e.g. *ath-chlaoidh* ‘relapse’ **D**, *ath-obair* ‘redoing of work’ **CF**, *ath-fhás* ‘second growth’ **CF**), but a semantic modifier when it introduces something that is new, often in a more abstract sense (e.g. *aith-bhliadhain* [‘æ:vl’iən’] ‘next year’ **CF**; *athsmaoineamh* ‘second thought, afterthought’, *athbhrí* ‘recovery, revival’ (< *bri* ‘strength’), *athlasadh* ‘inflammation’ (< *las* light, flame)) (Quiggin 1906: 153 (**D** = Donegal); de Bhaldraithe 1953: 240 (**CF**); *Oxford Irish Dictionary* 2000). In a few cases, it is also encountered in verbs, together with

some other “prefixes”, cf Example 15 (Lucas 1979: 205, Mhac an Fhailigh 1968: 62); as well as in the adverb *'athuair* [a:fər] ‘again’ (Lucas 1979: 205 (**RG**)), whose use is very restricted though:

Example 15.

(ag) *ATh-chognadh* (in Ros Goill, Co. Donegal) ~ *ag 'athchangailt* (in Erris, Co. Mayo)
‘chewing (the) cud’ (*cogain*, *ag cogaint* ‘chew’)

BOrr-chaoineadh ‘half-crying’ (*caoin*, *ag caoineadh* ‘lament, mourn; cry’)

FId-gháiridh ‘giggling’

SCig-mhagadh ‘laughing mockingly’ (*magadh* ‘mocking, mockery’)

Regarding stress, some expressions with preceding adjectives – even those of abstract meanings – have double stress (e.g. *'deagh-'chaint* (de Bhaldraithe 1945: 63)). It is debatable whether these expressions are compounds at all, or merely collocations similar to Spanish syntactical phrases like *un buen libro* ‘a good book’ (where *buen* is not used separately – but cf *un libro bueno* ‘a good book’, *Bueno*. ‘Good./Right.’). *Intensifiers* – or, in other words, ‘*emphatic prefixes*’ – usually show double stress, as well, which would suggest that they function as adverbs (and thus, normally, do not make parts of compounds). However, just like preceding adjectives, they show an idiosyncratic word order with their qualified words. Also, they have both literal and abstract meanings – they function as intensifiers when they are abstract. Like this they create a similar problem to that of preceding adjectives: according to their stress pattern they should be considered as separate words; however, with regard to their idiosyncratic usage and meanings they might be seen as constructional elements. (This does not apply to *ro* ‘too’, which is an adverb without any further, special meanings.)

These *constructional intensifiers* are for the most part adjectives, qualifying other adjectives in an adverbial sense. A list of their original meanings and examples for their use can be found in Table 2 (de Búrca 1958: 75 (**T** = Tourmakeady); Ó Cuív 1944: 68 (**WM**); Ó Cúrnáin 2007: (vol. 3:) 146 (**IO** = Iorras Aithneach); Lucas 1979: 203–5 (**RG**); Mhac an Fhailigh 1968: 174 (**E**); de Bhaldraithe 1945: 63, 1953: 240–4 (**CF**); Oxford Irish Dictionary 2000):

Table 2.

intensifier	literal meaning	meaning as prefix	examples
<i>fíor</i>	truth/true ¹²	true, real	<i>Fíorchinnt</i> ‘dead certain’ RG <i>fíorghann</i> ‘very scarce’ E
<i>barr</i>	top (N)	excellent	<i>'barr'fhear</i> ‘excellent man’ CF ‘53 <i>'barr'bhainis</i> ‘excellent wedding’ CF ‘53 <i>'barr'lá</i> ‘excellent day’ CF ‘53
<i>lán</i>	full (A)		<i>'lán'thirim</i> ‘rather dry’ RG
<i>marbh</i>	dead (A)		<i>ar a MHarbhshuaimhneas</i> ‘at his dead ease’ RG (<i>suaimhneas</i> ‘comfort, leisure, ease’) <i>'marbh'shocair</i> ‘dead quiet’ RG
<i>dubh</i>	black; dark (A)		<i>DÙMHór</i> ~ <i>dubh-'mhór</i> ‘very big’ CF ‘45 <i>'dubh-'bháisteach</i> ‘heavy rain’ CF ‘53
<i>dearg</i>	red (A) /neg. connotation?/	intense, utter /neg. connotation/	<i>'dearg'bhreag</i> ‘big/bare-faced lie’ T <i>'dearg,mhaidin</i> ‘bright morning’ WM <i>dearg-ghráin</i> ‘intense hatred’ IO <i>ar deargbhuile</i> ‘furiously angry’ (<i>buile</i> ‘madness, fury’)
<i>rua</i>	red (A)		<i>RUabhéic</i> ‘a loud shout’ RG
<i>sean</i>	old (A)	exceeding	<i>SEanbhualadh</i> ‘a heavy blow’ RG
<i>gearr</i>	short (A)	fair, fairly	<i>'gearr,chuid</i> ‘fair amount’ WM <i>GEarmhaith</i> ‘pretty good’ RG
<i>buan</i>	lasting, enduring (A)	permanent	<i>buanchruth</i> ‘stereotype’ (<i>cruth</i> ‘appearance’)
<i>síor</i>	eternal, continual (A)	ever, perpetual	<i>'síor'ghlas</i> ‘evergreen’ <i>'síor'ghnách</i> ‘humdrum’ (<i>gnách</i> ‘usual, customary, normal’)
<i>uile</i>	all, every, whole		<i>Uilechumhachtach</i> ‘omnipotent’ RG , cf <i>Dia Uilechumhachtach</i> ‘God Almighty’ (<i>cumhachtach</i> ‘powerful’)

In the list above *fíor* ‘truth/true’, *barr* ‘top’ and *lán* ‘full’ have a very close sense to their original meanings. The same is true for *buan* ‘lasting, permanent’, *síor* ‘perpetual’ and *uile* ‘all, whole’. I have also listed three intensifiers which represent colours in origin. These (black and red) are basic colours in the world’s languages with a high degree of symbolism. Of the two words for ‘red’ (*dearg* and *rua(dh)*), *dearg* often bears negative connotation, which feature it tends to retain also as an intensifier. Incidentally, it is

¹² Historically, *fíor* is a construction of adjective and substantive (copula). It should be established empirically what part of speech contemporary speakers hold it to be.

interesting to consider intermediate cases of *dearg-* and *dubh-* in compounds referring to degrees of colour or shade: *dearg-rua*, which combines both words for ‘red’ in the language to convey a meaning ‘intense red’, and *dubh-ghorm* ‘blackish or dark blue’, which has a sense ‘very blue’, as well as the expression *dúdhorcha* ‘pitch dark’, combining ‘black’ (*dubh*) and ‘dark’ (*dorcha*) to gain an emphasised meaning of darkness (Lucas 1979: 203, 217–8). In these compounds, thus, the specifier eventually functions as an intensifier.

Dillon (1944: 96–97) describes Middle Irish negative *an-* as having three different functions: (1) in words with positive connotation: the negative is evidently pejorative (e.g. *ád* ‘luck’: *aná* ‘ill luck’); (2) in words with a neutral sense, this pejorative connotation is also observed by extension (e.g. *cindiud* ‘decision’: *ancindiud* ‘wrong decision’); (3) in words with negative connotation “the pejorative prefix has intensive force”, i.e. it frequently intensifies this negative meaning (e.g. in *brath*: *anbrath* ‘treachery’). According to Dillon (1944: 99), the next step (not earlier than the 16th century) was that in a word with neutral connotation, the prefix projected this pejorative force “in the special sense of excess” (e.g. *caitheamh* ‘to spend’ – *anchaitheamh* ‘waste’, *trom* ‘heavy’ – *antrom* ‘excessive weight’). In the modern spoken language the intensive particle *an-* (*ana-* in Munster), almost exclusively conveys the meaning ‘very, great’ (both with adjectives and nouns). However, it differs from the negative prefix *an-* in that “it does not form composition, for the following word retains its accent.”

Likewise, in the case of *dubh* + *buí* ‘yellow’, the stress pattern distinguishes between the intermediate and the intensified meaning: the true compound with the initial stress, *'dubh-,bhuí*, gives a shade of the colour in question: ‘dark yellow’, whereas double-stressed *'dubh-'bhuí* bears the intensified meaning ‘very yellow’ (de Bhaldraithe 1953: 240–4). *Deargmhaidin* ‘bright morning’ also reflects an intermediate sense, probably referring to the colour of the morning (even without any negative connotation in its meaning) (Ó Cuív (1944: 68)).

Discussing colours, *trom* ‘heavy’ and *éadrom* ‘light’ behave in a very similar way to intensifiers (although the latter could rather be considered as a “negative” intensifier according to its meaning – a similar, though intermediate case would be *bándearg* ‘pink’ (< *bán* ‘white, fair, pale’ + *dearg* ‘red’)). Both these words have a special meaning (i.e. ‘dark’ and ‘light’, respectively) when attached to colour names (probably due the influence of English), they are used productively and show stress on both elements (Lucas 1979: 205):

Example 16.

(*trom* ‘heavy’ + *glas* ‘green’ >) ‘*trom-*’*ghlas* ‘dark green’

(*éadrom* ‘light’ + *gorm* ‘blue’ >) ‘*éadrom-*’*ghorm* ‘light blue’

There is also a number of examples with initial stress (cf. for instance ‘*síor-rá*’ ‘ever saying’ as opposed to ‘*síor-*’*bháisteach* ‘constant rain’, ‘*síor-*’*chlamhsán* ‘ever complaining’, etc.). If with initial stress, constructions like this should be considered as real compounds. The colour adjective *glas* ‘green/grey’ and the noun *béal* ‘mouth; opening’ also have some intensifier function in expressions like ‘*glas-*’*gharbh* and ‘*béal-*’*gharbh* (both meaning ‘fairly rough’/of elements, weather/), together with the adjective *mór* ‘big’ (e.g. ‘*mór-*’*sháthach* ‘very quiet’, ‘*mór-*’*fhoclach* ‘magniloquent’ (lit. “with many words”), ‘*mór-*’*chuid* ‘a large amount’). However, all of these constructions bear initial stress, and thus can be regarded as real proper compounds. The intensifier function of *glas* may have originated as a negative connotation – cf the following examples: ‘*glas-*’*chaint* ‘(act of) arguing, bickering’, ‘*glas-*’*chomrac* ‘(act of) fighting’, ‘*glas-*’*ghála* ‘a fairly strong wind’, ‘*glas-*’*aimsir* ‘rather cold weather’; whereas in the case of *béal*, it is interesting to note the intermediate sense in ‘*béal-*’*osglaithe* ‘wide open’ (of door) (de Bhaldraithe 1953: 240–4, 254–6). (It is also worth noting that ‘*marbh-*’*fáisg* ‘bad luck’ (lit. “dead luck”) bears double stress (cf Mhac an Fhailigh 1968: 62) (just as ‘*marbh-*’*shocair* ‘dead quiet’), while *marbh-* here is probably not to be regarded as an intensifier – it appears as though the negative connotation is in some cases more important than the intensifier function – probably coming from the specifier’s original meaning.)

As I have already mentioned above, there are two intensifiers which do not belong to the class of emphatic prefixes: *an-*, which is a prefix in the grammatical sense, though also with double stress (like preceding adjectives and intensifiers) - e.g. *AnAirde* ‘a great height’, *AnDEas* ‘very nice’ (de Bhaldraithe 1945: 63, 1953: 240–4; Lucas 1979: 203), and *ro-* ‘too’, since it shows no other, physical meanings – thus it rather functions as an adverb-like particle. Still, constructions with *ro-* usually bear double stress as intensifiers in general (e.g. ‘*ro*’ ‘*mhór*’ ‘too big’ **RG**, ‘*ro*’ ‘*mhinic*’ ‘too often’ **RG**, ‘*ro-*’ ‘*mhall*’ ‘too late’ **T** – but cf ‘*ró-*’*thirm* ‘very dry’, and even ‘*ro-ard*’ [ra:rd] ‘too high’ (with phonological reduction), or *ro-* ‘*mhaith*’ ‘too good’ in Cois Fhairrge) (Lucas 1979: 205 (**RG**); de Búrca 1958: 75 (**T**); de Bhaldraithe 1953: 240–4 (**CF**)).

Another interesting case is that of the specifier adjective *ard-*. In Ring (Breatnach 1947: 81) compound nouns with *ard-* ‘high, arch-; main, principle, chief’ usually have double stress (e.g. ‘*ard-*’*bhróig* ‘boot’, ‘*ard-*’*fhear* ‘chief man’) (also in Cois Fhairrge (de Bhaldraithe 1953: 240): ‘*ard-*’*oidhche* ‘excellent night’, ‘*ard-*’*lá* ‘excellent day’). But cf.

ARdoras ‘lintel’ (lit. “high door”) from Ros Goill, and ‘*ard,cheann*’ ‘superior’, ‘*ard,réim*’ ‘sway, supremacy’, ‘*ard,chíos*’ ‘tribute (rent)’ from Cois Fhairrge (Lucas 1979: 205, de Bhaldraithe 1953: 240). These observations indicate that it should be considered as a preceding adjective or, before other adjectives, an intensifier: cf ‘*ard-’mhilis*’ ‘very sweet’, ‘*ard-’mhuinteartha*’ ‘very friendly’ (Breatnach 1947: 81). On the other hand, *ard-* remains unstressed in the words *ard’aingeal* ‘arch-angel’, *ard’easpag* ‘arch-bishop’ not only in Ring (where it might be explained on phonological bases), but also in Ros Goill (Breatnach 1947: 80; Lucas 1979: 217) – in these special cases it may be regarded as a prefix.

We can attest other “prefixes” behaving as constructional elements, found only in word compositions and being used more or less productively. Unlike intensifiers, though, these words tend to bear regular word stress (i.e. initial in Northern dialects), thus they should be regarded as semantic modifiers. *Bun-*, just like intensifiers, has two different meanings in its compounds: *bun-* ‘basic, bottom’ (e.g. *bunscoil* ‘primary school’, *buncheart* ‘fundamental right’, *BUn-sheanduine* [bʊNhaNəN’ə] **RG**) and *bun-* ‘medium’ (e.g. ‘*bun,choca*’ ‘medium-sized cock’ **CF**, ‘*bun,aosta*’ ‘middle-aged’ **CF**) (Lucas 1979: 217–8 (**RG**), de Bhaldraithe 1953: 240 (**CF**), *Oxford Irish Dictionary* 2000).

There are a number of elements which probably cannot be classified as constructional due to their low productivity. Rather, the words they occur in may be good examples for the *cranberry* type compounds. *Scig-* has a meaning of ‘mocking’ in ‘*scigphictiúr*’ ‘caricature’ (< *pictiúr* ‘picture’), ‘*scigaithris*’ ‘parody’ (< *aithris* ‘imitation’) and *SCigmhagadh* ‘laughing mockingly’ (< *magadh* ‘mocking, mockery’) **RG**. The verb *borr-* ‘swell, grow’ conveys a sense of gradience in *BOrrchaoineadh* ‘half-crying’ **RG**. *Mac-* ‘son’ shows an abstract meaning in the N+N(gen.) compound *mac’alla* ‘echo’ **D**. Other examples are *SLithgháiridh* ‘mocking laughter’ (< *gáiridh* ‘laughing’) and *CLapsholas* ‘twilight’ (< *solas* ‘light’) **RG**. (Although it probably cannot be considered as a constructional element either, note the abstract sense that the prefix *iom-* ‘around, about’ creates in the words *iomrá* ‘rumour’ (< *rá* ‘saying’) and ‘*iomráiteach*’ ‘famous’.) (Lucas 1979: 205 (**RG**); Quiggin 1906: 153 (**D**); *Oxford Irish Dictionary* 2000)

It is worth taking into consideration other compound types as well; such as cardinal points (e.g. *aniar* ‘west’ + *aneas* ‘south’ > *aniar-’neas* ‘southwest’ **RG**; *anoir* ‘east’ + *aduaidh* ‘north’ > *anoir-’duaidh* ‘northeast’ **RG**; *thiar* ‘(in the) west’ + *theas* ‘(in the) south’ > *thiarr-’dheas* ‘southwest’ **RG**), the expressions *aon-’duine* [ə’Nənə] **RG** (*gach aon duine* ‘every single man’) and (*i n-’aonturas/d’aon turas* ‘deliberately, on purpose’ **T/E/RG**, and the adverbs *SEal-uair* **RG** and (perhaps) *bun-os-’cionn* ‘upside-down’ (lit. “bottom above/on the head”) **RG** (Lucas 1979: 218 (**RG**); also: de Búrca 1958: 69 (**T**),

Mhac an Fhailigh 1968: 62 (E); *Oxford Irish Dictionary* 2000 for *d'aon turas*). Cardinal points can be best described as mixed coordinate compounds, in accordance with Scalise & Bisetto's (2005; 2009) classification, complemented by Lieber's analysis (2009) (discussed in section 2.8). *Bun-os- 'cionn* 'upside-down' is a phrasal compound (see sections 2.2. and 2.9.3 on this type), *aon- 'duine*¹³ and *'aonturas* behave as attributive compounds, while *SEal-uair* is probably a subordinate compound.

Finally, doublets/reiterative words can be considered to be compounds. As Moylan (1996: 317) explains about words from Kilkenny: these are repetitive words with some vocalic alteration. They normally bear double stress and usually convey contempt, as Moylan maintains (e.g. *'buaileam báileam* [term of abuse or contempt for a loudmouth or braggart] (cf *buaileam sciath* 'braggart'); *'búise 'báise* [mess, jumble or clutter]; *'músaí ('másaí)* [shy, introverted, not talkative]; *'stróiceam 'stráiceam* [(of people) poorly; (of action or movement) slowly, painfully, with difficulty]). De Bhaldraithe (1945: 63) also mentioned reiterative words from Cois Fhairrge: e.g. *'de- 'dei* 'toy', **'bo 'bou* 'bogey'.

3.5.2. Classification of Irish compounds

In Irish monographs authors mention four different types of compounds. In the first case (Example 17a, on page 61) words that were once made up of two words have ceased to be perceived as compounds – thus, authors argue that words like *DEarbh-bhráthair* 'brother' **CF** or *'ceanann* 'white-headed, white-faced' **WM** are no longer compounds (de Bhaldraithe 1945: 63 **CF**, Ó Cuív 1944: 67 **WM**). These words typically have initial (or regular) stress and the vowels in the second element are liable to be obscured. According to de Bhaldraithe (1953: 4), the prefix *ban-* is not understood anymore in *'banríon* 'queen' and *'baintreach* 'widow', and, as the second element is considerably reduced, these words are not felt to be compounds. Ó Cuív (1944: 67) treats *'banaltra* 'foster mother' in the same way (but see afore-mentioned *banchara* 'lady friend, girlfriend', *banchliamhain* 'daughter-in-law' for productive usage of *ban-*). On the other hand, in compounds that are still felt to be made up by separate words (in spite of their obvious unity) (Example 17b), primary stress is initial, yet the second element bears secondary stress, thus not reduced phonologically (de Búrca 1958, Ó Cuív 1944). These are called *close compounds* (de Búrca 1958: 74–5; Mhac an Fhailigh 1968: 62) (or *independent compounds* by Breatnach (1947: 79)). (Mhac an Fhailigh (1968: 62) considers all compounds with initial stress as close compounds – together with 'historical compounds' like *dearbh-bhráthair* ['dr'ix'ar'] 'brother' and *deirbh-shiúr* ['d'er'hu:r]~[' d'er'əhu:r] 'sister'; and also gives examples with

¹³ I am doubtful about the compoundhood of this expression.

sean-, *ath-* and *corr-* – cf Example 17, pp 61–62.) Words beginning with *ath-*, *leath-* and *sean-* have initial stress according to de Bhaldraithe (1953: 240–4) as well, while *droch-*, *deagh-* and *corr-* show either double or initial stress according to the particular word or the pattern of the sentence they are used in (cf Example 17 b, c below). In *loose compounds* (Example 17c) both elements are stressed (*double/even stress*). Besides preceding adjectives and intensifiers, reiterative words (e.g. *de-dei*) show double stress (cf de Bhaldraithe 1945: 63 and Moylan 1996: 317). Mhac an Fhailigh (1968: 62) mentions also *phrase compounds* (Example 17d): in which the second element is stressed. Just as we have seen in other Celtic languages, “the qualifying word”¹⁴ [a noun or an adjective in most cases] generally takes the main stress” (de Búrca 1958: 76). Thus, it can be stated that close compounds in the Irish linguistic literature represent Brittonic strict proper compounds. (Quiggin (1906: 153) actually calls compounds with initial stress *proper compounds*.) ‘Loose compounds’ is the same as ‘loose proper compounds’, and ‘phrase compounds’ is for Brittonic ‘improper compounds’. I also distinguish possible *constructional idioms* within close compounds, following the classification described in Chapter 2 about compounding. (Examples are from de Bhaldraithe (1945: 63, 1953: 240–4, 254–6) (CF), Mhac an Fhailigh (1968: 62) (E), Ó Cuív (1944: 67–8) (WM), Quiggin (1906: 153) (D) and de Búrca (1958: 74–5) (T), *Oxford Irish Dictionary* 2000.)

Example 17.

a) historical compounds /no longer felt to be compounds/:

'dearbh-bhráthair ['dr'ix'ar']~['dr'a:r'] ‘brother’ CF ‘45, E

'deirbhshiúr ‘sister’ ['d'er'hu:r] E

'ceannaghaidh ‘face’ ['k'æNi:] (< *ceann* ‘head’ + *aghaidh* ‘face’) CF ‘45

'ceanann ['k'anən] ‘white-headed, white-faced’ (< *ceann* ‘head’ + *fionn* ‘fair’)

WM

'baintreabhthach ['baint'rəx] ‘widow’ WM

'banaltra ['banərlə]~['banəltrə] ‘foster-mother, nurse’ WM, D

'aithghiorra ‘short cut’ ['ak'ərə]~['æ: k'ərə] (< *giorra* ‘shortness’) E, CF ‘45

b) close compounds (proper strict compounds):

'fuarfháilte ‘cold welcome’ (< *fuar* ‘cold’ + *fáilte* ‘welcome’) E

'gearr, chaile~*'gearrchaile* ‘maid, young girl’ (< *gearr* ‘short’ + *caile* ‘girl’) T, E

'lag, dhramanach ‘weak-backed’ (< *lag* ‘weak, feeble’ + *droim* ‘back’) CF

'muaigh-chríoch ‘tender-hearted’ (< *muaigh* ‘tender’ + *croí* ‘heart’) D

¹⁴ i.e. the specific

'*dubh, bhuí* 'dark yellow' (< *dubh* 'black' + *buí* 'yellow') **CF**

'*bándearg* 'pink' (< *bán* 'white' + *dearg* 'red')

'*caoirfheoil* mutton (< *caora* 'sheep' + *feoil* 'meat') **CF '53**

'*baill-, chríoth* 'trembling of the limbs' (< *ball* 'limb' + *crith* 'tremble, shiver')

WM

'*ceo-bháisteach* 'drizzling rain' (< *ceo* 'fog, mist' + *báisteach* 'rain') **E**

i 'n-aon-turus 'deliberately' **E**

'*droch, ainm* 'bad reputation' (lit. "bad name") **WM**

'*sean, bhean* 'old woman' **WM**

seanfhocal 'proverb' (lit. "old word"); '*sean- fhocla* 'proverbs' **T**

'*corruair* 'occasionally' (lit. "an odd hour") **E**

Constructional idioms:

'*leas, mháthair* 'stepmother' **T**

'*leath-uair* [L'æ:uər']~[L'æ:fo:r'] 'half an hour' **CF**

'*leath, phunt* 'half pound' **CF**

'*leath, chéad* 'fifty' (lit. "half hundred") **CF**

'*leath, cheann* 'half-wit' (lit. "half-head") **CF '53**

'*leath, fhocal* 'a cant phrase; a hint' (lit. "half-word") **CF**

'*leataobh* 'one side /of two/' (lit. "half-side") **CF**

'*athchlaoidh* 'relapse' **D**

'*ath, obair* 'redoing of work' **T**

ag 'athchangailt 'chewing cud' **E**

c) loose compounds (proper loose compounds):

'*droch- 'chosmhalacht* 'bad appearance' **T**

'*droch- 'chladach* 'dangerous shore' (< *cladach* 'seashore') **E**

'*dearg 'bhréag* 'barefaced lie' (< *bréag* 'lie') **T**

'*marbh 'fáisg*¹⁵ 'bad luck' (< *fáisg* 'luck') **E**

'*cinn- 'tsiocair* 'cause' (< *cinn* 'head (gen.)' + *siocair* 'cause') **T**

d) phrase compounds (improper compounds)

sgrraith 'bhogáin 'quagmire' **E**

tráth 'nóna 'afternoon' **CF '45, E**

*doigh 'bhuilg*¹⁶ 'stomach ache' **CF '45**

(*n*)*athair nimhe* 'serpent, poisonous snake' (lit. "snake of poison")¹⁷

¹⁵ *marbh(fh)fáisg* also exists, see Ó Dónaill's dictionary

¹⁶ *daigh bhuilg* in Ó Dónaill's dictionary

mac- 'alla 'echo' **D**

mí 'Fheabhra'¹⁸ 'the month of February' **D**

In Munster syllable-structure (the number and length of the syllables) influences the tendency of initial stress in specifier-first compounds (i.e. stress may shift to the second element – cf Example 12). In close compounds (or strict proper compounds), however, even here, the tendency is to stress the first element (Breatnach 1947: 79). If the second element contains no long syllables, the stress may vary: for example, if *sean-* is used productively, the stress is on the second element in contrast with lexicalised compounds, which have initial stress: *sean-*'*chearc* 'old hen', *sean-*'*asal* 'old donkey' vs '*seanbhean* 'old woman'. There is also a difference in meaning between '*seanathigh* [one of the old houses which have been vacated in favour of new ones], stressed on the first element as compounds normally are, and *seana-*'*thigh* [a house that is old], with stress on the second element only (Breatnach 1947: 80). On the other hand, words with *ard-* tend to have double stress, which may be due to the long vowel in [a:rd]: e.g. '*ard-*'*fhear*, '*ard-*'*mhuinteardha* 'very friendly', '*ard-*'*ghnó* (*gnó* 'business, affair'), '*ard-*'*bhróig* (*bróg* 'shoe'), '*ard-*'*mhilis* 'very sweet' (Breatnach 1947: 81). The case of *ard'**easpag* 'archbishop' and *ard'**aingeal* 'arch-angel', on the other hand, is special for the second element consists of merely two (short) syllables, in which case the stress does not normally shift to the second element even in Munster. (As I have noted before, *ard-* here may be treated as a prefix. Although, considering its meaning, it is not purely grammatical, it greatly resembles the corresponding prefix in English (*arch-*) and other languages (from Greek *arkhein* 'rule' > *arkhi-*). If its usage copies that of this prefix (despite it obviously means something like 'high, chief, principle' itself), the semantics may play a less important role than the phonology of these prefixes.)

Two expressions with the semantic modifier *leath-* 'half' also show even stress in Ring – before the adjective *maith*, and the noun *suim* 'interest', both of which occur in expressions after negation ('*leath-*'*maith* ~ *leath-*'*maith* – in the sense 'not even half-good, not good at all'; '*leath-*'*suim* ~ *leath-*'*suim* – 'very little concern; no concern at all'), and the compoundhood of which expressions are doubtful in Breatnach's (1947: 81) view. Breatnach may be right if we consider that both expressions can take double stress in contrast with all other examples mentioned in the monographs, and we would expect that at least *leath-maith* should be lenited. However, it also should be taken into consideration that *leath-* cannot stand on its own, and, especially when only the second element takes

¹⁷ It refers to ties of cloth put on a corpse around the head to keep the jaw shut.

¹⁸ Note lenition of the genitive, triggered by the feminine noun *mí* 'month' (in earlier language).

stress, *leath-* still meets the requirements of being a constructional element – especially if we take into account the specific nature of the contexts these expressions occur in. They may well be collocations when double-stressed, though I am not entirely convinced about the independent status that *leath-* would gain in these expressions.

Another exception is *leath-'chois* ‘one leg’ with second element stress, which, according to Breatnach (1947: 82), might be (in some measure) explained by a contrast between *leath-'chois* and *leath-'láimh* ‘one hand’, *leath-'shúil* ‘one eye’, etc (i.e. the person in question is without a leg, and not without a hand, eye etc). This explanation would seem to me somewhat lame, though, as normally we make a contrast between two objects, and not between an individual and a whole set. Rather, I would suggest an analogy with the afore-mentioned compounds, which also have a one-syllable second element but with a long vowel in them (which will naturally bear the stress on the second element in this dialect): *leath-'láimh* ‘one hand /of two/’, *leath-'shúil* ‘one eye /of two/’. If the specifier is the second element, this is stressed in Munster as well (e.g. *bean 'tighe* ‘housewife’ (lit. “woman of house”), *cailín 'aimsire* ‘maid servant’, *fear 'oibre* ‘worker (lit. “man of work”), *saor 'luinge* ‘shipwright’ (lit. “joiner of ships”), *maighistir 'sgoile* ‘school master’ (lit. “master of school”)). (Breatnach 1947: 79–2 (**R**); examples also from Ó Cuív 1944: 67–68 (**WM**)) (In Munster the main stress falls on

1. the second syllable if heavy
2. the third syllable if heavy and not preceded by a heavy syllable
3. the first syllable otherwise (‘default case’)

(Ó Sé 1989) Similarly, if the second component of a compound contains a heavy syllable, the stress falls on that element accordingly.)

Example 18.

deirbh-'fiúr [dr'i'fu:r] ‘sister’ **WM**

leas-'mháthair ‘stepmother’ **R, WM**

leath-'choróin [l'a-'χro:n] ‘half-crown’ **R**

leath-'scéal ‘excuse’ (lit. “half-story”) **R**

leath-ama'dán ‘a half-fool’ (BUT also: *'leath-amadán*) **R**

sean-'daoine ‘old men’ (vs sing. *'sean-duine*) **R**

droch-'aimsir [ˌdro'hajm'fɪr] ‘bad weather’ **WM, R /no sec. stress/**

droch-chomh'luadar ‘bad company’ **WM**

deigh-'ghníomh ‘good deed’ **WM**

geamh-'oidhche ‘winter night’ (< *geimhreadh* ‘winter’ + *oidhche* ‘night’) **WM**

fad-a 'radhnach [ˌfadaˈri:nəχ] ‘deliberate, patient’ **WM**
,moch- 'óirge ‘early rising’ (< *moch* ‘early’ + *éirigh* ‘rise’) **WM**
,croí- 'bhrúdh ‘remorse’ (< *croí* ‘heart’ + *brú* ‘pressure’) **WM**

Note that all of the above examples have a long vowel (or diphthong) in the second element.

As I have mentioned above, both elements are stressed in expressions with intensifiers like *barr-* ‘excellent’, *dearg-*, *dubh-*, *fíor-* ‘really’, *síor-* ‘ever-’, in certain expressions with the preceding adjectives *deagh-* ‘good’, *droch-* ‘bad’, *corr-* ‘odd’, in reiterative words, and also in the expressions *'plé[a] 'ráca* ‘revelry, merrymaking; festival’ (< *plé* ‘dealings’ + *ráca* ‘rake’?) **CF** ‘45, *'cinn- 'tsiocair* ‘cause’ **T**, *'ball 'odhair* ‘predicament’ **T**, and *'taobh- 'balla* ‘sidewall’ **RG** (de Bhaldraithe 1945: 63, 1953: 240–4 (**CF**); de Búrca 1958: 75 (**T**); Lucas 1979: 16 (**RG**)). (Examples: de Bhaldraithe (1953: 240–4, 254–6) (**CF**), de Búrca (1958: 75) (**T**), Quiggin (1906: 154) (**D**).)

Example 19.

'barr- 'oidhche ‘excellent night’ **CF**
'láin- 'siúráilte ‘absolutely sure’ **CF**
'dearg- 'bhréag ‘bare-faced lie’ **T**
'deagh- 'bhreith ‘good judgement’ **CF**
'deagh- 'aimsir ‘good weather’ **CF**
'droch- 'oidhche ‘bad night’ **CF**
'droch- 'shnua ‘bad appearance’ **CF**
'droch- 'iarraidh ‘attempt to violate’ (< *iarraidh* ‘attempt’) **D**

As noted above, intensified expressions may be regarded as collocations behaving in an adverb-like way, or at least those of them in which there is still a strong relationship between the literal and the intensifier meaning (such as *fíor-* ‘truly’, *lán-* ‘fully’, *síor-* ‘ever’, *uile-* ‘all, whole’; and even *barr-* ‘top, excellent’ and *marbh-* ‘dead(ly)’, in a figurative sense). In other cases at least, intensifiers may be considered as constructional elements (e.g. *dubh- 'mhór* with second element stress due to its long vowel, or other expressions with colour names, like *'dearg- 'mhaidin* ‘bright morning’ **WM**). As regards preceding adjectives, if the first element is stressed, we evidently have instances of compounds (cf Example 20). There are cases in which both variants are encountered: the preceding adjective alternates between a constructional element and a part of a real (close) compound. In Ring (Co. Waterford, Munster) the same distinction can be observed between second element and first element stress instead of double stress and first element

stress (i.e. the first element is not stressed if a constructional element) – see above (Breatnach 1947: 80). (Examples from de Bhaldraithe (1953: 240–4) (CF), Quiggin (1906: 153) (D), de Búrca (1958: 74) (T), Mhac an Fhailigh (1968: 62) (E), Ó Cuív (1944: 68) (WM).)

Example 20.

- '*dea, chríoch* 'good-hearted' CF
- '*dea, chaint* 'smart talk; witty speech' CF
- '*dea, labhartha* 'eloquent' (lit. "good-speaking") CF, D /no second stress/
- '*dea, bholadh* 'sweet smell' (< *boladh* 'smell') D¹⁹
- '*droch, shnuadhúil* 'with bad appearance' CF
- '*droch, mheas* 'contempt' (< *meas* 'respect; opinion, estimation') T
- '*droch, mheasúil* 'disdainful, contemptuous' CF

According to de Bhaldraithe (1953: 241), compositions beginning with *corr-*, *deagh-* and *droch-* show either even or initial stress. Note the slight differences in usage:

Example 21.

- '*corr áit fadó bhíodh plúr* 'long ago there would be flower at some places' vs *téighim i*
'*gcorr, áit* 'I hardly go anywhere'
- is 'corr uair é* 'it happens time to time' vs *bhíodh, 'corr, uair* 'yes, occasionally'
- bhí 'dea chroí aige* 'he has a good heart, he's kind' vs *le teann 'dea, chroí*
'with kind support'
- '*droch lá é* 'it's a bad day/a bad day, it is' vs *ná tug aon 'droch, lá ort féin*
'don't make yourself a bad day'

Droch-sheains ('bad luck') has either even stress or the primary stress falls on the second element: *Tá 'droch-'sheains aige*. 'He's got bad luck.' vs *'droch-'sheains* (as a full answer) (de Bhaldraithe 1953: 241).

Prefixes, again, show the same categories as compounds do with regard to their stress pattern (cf Example 22 – Quiggin 1906: 153–4 (D), de Búrca 1958: 74–5 (T), de Bhaldraithe 1953: 240–4 (CF), Mhac an Fhailigh 1968: 62 (E), Breatnach 1947: 81 (R), *Oxford Irish Dictionary* 2000).

Example 22.

- a) first element stressed: *so-* [ability], *do-* [inability]; neg. particles *an-*, *mí-*, *neamh-*
'*sochreidte* 'credible' D

¹⁹ Secondary stress is not indicated in this source.

`sothuigthe ‘comprehensible’

`so-, ólta ‘drinkable’ **CF**

`do, bhriste ‘unbreakable’ **CF**

`do-ite ‘inedible’

`an, tráth ‘inopportune time’ **T**

`mí, nádúrtha~ ‘mí-, nádúrthach ‘unnatural’ **T, CF**

`neamhnáireach [N'æ:mNa:r'əx] ‘shameless’ **CF**

`neamhshuim ‘indifference’ (< *suim* ‘concern’) **CF**

b) second element stressed: *ion-* [ability]

ion ‘trust’ ‘trustworthy’ **CF**

in ‘ionnsaithe’ ‘learnable’ **CF**

c) both stressed (double/even stress): intensive particle *an-*; *mí-*, *comh-*

`an ‘deas’ ‘very nice’ **T**

`an ‘íseal’ ‘very low’ **D**

`an ‘ocras’ ‘great hunger’ **D**

`an ‘fhearg’ ‘great anger’ **R**

`mí- ‘ádth’ ‘misfortune, bad luck’ **E** (but ‘mí-ádth in **CF**!)

`comh ‘aois’ [‘ku: ‘i:ʃ] ‘same age’ **CF**

Comhaois may be reduced to one syllable [ki:ʃ] if understood as a noun (pl. *comhaoiseannaí* ‘peers’) (Cois Fhairrge (Co. Galway): de Bhaldraithe (1953: 240–4)). Second element stress does not appear to be common in Irish dialects; which is not surprising, since prefixes never function as the generic. Thus, they are either completely merged with the base word and show initial stress, or both elements are equally stressed. On the other hand, the existence of both even stress and second element stress seems to characterise grammatical modifiers: the same phenomenon can be observed in the case of the adverb-like particle *ro-* ‘too’, which, being an intensifier, normally shows double stress. However, in the expressions *ro-* ‘mhaith’ ‘too good’ (Cois Fhairrge, Co. Galway), *ro-* ‘gharbh’ ‘too rough’ and *ro-* ‘fhairsing’ ‘too wide, too open’ (Erris, Co. Mayo) the stress may fall on the second element. This may be due to the fact that grammatical words/prefixes show vague semantics (i.e. they relate more to logic than to conceptual meanings), thus universally tend to remain unstressed (cf for example Catalan prepositions, which always display the unstressed varieties of the vowels in them: e.g. *per* [pʌr] ‘for’ instead of [per]). (In Cois Fhairrge there is alteration even in the case of the intensifier *dubh-* (e.g. ‘dubh-’mhór~dubh-’mhór ‘very big’), which would support the grammatical

nature of intensifiers of this kind.) (de Bhaldraithe 1945: 63, 1953: 240–4; Mhac an Fhailigh 1968: 63)

3.5.3. Signs of compoundhood in Irish

Finally, it is worth discussing two typical questions of compounding in Celtic languages, the first of which is initial mutation in compounds, which shows a very similar picture in all Celtic languages. Secondly, there are some interesting cases of plurals among Irish compounds as well.

3.5.3.1. Lenition and other phonological issues in Irish compounds

The close relation between the elements of compound words may be reflected in various phonological phenomena. **Lenition** in Goidelic compounds greatly resembles initial mutations in Brittonic compounds: in proper compounds (where the specifier comes first) the initial of the compounds' second element is usually lenited (compounding lenition), whereas in improper compounds (in which the specifier follows the generic), the initial of the specifier is lenited if the first noun is feminine (or in oblique cases – dative, genitive: grammatical lenition) (Lucas 1979: 20, 61–2 (**RG**); Mhac an Fhailigh 1968: 172 (**E**); *Oxford Irish Dictionary* 2000):

Example 23.

- a) proper compounds:

FAdcheanna(ch) 'long-headed' (< *fad* 'long' + *ceann* 'head') **RG**

LEath-the(th) [L'ehh] 'lukewarm' (lit. "half-hot") **RG**

- b) improper compounds:

,slat (f) *`mhara* 'searod' (lit. "rod of sea") **E**

,bó (f) *`bhainne* 'milk-cow' (lit. "cow of milk") **E**

,scáth (m) *`fearthainne* 'umbrella' (lit. "cover of rain") **RG**

,sú (m) *`talún* 'strawberry' (lit. "berry of ground/earth")

Dental sounds (/t/, /d/, /s/) are not normally lenited after other dentals (/t/, /d/, /n/, /l/) (**dental/homorganic rule**), nor are the initials of some older compounds – some of these show eclipsis (cf Lucas 1979: 16, 217–8):

Example 24.

- a) *'ar(d)doras* 'lintel' (< *ard* 'high' + *doras* 'door')

'fadsaolach 'long-lived' (< *fada* 'long' + *saol* 'life')

'caoldroim 'the small of the back' (< *caol* 'narrow' + *droim* 'back')

'ceanndána 'headstrong, stubborn'

- b) 'coiscéim 'step' (< *cos* 'foot' + *ceum* 'step')
- 'taobh 'balla 'sidewall'
- lán 'mhara~lán 'mara* 'high tide' (lit. "fullness of sea")

See also the two placenames meaning 'old mountain', distinguished by the presence of lenition in *Seanshliabh* (*Shanlieve*), but not in *Seansliabh* (*Shanslieve*) (Ó Mainnín 1993: 151–2). Examples for the dental rule in Scottish Gaelic are: *sgian-* 'dubh' 'black-knife' (as a part of traditional clothing); *seannduine* 'old man', *seann(-)taigh* 'traditional (black-)house; previous house', etc) (see section 6.4). Note also the assimilation (n+d>N) in Irish *seannduine* [ʃaNəN'ə] 'old man'. The case of 'taobh 'balla in Example b can be seen as homorganic delenition, while /mh/ alternates with /m/ in *lán 'mhara~lán 'mara* due to nasal environment. Here /mh/ **assimilates** with the nasal and becomes more sonorant itself (see Ó Maolalaigh 2003). It can also be observed in Scottish Gaelic: e.g. *làn mhaise~làn maise* 'full beauty' (see sections 7.2.3, 7.2.5). There are a couple of examples for the lack of lenition after *leath-* as well (**older delenition**: t+th>t), which historically ended in a dental: cf *leatao(i)bh* 'one side' (< *leath* + *taoibh*), *leatoras* 'half-door' (< *leath* + *doras*) for example (Breatnach 1947: 74, 79; Ó Cuív 1944: 68). (On the lack of lenition in *coiscéim*, see Ó Maolalaigh 2016b.)

Two other phonological phenomena have been mentioned in this chapter, namely **homorganic delenition/blocking** (*marbhfáisg*, instead of *marbh(fh)áisg* 'bad luck', is perhaps a case of this), and **homorganic defricativisation**: *'cinn- 'tsiocair* 'cause' (de Búrca 1958: 74–5). The latter can be observed in *Cionn tSáile* (see section 3.3 on the similarity of proper names and compounds), and examples are encountered in Scottish Gaelic as well (e.g. *san t-seann t-saoghal* 'in the old world', *às an t-seann t-slighe* 'from the old way', see section 6.4).

3.5.3.2. Plural of Irish compounds

As we have already seen, the plural of compounds may show some idiosyncratic features, indicating that we are dealing with whole individual words rather than combinations of separate words (cf *sabretooths* instead of **sabreteeth* (Štekauer 2001, cited by Grzega (2009: 224); discussed in section 2.1); *taigh-sholaisean* in the East Sutherland dialect of Scottish Gaelic instead of *taighean solais* (Dorian 1978: 88; discussed in section 2.6.5)). Plenty of examples can be found for this phenomenon among Irish N+N(gen.) compounds. (Since these compounds are improper compounds following the phrasal composition, plural formation is an important sign of their compoundhood.)

Ó Curnáin (2007: 685) (Iorras Aithneach) points out that plural formation in compounds of the type N+N(gen.) generally follows the logical use of the element words (i.e. if one of the elements cannot be made plural, it tends not to take plural; however, in copulative (coordinate) compounds usually both elements are put into plural (e.g. *crántachai* (nom. pl.) *muc* (gen. pl.) < *cráin mhuice* ‘female pig’; *cráin* ‘sow’)). (Cf the Italian coordinate *cantanti-attori* ‘singer-actors’ (lit. “singers-actors”): pluralisation normally applies to both constituents in Romance languages (Scalise & Bisetto 2009: 46 fn 18).)

Example 25.

scamh(l)ach (t')iongan ‘ragnail’ (lit. “scale of (your) nails”) > *scamh(l)ach (t')iongachai* ‘ragnails’ (*scamhail* ‘scale’; *ionga* ‘nail’, pl. *iongachai*)
seol báid “sail of a boat” > *seolta* (pl.) *bád* (gen. pl.) “sails of boats”
clo(i)ch luai ‘stone of lead’ > *clocha luannai/luantai*

However, plural formation can be illogical, i.e. marked, in highly lexicalised compounds:

Example 26.

tinneas cinn ‘headache’ (lit. “ache of head”) > *tinneas* (sg) *cinneannaí* (pl.) ‘headaches’
ball éadaigh ‘piece of clothes (clothing)’ > *balltaí* (pl.) *éadach* (gen. pl.) ‘pieces of clothes’ (*éadach* ‘garment’, pl. *éadaí* ‘garments’!)
deideighe > *deideannaí-deigheas* (both elements are in plural, the second element *deigheas* is constructed by *deighe* + -s (English plural marker!))

Crann úllai ‘apple tree’ (lit. “tree of apples”) also shows an unusual plural: *croinnté* (pl.) *úlla* (pl.); as well as *tinneas* (sg) *cinn* (gen. sg): pl. *tinneas* (sg) *cinneannaí/cinneachai* (pl.) (corresponding with *cinn*, the gen. pl. would be *ceann*!) (also cf *deich gcínneachai* ‘tens, packets of tens’) (Ó Curnáin 2007: 687–8). This treatment resembles the case of English *sabertooths* instead of **saberteeth*, where a productive, ‘compound’ plural is used instead of the independent plural of the second noun.

In Ros Goill (Co. Donegal) the first element (i.e. the head) of N+N(gen.) compounds is made plural in most cases; in a number of cases, however, they are “felt as one word”, and therefore have special plurals:

Example 27.

ball-DObhran > *ball-DObhráin* ‘mole’ /on skin/
CRoth-dhearan > *CRoth-dhearain* ‘crowbar’
car-SLeamhna > *car-SLeamhnaí* ‘slipe car’ (< *sleamhnú*, gen. *sleamhnaithe* ‘sliding’)

carn AOiligh > *carn AOilionachadh* ‘midden, manure heap’ (< *carn* ‘heap’ + *aoileach*, gen. *aoiligh* ‘manure’)
solas DEarg > *solas DIrg* ‘red light’

In a few cases both elements are made plural, such as in *bocan-beara* ‘mushroom’ > *bocain-bhearaí* and *teach phobail* ‘chapel’ > *tighe pobal/poible* (Lucas 1979: 61–2).

Similarly, in Ring (Co. Waterford) the generic is normally inflected independently (e.g. *cailín* ‘maidsire’ ‘maid servant’ > *cailíní* ‘maidsire, fear’ ‘oibre’ ‘worker’ (lit. “man of work”) > *fir* ‘oibre), but *teine*-‘aoil’ ‘lime-kiln’ is inflected as one word in West Munster: pl. *teine* ‘aoileacha (according to Prof. O’Rahilly, cited by Breatnach 1947: 81). In Cois Fhairrge (Co. Galway) a specific plural of the (proper) A+N compound was observed by de Bhaldraithe (1953: 254): *gearr-bhodach*, pl. *gearr-bhodaí* ‘young boy’ (*bodach*, pl. *bodaigh!*).

3.5.4. Manx compounds

In some of the examples that survived in late spoken Manx, plurals of improper (N+A or N+N(gen.)) compounds also appear to indicate without doubt that these constructions were felt to be one word. As Broderick (1984: 36) describes it, where “the two words together specifically refer [...] to a particular object, while separately they mean something else, [...] the plural termination [-yn] is applied to the second element of the compound” (cf Example 28a). Sometimes, however, the plural ending is attached to the first element of the compound – cf Example 28b. (Note though that the lenition is retained in *thieyn veg* ‘lavatories’ (< *beg* ‘little, small’).)

Example 28.

- a) *dooinney-seyr* ‘gentleman’ (lit. “free man”) > *dooinney-seyryn*
fer-vooinjér ‘manservant’ > *fer-vooinjeryn*
- b) *thie veg* ‘lavatory’ (lit. “little house”) > *thieyn veg*
thie-oast ‘ale-house’ > *thieyn-oast*

(Note that lenition is retained in the plural: e.g. *thieyn veg* < *beg* ‘small’.)

Apart from preceding adjectives (and other constructional idioms), most examples that can be found in Manx are improper compounds. As Draskau (2008: 32) explains it, “in compound noun formation, the noun or other element acting adjectivally follows the more general noun”, i.e. the specifier follows the generic. Here are some examples for N+N(gen.) compounds (cf lenition after a feminine head noun):

Example 29.

ooh-chirkey (f) (< *kiark*) ‘hen’s egg’

paal-chirkey (f) ‘hen-coop’

giarreyder-cloaie (m) ‘stone cutter’

seyir-cloaie (m) ‘stonemason’

boalley-cloaie (m) ‘stonewall’

skeaban-braagey (m) ‘shoe brush’

buggyl-braagey (m) ‘shoe buckle’

key-braaghey (m) ‘shoe cream’

laatchey-braagey (m) ‘shoelace’

In Kelly’s (1870: 26) words “adjectives may be formed from the genitive case of the nouns they derive from”, which reflects the productive nature of improper compounds. Thus, the genitive of *sourey* ‘summer’ (gen. *y touree*) will give *earish houree* ‘summer weather’, and the genitive of *geurey* ‘winter’ (gen. *y gheuree*) makes part of *earish gheuree* ‘winter weather’, etc. Proper A+A, A+N compounds may not have survived in such a great number, still we have examples like *trome-chadlagh* (< *cadlagh*) ‘sleepy’ and *ard-chloie* (< *cloie*) ‘star turn, high jinks’, *ooilley-Cheltiaghys* (< *Celtiaghys*) ‘pan-Celticism’ (Draskau 2008: 9–10).

As regards lenition, the pattern is very similar to the one seen in other Celtic languages, as in improper N+N(gen.) and N+A compounds we find grammatical lenition, whereas after a prefixed adjective (and also after other prefixes) lenition occurs regularly (cf Example 30) (Draskau 2008: 4–5, 10):

Example 30.

a) after prefixes:

co-chruinnaght ‘gathering’

mee-chredjue ‘disbelief’

mee-chairys ‘injustice’

neu-hickyrys (< *shickyrys*) ‘uncertainty’

Constructional idioms:

aa-hilley (< *shilley*) ‘second sight’

aa-chlashtyn (< *clashtyn*) ‘rehearsal’

lieh-chiarkyl (< *kiarkyl*) ‘semi-circle’

lhiass-vac (< *mac*) ‘stepson’

lhiass-voir (< *moir*) ‘stepmother’

b) after a prefixed adjective (*drogh-* ‘bad’, *shenn-* ‘old’, *ard-* ‘high’):

drogh-vraane (< *mraane*) ‘bad woman’

drogh-chooilleen (< *cooilleen*) ‘revenge’

drogh-haghyrt (< *taghyrt*) ‘accident’

shenn ven (< *ben*) ‘old woman, crone, ancestress’

shenn warree (< *mwarree*) ‘grandmother’

shenn sidoor ‘veteran, old soldier’

ard-valley (< *balley*) ‘city, capital’

ard-ghoo (< *goo*) ‘fame, renown’

ard-chiarn (< *ciarn*) ‘sovereign lord’

ard-saggyrt ‘high priest’

c) after fem. sing. in N+N(gen.) compounds:

meinn-chorkey (< *corkey*) ‘oatmeal’

blein-vishee ‘leap year’ (< *bishee* ‘of increase’ – lit. “year of increase”)

ben-varrey ‘mermaid’ (< *marrey* ‘of the sea’) – lit. “seawife, woman of the sea”)

As you can see from the examples above (*shenn sidoor*, *ard-saggyrt*), the sounds [tʃ], [dʃ], [t], [d], [s] do not lenite after a prefixed adjective (or any other adjectives in A+A, A+N compounds) ending in [d] or [n]; and [t], [d], [tʃ], [dʃ], [s], [ʃ], [n], [l] do not lenite in N+N(gen.) compounds (see *blein-vishee* ‘leap year’, *ben-varrey* ‘mermaid’). Initial [f] may be retained in general (i.e. not lenited, cf Example 31) (Draskau 2008: 4–5, 10).

Example 31.

aaqfilley ‘evolution’

lieh-faill ‘half pay’

meinn-flooyr ‘breadstuffs’

fer-fysseree ‘astrologer’

guilley-faaie ‘groundsman’

Concerning the signs of compoundhood, it is worth considering the position of the definite article (or possessive pronoun) in N+N(gen.) compounds: in Manx this can tell if we are dealing with a genitive phrase or an ‘established compound’, as the definite article (or possessive pronoun) cannot separate the two parts of a compound (Draskau 2008: 66–67):

Example 32.

Genitive phrases:

cass y stoyl ‘the leg of the chair/chair leg’

mwannal my laue ‘my wrist’

(lit. “the neck of my hand”)

ushtey yn chibber ‘well water’

Compounds:

y dooiney-poosee ‘the bridegroom’

ny fir-reill ‘the rulers’

yn cheshaght-chaggee ‘the army’

After having discussed the various compound types and classes in other Celtic languages, I now turn to Scottish Gaelic compounds.

3.6. Scottish Gaelic compounds

3.6.1. Compound types

There is no consensus among Gaelic scholars about what they regard as a compound in Scottish Gaelic. MacAulay (1992: 224) maintains “word compounds are derived by joining together two lexical stems or by adding derivational prefixes or suffixes.” This means he views compounding as a morphological phenomenon, and thus he also considers prefixed words as compounds, just like Ó Murchú (1989), Henderson (1903–05) and Borgstrøm (1940): “in some cases it is [...] reasonable to regard a complex containing two accents as one word, because the first element does not occur as an independent word”: *imcheist* ‘perplexity, doubt’, *anaceartas* ‘bad treatment’ (Borgstrøm 1940: 53). Moreover, Henderson (1903: 274) differentiates between two groups of negated words according to their stress patterns: “when attention is directed to the negation as such, even stress is used”: *'eu'coir* ‘unkind’ vs *'eucoir* ‘wrong’. Concerning attributive adjectives that precede nouns, Henderson (1903–05) and Oftedal (1956) regard them as compounds, while Holmer (1938: 208) distinguishes real compounds from other adjective + noun constructions: *an t-'shean 'bhothan* [sic] ‘the old hut’, *'sean fhear* ‘an old one’ (generally standing in opposition to ‘new’), do not form true compounds since the former has double stress, while the adjective in the latter is semantically salient, whereas *'sean-ghlas* ‘old lock’, *'seannduine* ‘old man’, *'sean(a)bhean* ‘old woman’, *'sean-chat* ‘old cat’ are compound forms (interestingly, he considers *'seanfhaical* ‘proverb’ as a compound in Argyllshire (Holmer 1938: 208) but not in Arran (*SEan FHacal* ‘old word; saying’; Holmer 1957: 42, 117) according to its different stress patterns).

We also encounter compounds with productive, bound constituents like *leth-* ‘half’ (Ó Murchú 1989: 71): *lethphlaid* ‘half-blanket’ (note also the reduction in *leth-uair* [léwar] ‘half an hour’), or *ban-* ‘female’, *ath* ‘next’ (Henderson 1903: 272–5): *banaltrum* ‘nurse’, *banfhighich* ‘weaveress’, *ath 'leasachadh* ‘reformation’. Borgstrøm (1940: 53, 151; 1941:

31) considers all complexes with bound elements as compounds (e.g. *'deagh-'bhlasta* 'tasty', *'deagh-'dhuine* 'a good man', *'ban-'èireannach* 'Irishwoman', *'droch-'amhrasach* 'suspicious', *'sìor-'chruinneachadh* 'gather continually').

Colin Mark in his Gaelic-English dictionary (2004: 646–50) discusses compound nouns, and differentiates between compounds where the first element modifies the second, and those in which the second element modifies the first. He treats prefixed nouns like *ana-cainnt* '(verbal) abuse' (lit. "bad saying") and also *ath-nuadhachadh* 'renewal' as compounds, although he lists them separately from A+N compounds such as *àrd-mhanach* 'prior', *caol-shràid* 'lane', *mòr-choille* 'forest' and *deagh-ghean* 'goodwill'. He differentiates between attributive N+N compounds (*leabhar-chùinntas* 'book-keeping', *bun-sgoil* 'primary school') where both constituents are in the nominative case and those which express a genitival relation²⁰: a rare type N(gen.)+N (*coin-fhiacail* 'canine tooth', *cois-cheum* 'step, path', *cois-shluagh* 'infantry', *muicfheòil* 'pork' (note the inconsistency of hyphenation))²¹ and the newer, more productive N+N(gen.) (*taigh-solais* 'lighthouse', *cearc-fhraoich* 'moorhen', *baga-guailne* 'shoulder-bag', *caisteal-gainmhich* 'sandcastle', *bean-ghlanaidh* 'cleaning woman', *crith-thalmhainn* 'earthquake'). (The same distinction can be observed between early and newer Irish placenames (see Mac Giolla Easpaig 1981: 152).) Gillies (1902: 61–3, 152–3) deals with compound adjectives and compound verbs besides compound nouns: he mentions N+A compounds like *bàr[r]-bhuidhe* 'yellow-topped' and *tonn-gheal* 'white-waved' (exocentric attributive compounds), and A+A compounds such as *mìn-bhreac* 'fine-spotted' and *ciùin-gheal* 'calm-white' (coordinative compounds). According to him, Gaelic verbs form compounds with nouns (*cùl-shleamhnuich* 'backslide'), adjectives (*geur-lean* 'persecute') and prepositions (*eadar-mhìnich* 'interpret').

3.6.2. Stress in Scottish Gaelic compounds

One peculiarity of compounds is their idiosyncrasy. Compounds are not grammatical phrases (although in some cases they may have been historically). Grammatically, they represent a sort of frozen expressions which function as individual words and thus may show unusual features that cannot be observed in grammatical phrases made up by the same words (cf *caol-shràid* 'lane' as opposed to *sràid chaol* 'narrow street'). This can

²⁰ As the latter are relatively old compounds with a weakened secondary stress on the second element, and the *-e* ending of feminine genitive is never present, another, more possible explanation is that the specifier has become slenderised as part of the compounding process.

²¹ It is argued that the specific of these compounds is a genitive form which drops the final *-e* in feminine nouns, or a special slenderised form which occurs in compounds.

affect stress, word order, morphological properties like lenition, or the type of words which can be associated with them.

One distinctive feature of compounds is stress. Ó Murchú (1989: 67), among words that are marked for stress, lists words with initial stress: '*teis-, meadhan* 'very centre, epicentre', '*ban-, mhaighistir* 'school-mistress', '*mòr-, chuis* 'pride, haughtiness, conceit', '*mìol-, chu* 'greyhound', '*liath-, chearc* 'heath-hen' (not for all speakers). (Phonetic reduction also occurs in the specifying elements of such compounds, i.e. long vowels have come to be shorter in the second constituents of words like *mòr-chuis* /< *mòr* 'big' + *cùis* 'matter'/ or *mìol-chu* /< *mìol* 'grey' + *cù* 'dog'/.) He claims that these words "have the stress pattern of nominal compounds but the synchronic evidence which would allow them to be analysed into their constituent elements does not exist for most of them". He considers all types of compounded words with initial stress (like '*mìolchu* 'greyhound', '*lèthphlaid* 'half-blanket', and '*lèth-uair* 'half-hour') as true compounds.

Henderson (1903: 264) argues that in word combinations where the components are felt as separate words, both elements are stressed, whereas in compounds the stress is uneven²² and "falls upon the definitive word", i.e. the *specific*. He also distinguishes cases "[w]hen the two elements of a compound are both used to express a single idea", introducing a semantic level in his analysis (Henderson 1903: 272). In these compounds "the qualifying epithet [i.e. the *specific*] comes first", which means that they have initial stress ('*ceannfhionn* 'white-headed'), in contrast with compounds whose components still maintain their individuality (e.g. *lon-'dubh* 'blackbird', *ath'bheothachadh* 'rekindling', *ath-'leasachadh* 'reformation'). His examples include *ceannfhionn* 'white-headed', *bailgionnach* 'white-spotted, pie-bald', *ceithir-chasach* 'four-footed', *meanbh-chuileag* 'midge', *mòr-chuis* 'conceit', *muirghath* 'fishing spear' (from *muir* 'sea' + *gath* 'spear'), and also words with prefixes (*as'creidimh* 'disbelief', *ath'[b]heothachadh* 'rekindling', '*neochiontach* 'guiltless, innocent', '*athaodach* 'new clothing', '*atharrach* 'alien'), preceding adjectives ('*droch rud* 'rascal, devil', '*seanair* 'grandfather') and the bound element *ban-* 'female' ('*banaltrum* 'nurse', '*banfhighich* 'weaveress', '*banamhaistir* 'school mistress', '*baintighearn* 'lady'). (Note the variation in the use of hyphens.) Henderson claims that "in a large number of compounds both members are felt as separate words", and thus have even stress; however, he gives examples with prefixes, which are not compounds in my view since they bear purely logical rather than conceptual information (such as negation and intensification) rather than semantic modification, in a

²² **even stress:** both constituents are separately stressed; **uneven stress:** only one of the constituents bears primary stress

similar way to suffixes (e.g. *as'creidimh* 'disbelief', *eas'ùmhlachd*~*'easumhlachd* 'disobedience', *neo'chaochlaideach* 'unchangeable', *'neochiontach* 'guiltless, innocent'). However, note prefixes like *ath* 'next' in *'ath-bhliadhn* 'next year', with the abstract meaning 'new' in *'athaodach* 'new clothing' or 'different, else' in *'atharrach* 'alien', or *bith* 'ever' in *'bithbhuantachd* 'eternity', in which the prefix gives an additional, often abstract meaning to the word. Compounds in which the specifier follows the generic are stressed on their second constituents: *athair 'cèile* 'father-in-law', *uisge 'beatha* 'whisky', *craobh 'ubhal* 'apple tree', *lon-'dubh* 'blackbird' (Henderson 1903: 264–6).

Among his 'lexical combinations' (i.e. joining together two lexical stems), MacAulay (1992: 224) lists compounds with initial stress (*cis-mhaor* 'tax officer', *mart-fheòil* 'beef', *mòr-thìr* 'mainland', *brù-dhearg* 'red-breast(ed)', *bàn-dhearg* 'pale red (pink)', *dubh-ghorm* 'dark blue') and compounds with stress on the second constituent (*muileann-gaoithe* 'windmill', *glas-ghuib* 'gag', *crith-thalmhain* 'earthquake', *àite-còmhnaidh* 'residence').

As we have seen, there are two main categories of Gaelic compounds according to their stress pattern: those in which the modifying element (the *specific*) comes first – these have initial stress, and those in which the specific follows the generic (or head, using a grammatical term) – these are stressed on their second elements. This means that the stress always falls on the specific, which is a prominent feature of compound words, since in grammatical phrases the stress tends to fall on both constituents (cf *gloine-'fhiona* 'wine glass' vs *'gloine fiona* 'a glass of wine').

3.6.3. Scottish Gaelic preceding adjectives

Attributive adjectives normally follow nouns in Gaelic. There are, however, some adjectives (*seann* 'old', *deagh* 'good', *droch* 'bad') which precede them. Oftedal (1956: 199–200) calls them 'adjectival prepositives', and, according to him, "the whole unit of attribute plus noun is treated as a compound noun, where the second component receives the nominal inflection and the first component the initial mutations". He also notes that *ath* 'next' and *corr* 'odd, occasional' have no predicative adjectival counterparts (in contrast with predicative *sean* 'old' for *seann* 'old', *math* 'good' for *deagh* 'good' and *dona* 'bad' for *droch* 'bad').

Holmer (1938: 99) agrees that these constructions form units which very much resemble compounds. On the other hand, he argues that the real compounds, which are "construed exactly like ordinary nouns" (such as *an 'seann-duine* 'the old man', *an 't-sheanbhean* 'the old woman') must be distinguished here. These words bear uneven, initial stress if

compounds. Further examples from Argyllshire include '*sean-ghlas* 'old lock', '*seanathair* 'grandfather', '*sean-chat* 'old cat', '*seanmhair* 'grandmother', '*seannduine* (though *pl. 'seann'daoine* with even stress) 'old man (old people)', '*seanfhaical* (*pl. 'seanfhaicail*) 'proverb, saying' (Holmer 1938: 208). According to Holmer (1957: 42, 94, 117), the latter would not be considered a compound in Arran for having even stress in that dialect – the same is true for *SEan BHean* 'old woman' and *SEan GHealach* 'old moon'.

Nevertheless, Holmer (1938: 151) claims that *deagh* and *droch* enter into a compound with the following noun despite the even stress in '*deagh-shaighdear* 'good soldier', '*deagh-iasgach* 'good fishing' (Skye). (Ofstedal (1956) finds that *deagh* is not frequently met with in Lewis (but cf. *deagh bhlasta* 'really tasty').) Examples with *droch*: '*droch-mhanadh* 'bad omen', '*droch-dhaoine* 'bad people', '*droch-fhàileadh* 'bad smell' (Holmer 1938: 157). *DRoch SHùil* 'evil eye' and *DRoch GHnìomh* 'evil act' "are historically compounds but each word has a separate stress as in English", as Holmer explains (Holmer 1957: 117). He also mentions *aon* 'one' as a possible constituent of a compound word, as in the expression *pìobaire an 'aon-phuirt* 'piper of the one tune' (Holmer 1938: 123).

3.6.4. Lenition

Another distinctive feature of compoundhood in Scottish Gaelic is lenition. In more recent, N+N(gen.) compounds – in which the generic comes first – lenition occurs only in certain cases. This is called *grammatical lenition* since it occurs if the first noun is feminine²³ or if the second noun is genitive plural (e.g. *gloinne-fhìona* 'wine glass', *taigh-chearc* 'hen-house'). This may vary throughout the paradigm indicating a weaker relation between the components (cf **constructions** like *na circe fraoich* 'of the moor hen', *gloinne-fìona* 'of a wine glass', *cearcan-fraoich* 'moor hens' and *chearcan-fraoich* 'of moor hens' without the lenition of the initial /f/ in genitive singular, nominative and genitive plural (Holmer 1957: 92–4, 104; Colin Mark's Gaelic–English dictionary 2004: 645–50))²⁴. In older, more obvious compounds (where the order of the constituents is not the normal grammatical order, i.e. the generic follows the specific), compoundhood is indicated by the lenition of the second, head element (*compounding lenition*) (e.g. *mòr-, thìr* 'mainland').

In Arran exceptions for lenition include *clach* (f) ***bannach*** 'baking stone' (Holmer 1957: 92–4), which is, however, not surprising in this dialect as inflected forms of the attributive adjective seldom occur here, and if so, then chiefly in certain common phrases:

²³ But cf *taigh-sholais* in East Sutherland (probably from the dative form *aig an taigh-sholais* 'at the lighthouse' (Dorian 1978: 85; Colin Mark's G.–E. Dictionary 2004).

²⁴ It is a question to investigate how regular grammatical lenition is, for which, however, there is no space in the present thesis, unfortunately.

air mo làimh dheis ‘on my right hand’ (also *air a làimh dheas* ‘on his right hand’), *Latha na Bliadhna Ùire* ‘New Year’s Day’ (cf. also *a Dhonnchadh Bhàin* ‘Duncan Bàn (Voc.)’). This marked treatment, on the other hand, may suggest the lexicalised status of expressions like *làimh dheas* ‘right hand’. (As we can see, proper names can be very similar to compound words for their invariability – discussed in section 3.3.) (Holmer 1957: 117)

We also encounter examples for the *lack* of lenition where it would be expected. In Kintyre, for instance, Holmer (1969: 62, 64) notes the feminine adjective without lenition in *a’ ghealach slàn* ‘the full moon’, or the expression *a’ chiad ceathramh* ‘the first quarter’ (of the moon), where *a’ chiad* ‘the first’ should trigger lenition (which, although not compounds, are both commonly used phrases). Also, in Kintyre the nominative form is used instead of the genitive in the cases of *taigh solas* ‘lighthouse’, *tom conasg* ‘whin bush’ or *fionnadh chat* ‘cat’s hair’ (unless it is a genitive plural) (Holmer 1969: 74). Special treatment like this, again, may be a good sign of compoundhood (or, at least, on the way towards it).

Lenition also contributes to identifying compounds in material expressions like the ones observed by Borgstrøm (1940: 82–83) in Bernera, Lewis: genitive singular is lenited “if the first member of the group is feminine singular” (e.g. *cas* (f) *mhaide* ‘a wooden leg’ (*maide* ‘stick’) vs *taigh* (m) *fiodha* ‘a wooden house’). These genitive nouns resemble the behaviour of adjectives in accordance with the gender of the noun they follow. This unique behaviour should most probably prove the compound nature of these constructions. We can observe counterexamples for this phenomenon as well: e.g. *feòil caora* ‘mutton’, *feòil mairt* ‘beef’ (where *feòil* ‘meat’ is feminine). However, this could suggest, eventually, that the latter examples are not compounds but genitive phrases (naturally in contrast with *ma(i)rtfheòil* for ‘beef’ and *muiltfheòil* for ‘mutton’, which *are* compounds for their unusual word order). This is a matter for future investigation.

Another example of the retention of an old form (besides inflected adjectives), and thus a good example for compoundhood²⁵, can be observed in the Outer Hebrides (from Harris to Barra), where a few traces of the older genitive is encountered in verbal nouns: *fàinne pòsda* ‘wedding ring’ (instead of the usual form *fàinne- pòsaidh*)²⁶, *cnàimh pòsda* ‘wish-bone’ (lit. “bone of marriage”) (Borgstrøm 1940: 195). A similar phenomenon exists in East Sutherland, where palatalised genitive singular survives only in rare compounds like *taigh sholais* ‘lighthouse’ (< *solas* ‘light’) and (productively) with a verbal noun as second

²⁵ This may require empirical establishment.

²⁶ Again, furthermore, although originally masculine (DIL s.v.), *fàinne* is often, if not usually, feminine in modern ScG (Dwelly s.v.).

element (e.g. *sgoth sheòlaidh* [skɔ̌ ʰo:Li] ‘sailboat’ < *seòladh* [ʃo:Lu] ‘sailing’) (Dorian 1978: 85).

As regards the preceding adjectives, in East Sutherland *seann* ‘old’ and *droch* ‘bad’ lenite the following noun optionally (either in singular or in plural). According to Dorian (1978: 105–6), the probability of lenition is greater if the following noun is feminine, but not excluded for masculines. On the other hand, the adjective *ath* ‘next’ invariably lenites a following noun. The fact that these adjectives behave differently could prove the special, therefore compound status of some expressions with *seann*- and *droch*-.

3.6.5. Evidence for compoundhood in Scottish Gaelic

Besides stress and lenition some further evidence may be given for compoundhood. Firstly, none of the preceding adjectives may be modified by the adverbs *glè* ‘very’ or *ro* ‘too, excessively’, only by *fìor* ‘very, really’, i.e. the separate modification of solely one (here the adjectival) element is rather restricted, which is typical of compound words. Thus, ‘very good weather’ may be expressed by *aimsir glè mhath* or by *fìor brod aimsir* (in East Sutherland) (Dorian 1978: 105–6). Furthermore, Dorian (1978: 107) treats some indefinite genitive, ‘noun-attributive’ constructions as compounds, and claims that, if they are modified by an adjective, the position of this will be variable. She explains that for 6 out of 8 informants the adjective followed a common construction like *taigh s(h)olais* ‘lighthouse’, and the rest (2) of them “resisted the use of an adjective in the same noun phrase” altogether. On the other hand, in a less lexicalised phrase like *long cogaidh* ‘battleship’, they either separated the two elements with the adjective, or vacillated between the two solutions:

Example 33.

anns an taigh sholais mòr~mhòr (‘in the big lighthouse’)

bho na luingeas mhòr cogaidh~chogaidh ‘from the big battleships’ – *anns na luingeas cogaidh mòr* (‘in the big battleships’)

The behaviour of the whole compound as one can also help us distinguish between compounds and phrases. In East Sutherland (Dorian 1978: 88) *taigh* [t^hɛ] ‘house’ has a suppletive plural: [t^hro:r]. In the case of *taigh sholais* [t^hɛ ʰɔliʃ] ‘lighthouse’ speakers vacillate between a plural [t^hro:r ʰɔliʃ] and a plural [t^hɛ ʰɔliʃɛn]. The former solution suggests individual reference to the meanings of its components, while the latter behaves as a true compound. (But note non-compositional *taighean beaga* for a counterexample.)

Ternes (1973: 17–9) gives a different type of evidence for the compoundhood of *lon dubh* ‘blackbird’ and *spàin teatha* ‘teaspoon’, when he discusses voiced stops in non-initial

position. He mentions three contexts in which they are encountered: loan words with second syllable stress, following a nasal segment (*bun* 'tàta 'potatoes', *tom* 'bac 'tobacco'; after a preserved nasal consonant in stem-internal position (apart from some counterexamples); and in 'close compounds' like *,lon* 'dubh [Lɔn du] 'blackbird' (but not in *'sgian* 'dubh [skan tu] 'a black knife'), *'spàin* 'teatha [span de] 'teaspoon' (but not in the sense 'a spoonful of tea' *,spàin* 'teatha [spā:n tʰe!]). Note also the difference between *,gloine* 'fhìona 'wine glass' and *'gloine* 'fìona 'glass of wine' – though their gen. sg. and nom. pl. will be unlenited for both (with different stress patterns?): *gloine-fìona* and *gloinichean-fìona*, respectively – a feature worth testing (as well as on which element the stress falls in these cases).

Another, though weaker, phonological type of evidence was observed in the north-eastern and south-eastern dialects of Skye (Kilmuir, Portree, Sleat) (and, less strongly, in Lewis), which “[m]ake a distinction between two kinds of nasals in initial position: the pure nasals and the nasals which are followed by reduced occlusives”. In the latter case “the nasal is denasalized at the end, and the result is a short and soft occlusive”, as Borgstrøm (1941: 13) explains. “Initial nasals belonging to the word are always pronounced as pure nasals (*màthair*, *nàbaidh*). The nasals followed by reduced occlusives are [among others] prefixed to initial vowels or lenited /f/” as in *an oidhche* [ə 'N^døiɣə] ‘the night’, *anns an fhiodh* [as ə 'N^dʲiɣ] ‘in the wood’, or in *sean fhacal* ['ʃauN^daxkəL] ‘a proverb’; which, though, would convey that both elements, *sean* and *fhacal*, were separate, individual words, still proves a close connection between them.

3.6.6. Conclusion

In my classification (cf section 3.7 below) I will not regard prefixed words as compounds in contrast with words with meaningful bound constituents like *leth-* ‘half’ or *ban-* ‘female’. Prefixes convey purely logical rather than conceptual information. To this category we can add words containing *mac-* ‘son’ as their first element but showing abstract meanings, such as *mac-meanmna* ‘imagination’ or *mac-talla* ‘echo’ (just as *straw*, though a meaningful word in itself, has currently no contribution to the meaning of *strawberry* in English; cf also *stepsister*, where the independent meaning of the first element *step* has nothing to do with the meaning of the compound).

The case of preceding adjectives is more complicated: unusual stress pattern (*'seannduine*) or abstract, lexicalised meaning (*seanfhaical* ‘proverb’) are important factors in compounding. Furthermore, where *deagh-* ‘good’ is rare (cf. Oftedal (1956) for Leurbost Gaelic), its uniqueness makes it a good candidate for compoundhood. In

Leurbost, according to Oftedal (1956), *deagh-* is used instead of *math* only in a couple of specific expressions with a few particular nouns, which means that in this case the unusual word order and word choice is not productive (as, for instance, in English *court martial* or in Spanish *cine-club* ‘cinema club’ instead of *club de cine*) (cf Giegerich 2009: 186), and these particular expressions are lexicalised and thus can be regarded as compounds (unless we treat them as collocations²⁷). Like this, their specific use *together with* their unusual word order may strengthen their compoundhood. We may compare the Spanish uninflected adjectives *buen*, *mal*, etc, which stand only with singular masculine nouns, preceding them, while in the case of singular feminine and plural nouns inflected *buena* and *buenos/buenas*, respectively, following their nouns, the inflected form (*bueno*, *malo*, etc) is used (e.g. *una escuela buena* or *una buena escuela* (f) ‘a good school’, *un coche bueno* (m) ‘a good car’ vs *un buen coche* (m) ‘a good car’, etc). However, in Spanish this applies to *all* the nouns making it a pure grammatical phenomenon.

Examples of unusual word choice in a compound (particularly with old, currently rarely used words) can also be observed in other languages: in the Hungarian word *ebadó* ‘tax for dogs’ the old-fashioned word *eb* ‘dog’ stands instead of *kutya* ‘dog’, which is the more common word currently. Similarly, the word *ék* ‘jewel, decoration’ has survived in compounds: *ékkő* ‘jewel’, suffixed words: *ékszer* ‘jewellery’ (with an unproductive, old suffix) and rarely used idioms: *a falu éke/ékessége* ‘the jewel of the village’ – the word used productively is *dísz* ‘decoration’. Nevertheless, whether specific expressions with *deagh-* are to be regarded as compounds or as collocations, remains a phenomenon worth studying. Other complexes with unusual word order in Scottish Gaelic (e.g. *mòr-thìr* ‘mainland’, *ma(i)rt-fheòil* ‘beef’, *dubh-fhacal* ‘riddle’) are definitely compounds in my view for they clearly differ from productive syntactical phrases.

Concerning stress there are two patterns emerging: if the qualifying element comes first, the stress is on the first word; however, if the qualifying element stands in its usual place – in second position – the compound’s second constituent is stressed. Lenition is another diagnostic feature in Scottish Gaelic compounds, although not in every case. In certain examples old forms are retained, which may be considered compounds: possessive phrases which show a lenited genitive in dialects where it is not expected (Arran, Kintyre), just like adjectival phrases with inflected (or lenited) adjectives where these are no longer marked (Arran) (unless they are proper names).

²⁷ A collocation is a conventional expression consisting of a base and a qualifier, both of which are reasonably fixed but not necessarily unreplaceable (e.g. *common sense*, *blithering idiot*), see section 2.3.

On the other hand, where lenition (or adjectival inflection) is regular, nonlenited or noninflected forms (e.g. *taigh solas* ‘light house’ – without genitive inflection – in place of *taigh solais*) may be considered as compounds for their unique behaviour (cf Kintyre). (The fact that the process is further developed in these expressions probably indicates the common use of the complex as well as the strong relation of the building elements.) No lenition in such compounds might come from dialects where the genitive singular or feminine adjectives have ceased to be marked.

In summary, besides stress (and lenition) the main diagnostic features of compoundhood can be abstract meaning, retention of old forms and unique behaviour (as in material names, or unusual word order). Apart from these, some other – phonological or syntactic – tests may be called for in order to make a decision in problematic cases.

3.7. Classification of Scottish Gaelic compounds

Following the Brittonic nomenclature (Morris-Jones 1921: 18–20, 80–4; Thorne 1993: 840–4; Hardie 1948: 55–6), which is very similar to Mark’s (2004: 646–50) classification for compound nouns, we can distinguish two basic classes of Scottish Gaelic compounds: *proper compounds*, in which the first element modifies the second, and *improper compounds*, where the second element modifies the first. The first class can be further divided according to stress, thus we may speak about *strict proper compounds* with initial stress (and probably secondary stress on the second element, although secondary stresses are not marked in all sources) and *loose proper compounds*, in which both elements are equally stressed.

3.7.1. Proper compounds

The specifier–generic order is an unusual word order in Scottish Gaelic. This idiosyncratic word order can be encountered in two constructions. Firstly, strict proper compounds are more ancient, more lexicalised compounds with initial stress and secondary stress on the second element.²⁸ Secondly, another explanation for the use of prefixed constituents is the existence of constructional idioms (see section 3.2 for definition), which normally form loose compounds (with double stress).

Regarding syntactic categories, prefixing a noun or adjective to another noun is a highly productive way of forming compound nouns according to Mark (2004: 646–8); whereas

²⁸ Incidentally, there is a third class to be distinguished here, just as in the case of Irish compounds: compounds with no secondary stress and reduced second element with obscured vowels (e.g. *dùbhlán* ‘defiance’ < *dubh* + *slàn*; *cruinnleum* ‘standing jump’ < *cruinn* ‘compact, neat’ + *leum* ‘jump’; *caisbheart* ‘footwear’ < *cas* ‘foot’ + *bheart* ‘instrument, device’). See section 3.8.1 on this category.

there is a synchronically “much less common” formation, in which the first, specifier noun, is in the genitive (or, alternatively, a special, slenderised compounding form, see below) (e.g. *coin-bhile* ‘dogwood’, *mairtfheòil* ‘beef’). Compound adjectives are also formed by prefixing either a noun or an adjective to the generic (cf Gillies 1902: 62–3). A+A compounds do not always have a head, as I have stated before (sections 3.4, 2.8; see also section 3.5.1 for Irish). (In this respect, compounds like *iar-thuath* ‘northwest’ are very similar – both are exocentric coordinative compounds – and so is maybe *clann-nighean* ‘young girls’ as well.) According to Gillies (1902: 152–3), we may also find compound verbs – the specifiers of which can be either prefixes (prepositions), or nouns and adjectives (note that prefixed verbs are not considered as compounds in my view).

Proper compounds, as we have already seen in other Celtic languages, lenite in every possible case – thus, *compounding lenition* is a marker of old compounds (e.g. *mòr-thìr* (< *mòr* ‘big’ + *tìr* ‘land’) ‘mainland’). These compounds normally behave like independent words in that initial mutations affect their first elements, whereas the second element declines (and gives the compound its gender, being its head) (e.g. *gnùis-bhrat* (m) ‘veil’ < *gnùis* (f) ‘face’ + *brat* (m) ‘cover’; *fad a’ ghnùis-bhrait* ‘the length of the veil’ (gen.)); however, in compound adjectives (apart from preceding adjectives) both constituents decline regularly (although the second always bears lenition) (e.g. *ciùin-gheal* ‘calm-white’, gen. *chiùin-ghil*) (cf Mark 2004: 646–8; Gillies 1902: 62). Prefixes may or may not lenite, which differentiates them from compounds. There are some examples for Scottish Gaelic prefixes and proper compounds below (Gillies 1902: 62, 152–3 (G); Mark 2004: 646–8 (CM); *Teach Yourself Essential Gaelic Dictionary* 2004/2010 (TY)):

Example 34.

prefixed word: ana-cainnt ‘abuse /verbal/’ (< *cainnt* ‘speech, conversation, language’)

CM

do(-)char ‘hurt’ (< *car* ‘turn’) G

so(-)char ‘benefit’ G

Proper compounds

A+N: *àrd-mhanach* ‘prior’ (< *àrd* ‘principal, chief’ + *manach* ‘monk’) CM

caol-shràid ‘lane’ (< *caol* ‘narrow’ + *sràid* ‘street’) CM

N+N: *leabhar-chunntas* ‘book-keeping’ (< *leabhar* ‘book’ + *cunntas* ‘counting; account’)

CM

inntinn-eòlaiche ‘psychologist’ (< *inntinn* ‘mind’ + *eòlaiche* ‘expert’) CM

(also *eòlaiche-inntinn* (N+N(gen.)) TY

cuairt-shlugan ‘whirlpool’ (< *cuairt* ‘whirl’ + *slugan* ‘gorge’) **CM**

bun-sgoil ‘primary school’ (< *bun* ‘base, bottom’ + *sgoil* ‘school’) **CM**

bròn-chluich ‘tragedy’ (< *bròn* ‘sorrow, grief, sadness’ + *cluich* ‘play’) **CM**

meadh-bhlàth ‘lukewarm’ (< older *miodh* or *meadh* ‘middle’ + *blàth* ‘warm’)

N+N(2): *coin-bhile* ‘dogwood’ (< *cù* ‘dog’ + *bile* ‘lip, rim, brim’) **CM**

mairtfheòil ‘beef’ (< *mart* ‘cow’ + *feòil* ‘meat’) **CM**

A+A: *mìn-bhreac* ‘fine-spotted’ (< *mìn* ‘soft, delicate’ + *breac* ‘spotted’) **G**

ciùin-gheal ‘calm-white’ (< *ciùin* ‘calm’ + *geal* ‘white’) **G**

bàn-dhearg ‘pink’ (< *bàn* ‘white, pale’ + *dearg* ‘red’)

Prep+V: *eadar-mhìnich* ‘interpret’ (< *eadar* ‘between’ + *mìnich* ‘interpret, explain’) **G**

N+V: *cùl-shleamhnaich* ‘backslide’ (< *cùl* ‘back’ + *sleamhnaich* ‘slip, slide’) **G**

A+V: *geur-lean* ‘persecute’ (< *geur* ‘sharp; bitter’ + *lean* ‘follow, pursue’) **G**

The second type of N+N compounds is described by Mark and Gillies as a combination of a genitive and a nominative noun. However, the first element is probably a special compounding form of these nouns (here *con-* for *cù*). (The same slenderisation for *ban* can be seen in *baintighearn* ‘lady’, for example.)

Loose proper compounds (or loose compounds): Some compounds with preceding adjectives (*deagh-* ‘good’, *droch-* ‘bad’, *seann-* ‘old’), and also with the semantic-grammatical modifier *ban-* ‘female’ show double stress. (Examples are listed under Example 36 in section 3.7.3.1 below.) As I have noted before (in section 3.5.1.1), it may be questioned if these are compounds at all. It is clear that these forms of the adjectives cannot be used independently; however, their productivity leaves it open whether they are to be treated as constructional idioms or parts of syntactic phrases.

3.7.2. Improper compounds

The generic–specifier type is typical of newly formed compounds. They reflect the phrasal word order, as well as the grammatical rules within a phrase (if we treat singular N+N(gen.) compounds as N+A compounds) – as Gillies (1902: 61) describes N+A compounds: “both parts are regularly declined as if they stood apart”. (Only genitive *-e* is dropped in the first constituent of compounds: e.g. *taigh-chearc* ‘of a henhouse’, *ceann circe mìn-bhrice* ‘the head of a **fine-spotted** hen’ (Gillies 1902: 63), if we regard them as genitive.) Besides N+A compounds, also N+N(gen.) compounds show *grammatical lenition* (if we consider the second noun as an adjective): the nominative form is lenited if the first noun is either singular feminine, or plural (cf *gloine-fhiona* ‘wine glass’). (Naturally, “final *n* or *l* of the first element prevents [lenition] of initial dental of the

second”: e.g. *aig sgoil-dannsa* ‘at a dancing-school’, ‘s a’ *sgoil-duibh* ‘in the school of black-art’ (Gillies 1902: 62).) In Example 35 I list some improper compounds (Gillies 1902: 61–2 (G); Mark 2004: 647–9 (CM)):

Example 35.

- N+A (N): *coileach-dubh* ‘black-cock’ (< *coileach* ‘cock’ + *dubh* ‘black’) G, CM
feannag-ghlas ‘hoodie cow’ (< *feannag* ‘crow’ + *glas* ‘grey’) CM
bràthair-bochd ‘friar’ (< *bràthair* ‘brother’ + *bochd* ‘poor’) CM
duilleag-bhàite ‘waterlily’ (< *duilleag* ‘leaf’ + *bàite* ‘sunk’) CM
sgian-dubh ‘black-knife’ (< *sgian* ‘knife’ + *dubh* ‘black’) G
- N+A (A – exocentric): *bàrr[r]-bhuidhe* ‘yellow-topped’ (< *bàrr* ‘top’ + *buidhe* ‘yellow’) G
tonn-gheal ‘white-waved’ (< *tonn* ‘wave’ + *geal* ‘white’) G
- N+N(gen.) *taigh-solais* ‘lighthouse’ (< *taigh* ‘house’ + *solais* ‘of light’) CM
cearc-fhraoich ‘moorhen’ (< *cearc* ‘hen’ + *fraoich* ‘of heather’) CM
taigh-chearc ‘hen-house’ (< *taigh* ‘house’ + *cearc* ‘of hens’ (gen. pl.)) G, CM
làn-mara ‘full tide’ (< *làn* ‘tide’ + *mara* ‘of sea’) G
gille-coise ‘footman’ (< *gille* ‘lad, boy; servant’ + *coise* ‘of foot’) G
coille-chnò ‘nut-wood’ (< *coille* ‘wood’ + *chnò* ‘(of) nut’) G

As these compounds follow the normal word order (and declension) of grammatical phrases, semantics here is a very important diagnostic for compoundhood. Consider, for example, names of plants (e.g. *ròsan fiadhaich* ‘dogroses’ – lit. “wild roses” (Holmer 1938), *sùil bhuidhe* ‘corn marigold’ – lit. “yellow eye” (Holmer 1969: 71)), names of animals (e.g. *cailleach oidhche* ‘owl’ – lit. “hag of night”, *muc-mhara* ‘whale’ – lit. “pig of sea”). Even *coileach-dubh* ‘black-cock’ refers to a specific species and gender (the female of the black-cock is called *liath-chearc* “grey hen”); just as *sgian-dubh* ‘black knife’ does not refer to any ordinary knife that is black, but to a part of traditional clothing (cf also *baile-mòr* ‘city’, which means more than a “big town”, or the strict compound *leth-doras* ‘half-door’ – these compound words may be regarded as partly compositional²⁹). A somewhat more abstract example is the Gaelic for ‘friar’ (*bràthair-bochd*), which literally means “poor brother”. Also note *bàrr-bhuidhe* ‘yellow-topped’ and *tonn-gheal* ‘white-waved’, where the literal meanings identify nouns, yet they are used in an adjectival sense – these compounds are no doubt exocentric, characterising a thing with a feature described

²⁹ An expression is compositional if its meaning can be derived from the meaning of its constituents and their syntactic relations.

by a different noun – if we consider metonymic compounds exocentric (Lieber 2009: 99); however, see Bauer (2009: 351) for an opposite view, i.e. figurative compounds in which the part refers to the whole are not exocentric.

In all types of Scottish Gaelic compounds the generic takes the inflection and gives the gender of the compound (cf *cis-mhaor* (m) ‘tax-gatherer’ (< *cis* (f) ‘tax’ + *maor* (m) ‘officer’) – Gillies 1902: 61). This does not apply to nouns compounded with *ban-*, which are feminine by definition. As Ó Siadhail (1984: 173) states, “nouns describing females are generally feminine” in Scottish Gaelic (similar to many other languages), thus the modifier *ban(a)-* (or *bean*) referring to ‘woman’. In improper compounds and those proper compounds which have an adjective as second element (i.e. adjectives which are exocentric N+A compounds), normally both elements decline (e.g. *coileach-dubh* ‘black cock’, gen. *coilich-dhuibh*; *tonn-gheal* ‘white-waved’ (lit. “white wave”), gen. *thuinn-ghil*). Also N+N(gen.) compounds seem to decline as if the second element were an adjective: cf *gloine-fhiona* ‘wine glass’ (where *gloine/glainne* ‘glass’ is feminine) > gen. *na gloine-fiona*, pl. *gloinichean-fiona* (with unlenited /f/). (The paradigm of these improper compounds could be investigated in terms of stress with the help of native speakers.) Agreement between the compound elements is, however, not a unique phenomenon amongst the world’s languages, cf for example It. *mezza-luna* ‘half-moon’, pl. *mezze-lune* – where the specifier agrees with the head (Bauer 2009: 347).

Stress in Gaelic falls on the specifier in strict/close proper compounds (initial stress) and in improper compounds (second element stress). Loose proper compounds, as we have seen, show double stress. We have also seen that close proper compounds tend to be older, more lexicalised compounds (apart from poetic constructions, discussed below), while improper compounds are newer, more productive compounds. What is a loose proper compound then? Loose proper compounds are specifier – generic constructions with preceding adjectives or intensifiers, or even with the semantic modifier *ban-* ‘female’. They also show a certain degree of productivity (e.g. ‘*sean-*’asal ‘old donkey’, ‘*sean-*’chat ‘old cat’, ‘*seann-*’chàr ‘old car’, etc). However, some of these “prefixes” have forms with initial stress, giving close proper compounds (it should be tested to what degree these are non-productive). Loose proper compounds are exceptional for their stress pattern, and for the uncertainty of their compound status. Preceding adjectives and *ban-* may be regarded as constructional idioms, whereas intensifiers like *ro* ‘too’, *fìor* ‘true, genuine, actual; very, really’ and *sìor* ‘ever, always, continual’ should be treated as adverbs (if double-stressed or unstressed). (*Fìor-uisge* has initial stress, thus it is a proper compound; expressions with *ro*

have either double or second element stress (e.g. *ro- 'mhòr~ro- 'mhòr* ‘too big’) – it behaves clearly as an adverb.)

If we maintain the Brittonic classification, all forms of these compounds can be listed within the category of proper compounds – where true compounds would belong to strict proper compounds, while constructional idioms would form part of loose proper compounds; however, the special position of these latter within compounds would be lost then. The other possibility is to make a three- (or four-) folded classification, in which compounds with double stress could be isolated from the other classes. It is also worth recognising that, in terms of productivity, loose proper compounds are much closer to improper compounds than to strict proper compounds. Productive compounds in Scottish Gaelic are either formed with constructional idioms or are improper compounds (apart from exocentric compounds, which are made through metaphors and metonymy, thus they are inevitably more creative and imaginative (cf Heyvaert 2009: 245)). Note, though, the innovative proper (A+VN) compounds *deasghluasad* ‘ready movement’ and *snasghluasad* ‘elegant movement’, in the poem *An Tuagh* by Fearghas MacFhionnlaigh (cited below) – still, novel constructions like this are natural in poetic, and figurative or jocative language, but do not usually gain independence in everyday speech. Furthermore, the author had an obvious pattern here, as the two novel compounds follow, and are thus analogous with the existing compound. (The quotation is from *Archipelago* 7: 3 (2003), pp 31, 33; translated by the author.)

<i>thàinig e oirbh</i>	<i>he came at you</i>
<i>ach a chlisge</i>	<i>but instantly</i>
<i>le gluasad luath</i>	<i>with an agile movement</i>
<i>le gradghluasad cruinn</i>	<i>with a neat sudden movement</i>
<i>le deasghluasad pongail</i>	<i>with a precisely executed movement</i>
<i>le snasghluasad brìoghmhor</i>	<i>with an elegant energetic movement</i>
<i>san robh an sàs ar n-eachdraidh gu lèir</i>	<i>on which our entire history hinged</i>

At this stage, I would suggest the following classification:

type of compound	stress	orthography	example
(old compounds)	initial stress, with reduced second element	one word	<i>seanair</i> 'grandfather'
close compounds	initial stress (sometimes secondary stress on second element)	with hyphen	<i>mòr-thìr</i> 'mainland'
loose compounds	double stress	no hyphen	<i>deagh charaid</i> 'good/intimate friend'
phrase (/improper) compounds	second element stress	hyphen	<i>gloine-fhiona</i> 'wine glass'

Groups (1), 2 and 3 contain *proper compounds*, and all three of them may include constructional idioms in the form of semantic modifiers or preceding adjectives (productivity, and, accordingly, their position on the scale of old compound – compound – formation with constructional idiom, may correlate with their place within these three classes).

3.7.3. Constructional idioms

Constructional idioms, following the section above, are not encountered only among loose compounds. They are present in every category. The productive, double-stressed forms of preceding adjectives as well as *ban-* belong here, but also other semantic modifiers, usually with initial stress – *leth-* and *ath-* – may have double stress. *Neach-*, *luchd-* and *mac-* form parts of improper compounds, accordingly, stress falls on their second elements. Intensifiers tend to have double stress – it is probably more appropriate to regard them as adverbs than as compounds, since with initial stress they convey different meanings and form parts of proper compounds.

3.7.3.1. Double or initial stress (preceding adjectives *deagh-*, *droch-*, *seann-* and semantic modifier *ban(a)-*)

The preceding adjectives *deagh-*, *droch-*, *seann-* form part of expressions with either *initial* or *double stress*. Those with first element stress may be considered as *proper compounds*. These are normally lexicalised and often bear abstract or non-literal meaning (e.g. '*seanfhalac* 'proverb', as opposed to '*sean fhacal* 'old word'; '*droch-sgeul* 'bad news', lit. "bad story"; '*droch-rud* 'devil', lit. "bad thing"). On the other hand, preceding adjectives in expressions with double stress may be regarded as *constructional idioms*. These constructions tend to be productive (*deagh-* is not productive in every dialect – Oftedal (1956) observes its rarity in Leurbost Lewis, see section 3.6.6). Semantic modifiers like *leth-* have productive forms with initial stress – most of the forms of *ban(a)-* with initial stress, by contrast, are highly lexicalised, and thus more liable to be regarded as

compounds (maybe with secondary stress) if not single words (without secondary stress, e.g. *'banarach* ‘milkmaid’). It is worth noting that in words with *ban-*, the specifier gives the gender of the whole compound, which is unusual compared to other compounds (probably because it refers to a female, see Ó Siadhail (1984) on the connection between sexual and grammatical gender). However, initial stress and the lenition of the second element leave it without doubt that *ban-* does not form improper compounds. Rather, besides being a semantic modifier, it is also a *grammatical modifier*, which has the function to change the head noun’s gender. (Examples are taken from Mark 2004: 646–7 (CM); Oftedal 1956 (L: Leurbost); Borgstrøm 1940: 53, 151 (OH: Outer Hebrides); 1941: 31 (S: Skye); Holmer 1938: 208 (Arg: Argyllshire); Henderson 1903: 272–3 (H); Ó Murchú 1989 (EP: East Perthshire). Note that some of these sources do not indicate secondary stresses.)

Example 36. *deagh-* ‘good’, *droch-* ‘bad’, *seann-* ‘old’ (preceding adjectives); *ban-* ‘female’ (semantic and grammatical modifier)

a) initial stress:

- a. *'deagh-ghean* ‘goodwill’ (lit. “good humour”) CM
- b. *'droch-,rud* ‘rascal, devil’ (lit. “bad thing”) H
- c. *'seanmhair* ‘grandmother’ (< *màthair* ‘mother’) L, Arg – reduced second element
SEan-ghlas ‘an old lock’ Arg, *'seann-,chù* ‘old dog’; *SEannduin(e)* ‘old man’ Arg; *SEan fhear* ‘an old one’ (in contrast with a new one) Arg – productive!
SEanfhaical ‘proverb, saying’ (lit. “old word”) Arg – abstract (non-compositional) meaning
- d. *'banaltrum* ‘nurse’ (< *altraim* ‘nurse, foster’) H, *'banfh(igh)ich* ‘weaveress’ (< *figh* ‘weave’) H, *'baintighearn* ‘lady’ (< *tighearna* ‘lord’) H, *'banrigh* L (/ *banrighinn* EP) ‘queen’ (< *rìgh* ‘king’) – reduced vowels, obscured meaning?
'ban-nàbaidh ‘woman neighbour’ L, *'ban-,mhaighistir* EP ~ *'banamhaistir* H ‘school-mistress’ (< *maighistir* ‘master’); *'bana-,bhuidseach* ‘witch’ (< *buidseach* ‘wizard’) CM – productive?

b) double stress:

- a. 'deagh-'dhuine 'a good man' **OH(Harris–Barra)**, 'deagh-'shaighdear 'good soldier' **Arg**, 'deagh-'iasgach 'good fishing' **Arg**, 'deagh-'bhlasta 'good-tasting, really tasty' **L**, **OH(Lewis)**
- b. 'droch-'dhuine 'bad person' **L**, 'droch-'bhlas 'disagreeable taste' **L**; 'droch-'mhanadh 'bad omen' (< manadh 'prophecy; omen') **Arg**, 'droch-'amhrasach 'suspicious' (< amh(a)rasach 'suspicious, distrustful') **S** – redundancy: emphatic function
- c. 'sean-'chailleach 'old woman' (< cailleach 'old woman' – redundancy) **L**, 'sean-'searbhan(a) 'old servant' **L**, 'sean-'cheòl 'old music' **L**, 'sean-'aodach 'old clothes' **L**, 'sean-'chù 'old dog' **L**, 'seann-'duine 'old man' **L**, 'seann-'daoine 'old people' **Arg**
- d. 'ban-'bharrach 'Barra-woman, a woman from Barra' **OH(H–B)**, 'ban-'Sgitheanach 'female inhabitant of Skye' ('bana-'Sgitheanach in **CM**), 'ban-'èireannach 'Irishwoman' **OH(H–B)**, 'bana-'charaid 'female friend' **CM** ('bean-'charaid in **EP**) – productive

Double stress in preceding adjectives can show emphatic usage (cf the definite phrases *an t-'sean-'bhothan* 'the old booth', *an t-'sean-'hut* 'the old hut' from Holmer (1938)). (Cf also examples of redundancy above.)

3.7.3.2. Initial or double stress: semantic modifier *leth-* and *ath-*; initial or second element stress: semantic modifier *ath-* and preceding adjective *corr(a)-*

As I stated above, *leth-* and *ath-* tend to have initial stress, and in some cases they show double stress just like *ban-*. On the other hand, *ath-* sometimes remains relatively unstressed, which may be explained by its behaviour as a prefix – this could be the case in *ath-'leasachadh* 'reformation' **H**, *ath-'[b]heothachadh* 'rekindling' **H**; however, in words like *ath-'latha* and *ath-'shamhradh* **EP** (where its grammatical productivity combines with its semantic modifier function) it conveys a meaning 'new, next' rather than having some automatic repetitive function. (The examples are from Henderson 1903: 274–5 (**H**), Ó Murchú 1989 **EP**.) Normally we can say that it depends on semantic considerations whether *ath-* is a prefix or a constructional idiom, rather than on its stress pattern.

The preceding adjective *corr(a)-* resembles *ath-* in that it may show second element stress as well as even stress. This, just as in Irish intensifiers, may indicate a shift towards grammatical quality in the nature of the constructional element (which is certainly already grammatical in the sense of productivity, yet here I do not mean to refer to growing

productivity – rather to a loss of semantic meaning, whereby it comes to be similar to prefixes). (Examples are from Ó Murchú 1989: 71 and glossary (**EP**); Holmer 1938 (**Arg**); Oftedal 1956: 199–200 (**L**); Henderson 1903: 272–4 (**H**); Mark 2004: 646–7 (**CM**) and Gillies 1902: 152–3 (**G**).)

Example 37. *leth-* ‘half’ (semantic modifier), *ath-* ‘re-; next; new’ (semantic modifier or prefix); *corr(a)-* ‘odd, occasional, irregular’ (preceding adjective)

a) initial stress:

- a. *'leth-, dusan* **EP** ~ *'leth-dhusan* **Arg** ‘half a dozen’, *'lethcheann* ‘temple; cheek’ (lit. “half-head”) **Arg, EP**;
'leth-, chrun **Arg** ~ *'leth-chrun* **EP** ‘half crown’, *'leth-, phlaid* ‘half-blanket’ **EP**,
'leth-, shùil ‘one eye /of two/’
- b. *'ath-nuadhachadh* ‘renewal’ **CM**, *'ath-fhàs* ‘regrowth **G**; new’, *'ath-bheothachadh* ‘revival’ **CM**, *'ath-atharrachadh* ‘changing’ **Arg** – prefix
'athaodach ‘new clothing’ **H**, *'atharrach* ‘alien’ **H** – constructional idiom (abstract meaning)
an 'ath-bhliadhna ‘(the) next year’ **L**, *an 'ath-oidhch* ‘the following night’ **L** (‘tomorrow night’ in **Arg** (Islay and Gigha)) – constructional idiom

b) double stress:

- a. *'leth-'uair* ‘half an hour’ **Arg**
- b. *'ath-'fhosgail* ‘reopen’ – prefix
an 'ath-'bhliadhna ‘next year’ **L, Arg**, *an 'ath-'oidhch(e)* ‘(the) next night’ **L**,
'ath-'latha ‘next day’ **Arg** – constructional idiom
- c. *ann an 'corr-'àite* ‘in an odd place; here and there’ **L**
'corr-'uair ‘now and then’ (lit. “odd hour”) **L**

c) second element stress:

- a. *ath-'leasachadh* ‘reformation’ **H**, *ath-[b]heothachadh* ‘rekindling’ **H** – prefix
ath-'latha ‘next day’ **EP**, *ath-'shamhradh* ‘next summer’ **EP**, *san ath-'sheachdain* ‘next week’ **Arg** – constructional idiom
- b. *corr-'uair* ‘sometimes’ **Arg**, *corr-'mheall* ‘an odd lump’ **Arg**, *corr-'dhaoine* ‘odd people’ (= several people) **Arg**

As it may be clear from the examples above, *ath-* meaning ‘next’ in relation to time expressions can show various stress patterns: Oftedal (1956: 199–200) mentions examples with both double and initial stress from Lewis (e.g. *an 'ath-'bhliadhna* ~ *an 'ath-bhliadhna* ‘next year’, *an 'ath-'oidhch(e)* ~ *an 'ath-, oidhch* ‘the following night’).

However, second element stress can just as well be encountered (cf *ath-* 'latha' 'next day', *ath-* 'shamradh' 'next summer' from East Perthshire (Ó Murchú 1989) or *san ath-* 'sheachdain' 'next week' from Argyllshire (Holmer 1938)).

3.7.3.3. Second element stress: *neach-*, collective noun forming *luchd-* and figurative *mac-* (improper compounds)

Neach-, *luchd-* and *mac-* form parts of improper compounds creating N+N(gen.) constructions, thus the stress falls on their second elements. *Neach-* 'person, individual' (as in *neach sam bith* 'anyone') principally signifies professions, with *luchd-* giving the plural (cf Example 38). *Luchd-* 'people' forms collective nouns like *luchd-* 'turas' 'tourists' (lit. "people of a trip"), *luchd-* 'obrach' 'staff' (lit. "people of work"), *luchd-* 'ionnsachaidh' 'learners' (lit. "people of learning"), thus these are relatively productive. On the other hand, *mac-* appears only in a few abstract nouns such as *mac-* 'talla' 'echo', *mac-* 'meanma' 'imagination', *mac-* 'mallachaidh' 'devil' (lit. "son of curse"), which makes it questionable whether it is a constructional idiom at all. The only point that would support this treatment is that its figurative usage "creation/formation of" cannot be used outside these compounds. (The examples below are taken from Robertson & MacDonald's *Teach Yourself Essential Gaelic Dictionary* by (2004/2010).)

Example 38.

neach- 'ciùil' 'musician' (< *ceòl* 'music')

neach- 'deilbh' 'designer' (< *dealbh* 'picture')

neach- 'gnothaich' 'business person' (< *gnothach* 'business')

neach- 'lagha' 'lawyer' (< *lagh* 'law')

neach- 'cathrach' 'chairperson' (< *cathair* 'chair')

neach- 'obrach' 'employee' (< *obair* 'work')

neach- 'cuideachaidh' 'helper, assistant' (< *cuideachadh* 'help, helping')

neach- 'teagaisg' 'teacher' (< *teagasg* 'teaching')

neach- 'riaghlaidh' 'governor, ruler' (< *riaghladh* 'ruling, governing')

3.7.3.4. Other possible constructional idioms and intensifiers

Other possible constructional idioms in Scottish Gaelic include *bith-* (e.g. 'bith-bhuan' 'everlasting' CM, 'bithbhuantachd' 'eternity' (< *buan* 'lasting, enduring') H, 'bith-'beò' 'livelihood' (< *beò* 'alive') CM, 'bith-, eòlas' 'biology' (< *eòlas* 'knowledge') CM), *bun-* 'basic' from the noun meaning 'bottom' (e.g. 'bun-sgoil' 'primary school' CM, 'bun-bheachd' 'concept' (< *beachd* 'opinion, view; idea') CM, 'bun-reachd' 'constitution' (< *reachd* 'law, ordinance') TY) and the adjective *àrd-* 'high' > 'main, chief' (e.g. 'àrd-

`mhanach ‘prior’ (< *manach* ‘monk’) **CM**, ,àrd-`chùirt ‘high court’ **TY**, ,àrd-`urram ‘high honour’ **CM**, ,àrd-`oifigear ‘chief executive’ (< *oifigear* ‘officer’) **TY**, ,àrd-`ollamh ‘professor’ (< *ollamh* ‘professor’) **CM**, ,àrd-`easbaig ‘archbishop’ **CM**). *Àrd-* maintains its literal meaning in ,àrd-`ùrlar ‘stage, platform’ (lit. “high floor”) **CM**, and refers to a more abstract but still literal concept in `àrd-`sgoil ‘secondary school, highschool’ **CM**, `àrd-`ìre ‘higher grade/level’ **CM**. Finally, it may show an intensifier sense in `àrd-`ghuthach ‘loud-voiced’ **CM**. (Apart from *bithbhuantachd* (Henderson 1903: 272–3 (**H**)) all examples are from Colin Mark’s dictionary (2004) (**CM**) and Robertson & MacDonald’s *Teach Yourself* Gaelic Dictionary (2004/2010) (**TY**)).

Intensifiers (*fìor* ‘truly, really’, *sìor* ‘ever-’ and *làn* ‘full, complete’), just like in Irish, tend to show double stress, yet may have compound counterparts: examples like `sìor-`mhaireannach ‘perpetual, everlasting’ and `sìor-`uaine ‘evergreen’ are likely to be close proper compounds – i.e. true compounds with initial stress (cf also `fìor-`uisge ‘freshwater’, `làn-`dùirn ‘handful’ (Holmer 1957), `làn-`ùine ‘full-time’). (Further examples are from Borgstrøm (1941: 31) (**S**), Holmer (1969: 158) (**K**: Kintyre), Ó Maolalaigh (2010; unpublished class handout) (**RÓM**), and the *Teach Yourself Essential Gaelic Dictionary* (2004/2010) (**TY**).)

Example 39.

- a) `sìor-`chruinneachadh ‘gathering continually’ (< *cruinneachadh* ‘gathering’) **S**
`sìor-`bhuain ‘cutting (reaping) all the time’ (< *buain* ‘cut(ting), reap(ing), harvest(ing)’) **K**
`sìor-`dhol ‘constantly going’ **RÓM**
- b) `fìor-`mhath ‘very/really good’ **TY**
`fìor-`amadan ‘a real fool’ **TY**
- c) `làn-`chinnteach ‘quite sure/certain’ **TY**
`làn-`earbs(a) ‘complete confidence’ **TY**
`làn-`thìd(e) ‘high time’ **TY**

The three intensifiers above, just like *ro*, may be seen as adverbs (if double-stressed), and if so, they do not belong in the category of constructional elements. *Sàr-* ‘very, extremely, true’ is very similar to these, though without a literal, non-intensifier meaning – it appears to convey a sense of approval (cf `sàr-`mhath ‘extremely good’ **RÓM**, `sàr-`chinnteach ‘completely sure’ **RÓM**, `sàr-`sheinneadair ‘a truly great singer’ **TY**).

There are some other expressions with *double stress* that cannot be regarded as intensifiers in a strict sense, yet they all reflect a sense of intensity (liveliness, swiftness,

firmness): *geur-* ‘sharp’, *beò-* ‘live(ly)’, *grad-* ‘sudden, quick, immediate’, *deann-* ‘force, haste’ (cf Example 40). The question arises again whether we can treat these as constructional elements, or rather as a certain sort of adverbs.

Example 40.

'geur- '*leanmhain* ‘persecution’ (lit. ‘a close pursue’) **RÓM**

'beò- '*ghlacadh* ‘obsession’ (lit. ‘a firm grasp’) **RÓM**

'beò- '*ghainmheach* ‘quicksand’ (lit. ‘a lively sand’) **TY**

'grad- '*mharbh* (< *marbh* ‘dead’) **RÓM**

'deann- '*ruith* ‘movement at speed, travel at pace, headlong rush’ (< *ruith* ‘run’) **RÓM**

The prefix *iom-* ‘about, around’ again, just like in Irish, may convey an abstract meaning in some cases as though it were a noun: cf *'iom(a)-,ghaoth* **RÓM** ~ *IOmaghaoith* **Arg** ‘whirlwind’, lit. “many winds” (< *gaoth* ‘wind’) (compare with *cuairt-ghaoth* ‘whirlwind’ < *cuairt* ‘circuit’ **TY**), *iomraiteach* ‘famous, celebrated’ **TY** (old compound). A similar compound is *ioma(dh)-dhoras* ‘rotating door’ (lit. “many door”), or a more literal example is *iomadh-fhillte* ‘multifold’ (vs *aon-fhillte* ‘unifold’). (More about prefixes, outside the domain of compounds, follows on in the next section.) (**RÓM**: Ó Maolalaigh 2010, unpublished class handout; **Arg**: Holmer 1938; **TY**: *Teach Yourself Essential Gaelic Dictionary* (2004/2010))

Derived compound adjectives (like *green-eyed*) are similar to constructional idioms in that their adjectival form often do not appear as an individual word, only as a component of a compound. Scottish Gaelic examples include *'dubh-cheannach* ‘black-faced’ /especially of sheep/ (< *dubh* ‘black’ + *ceann* ‘head’) (Holmer 1938), *mochth Rathach* ‘early’ (< *moch* ‘early’ + *tràth* ‘time’) (Holmer 1969: 154), *glòir-mhiannach* ‘ambitious’ (< *glòir* ‘glory’ + *miann* ‘wish, desire’) (**TY**), *ceud-chasach* ‘centipede’ (lit. “of a hundred legs” < *ceud* ‘a hundred’ + *cas* ‘leg’) (**TY**), etc.

3.7.3.5. Prefixes in Scottish Gaelic

Prefixed words, similar to other Celtic languages, may be stressed on the first element, on the second or on both of them. This is not quite the same as in the case of compounds though, as I have already pointed out, since a prefix may remain unstressed for grammatical, rather than semantic reasons. It does not even depend on the quality of the prefix: cf *'neochiontach*, *'neò,ghlan*, *neo-'bheothail*; *'mì-,chollach*, *'mì-'chòrd*, *mì-'thoilichte*; *'ro-'ràdh~ro-'ràdh* ‘prologue; introduction’; *'codhunadh~co-'dhùnadh*. Furthermore, in prefixed words lenition only occurs if the prefix normally lenites, in contrast with specifier–generic compounds, which normally bear lenition. (All examples

are from Ó Maolalaigh's 2010 unpublished class handout, apart from *so-thuigsinn*, which was taken from Robertson & MacDonald's *Teach Yourself Essential Gaelic Dictionary* (2004/2010).)

Example 41.

a) initial stress without secondary stress:

diochuimhnich 'forget' (< *cuimhnich* 'remember')

neochiontach 'innocent' (< *ciontach* 'guilty')

aotrom 'light' (< *trom* 'heavy')

anmoch 'late' (< *moch* 'early')

comhaois(e) 'peer, contemporary' (< *aois* 'age')

b) initial stress with secondary stress:

dicheannadh

neòghlan 'unclean' (< *glan* 'clean')

mì-chollach~choltach 'improbable, unlikely'

iar-ogha 'great-grandchild' (< *iar* 'after' + *ogha* 'grandchild')

inmholta 'praiseworthy' (< *molta* 'praised')

aocollach~aocoltach 'unlike, dissimilar' (< *coltach* 'similar')

c) double stress:

eadar-theangaich 'translate' (< *eadar* 'between' + *teanga* 'tongue')

mì-chòrd 'disagree' (< *còrd* 'agree')

in-thioraim (< *tioram* 'dry')

eu-dòchas 'hopelessness, despair' (< *dòchas* 'hope')

iar-cheannard (< *iar* 'after' + *ceannard* 'head, leader')

fo-thìotal 'subtitle' (< *fo* 'under' + *tìotal* 'title')

an(n)-dileas 'unfaithful' (< *dileas* 'faithful')

d) second element stressed:

do-ghiùlain 'unbearable' (< *giùlain* 'carry, bear')

so-thuigse, so-thuigsinn 'intelligible, clear' (< *tuigse* 'understanding, insight';
tuigsinn 'understanding, comprehending')

co-cheangal 'connecting, binding together' (< *ceangal* 'tying, binding,
connecting')

neo-bheothail (< *beothail* 'lively, vital')

as-creidimh 'disbelief' (< *creidimh* 'of religious belief')

eadar-sgaradh (< *eadar* 'between' + *sgaradh* 'separating; separation')

mì-thoilichte ‘unhappy’ (< *toilichte* ‘happy’)

aocosail (< *cosgail* ‘costly, expensive’)

3.7.4. Long constructions within compounds

Constructional idioms, as we have seen, form a specific type of compound, one element of which does not appear outside a compound, independently. The other extreme is represented by long, independent phrasal constructions *within* a compound (‘phrasal compounds’ in Harley’s (2009: 142) words), the compound status of which is still argued. Harley describes complex noun phrases like the one in *bikini-girls-in-trouble* genre as abstractions from existing conceptual categories: “intuitively, the phrase has been fully interpreted, and an associated concept extracted from it”.

In Gaelic, similar constructions are encountered mostly in the nomenclature of animals and plants. Mark (2004: 649–50) refers to these consisting of “a governing noun with one or more dependent nouns”, which incidentally means N+N(gen.) constructions where the genitive noun phrase is definite. Furthermore, “often at least one of the nouns is modified”. I give some of his examples below (no stress is indicated in the source, but it may be investigated by native speakers’ judgements):

Example 42.

bean-na bainnse ‘the bride’ (lit. “woman of the wedding”)

lus-a’ bhainne ‘milkwort’ (lit. “plant/herb of the milk”)

dallag-an-fhraoich ‘shrew’ /animal/

cas-na-tunnaig ‘wild mustard, charlock’ (lit. “foot of the duck”)

lus-leth-an-t-samhraidh ‘wallflower’ (lit. “half/separate plant of the summer”)

creamh-na-muice-fiadhaich ‘asparagus, hart’s tongue’ (“the angry/wild pig’s garlic”)

cnàimh-caol na lurgann ‘fibula’ (lit. “the thin bone of the shank”)

(*Bha e air cnàimh-caol a lurgann a bhriseadh.* ‘He’s broken his fibula.’

– lit. “(the) thin bone of **his** shank”)

eun-dubh-an-sgadain ‘black guillemot’ (lit. “black bird of the herring”)

figheadair-nan-casa-fada (pl. *figheadairean-nan-casa-fada*) ‘daddy-long-legs’

(lit. “weaver of the long legs”)

crotal-nam-madadh-ruadh ‘club moss’ (lit. “lichen of the fox /“red dog”/”)

Incidentally, genitive constructions with definite article are frequently encountered in Gaelic: cf Example 43. It can be argued, though, whether these are to be regarded as compounds or collocations. (Examples below are from Holmer 1938 (**Arg**); 1969: 68–9, 73 (**K**); 1957: 105–7 (**A**: Arran); Ó Murchú 1989 (**EP**).)

Example 43.

- a) *bean an 'taigh(e)* 'the landlady' (lit. "the woman of the house") **Arg, EP**
fear an 'taigh(e) 'the landlord, the host' (lit. "the man of the house") **Arg (Gigha)**
fear a' bhanais/na bainse 'the bridegroom' (lit. "the man of the wedding") **A, EP**
fear a' chrodh 'cattleman' (lit. "the man of the cattle") **EP**
luchd na bainnse 'the wedding crowd' (lit. "people of the wedding") **K**
clach na 'h-oisein 'corner stone' (lit. "the stone of the corner") **Arg**
druma na cluais 'the eardrum' (lit. "the drum of the ear") **A**

These expressions all signify something specific, something that is more than the sheer syntactic phrase behind them. The following examples may be even more abstract, more lexicalised:

b) half-metaphoric:

- deoch an dorais* 'stirrup cup' (lit. "the drink of the door") **K**
uisge na h-ugh 'the white of the egg' (lit. "the water of the egg") **A**

And we have fully metaphoric genitive constructions like:

c) metaphoric:

- beul an latha* 'the dawn' (lit. "the mouth/opening of the day") **Arg**
aodann na beinneadh 'the side ("face") of the mountain' **A**
gobhar-an- 'athair 'snipe' (lit. "goat of the air") **Arg**
bròg-na-cuthaig 'wild violet' (lit. "the cuckoo's shoe") **Arg (Skye)**
car-a'-mhultein 'somersault' (lit. "the little ram's trick/turn" / *molt* 'ram' – *multein*: diminutive/) **Arg**

However, although a good sign of compoundhood, metaphors are not necessarily compounds. Incidentally, non-compositionality is a feature of idioms in the first place (cf Kavka 2009: 26). It can be asked what makes a compound then. They are basically not different from simple syntactic phrases (or collocations) like those in Example 44:

Example 44.

- taigh a' ghobhainn* 'the smith's house' **K**
bròn na mnatha 'the women's sorrow' (i.e. 'the woman's sorrow') **A**
crò na[m] muc 'sty of the pigs', i.e. 'pigsty' **EP**
colbh na leapa 'the pillar/column (i.e. the front) of the bed' **A**

Can we call these expressions compounds? Is it sufficient for a compound that *bròn na mnatha* 'women's sorrow/the woman's sorrow' and *gnothach nam bean/ban* 'women's

business’ (**K**) are commonly used phrases, or that *crò na[m] muc* ‘pigsty’ and *bodach nan gobhar* ‘goatherd’ (lit. “the man of the goats”) (**K**) refer to something specific? What makes these definite while *ugh c(h)earc* ‘chicken egg’ (**EP**) and *tòrr chlach* ‘stone heap’ (**K**) are indefinite? What particular herrings are referred to in *eun-dubh-an-sgadain* ‘black guillemot’, and why are the legs of *figheadair-nan-casa-fada* ‘daddy-long-legs’ specific? Are the mere concepts that underlie them responsible for this definiteness? What is the difference between *fear a’ chrodh* and *fear-ciùil* ‘musician’ or *fear-gnothaich* ‘businessman’? These questions should all be answered before we can make a judgement about definite genitive constructions. (The possessive pronoun may similarly intervene in (definite) *mac mo pheathar* ‘my sister’s son, my nephew’ (**A**), as opposed to (indefinite) *mac peathar* ‘nephew’ (lit. “a sister’s son”) (**A**).)

The question of definiteness can also be raised if we consider the position of the definite article in the following examples:

Example 45.

a’ chruach shaoidhe ‘the haystack’ **EP**

an t-iarann sgriosaidh ‘the tanner’s iron’ **K**

In these expressions the definite article precedes the genitive phrase, which is the most remarkable in the second example, where *sgriosaidh* ‘tanner (gen.)’ is no less definite than *gobhar* ‘goats (gen.)’ in *bodach nan gobhar* ‘goatherd’. Also consider the difference between singular *lus buntàta* ‘a potato stalk’ (lit. “stalk of potato”) and plural *lusan a’ phuntàta* (sic) ‘potato stalks’ (lit. “stalks of the potato”) (**EP**). (Another example worth consideration is *luchd na bainnse* ‘the wedding crowd’ (cf Example 42a), where *luchd* is definitely not a constructional element, being a separate part of a noun phrase.)

In examples from Kintyre we can observe the tendency for nominative instead of genitive in these expressions as well: *solas a’ ghealach* ‘moonlight’, *sgeap na beachainn* ‘beehive’ (Holmer 1969: 74) (cf also *fear a’ bhanais* instead of *fear na bainnse*). From Embo, East Sutherland, Dorian (1978: 85) collected *leabaidh nan cat* (lit. “the cats’ bed”) as a metaphor for slovenliness. Draskau (2008: 32) considers Manx phrases like *shirragh ny giark* ‘hen harrier’ or *connagh ny giark* ‘henbrane’ compound nouns; nevertheless, she notes the importance of the position of the definite article in Manx (cf section 3.5.4; Draskau 2008: 66-67). Other phrases referring to a single object or individual in Scottish Gaelic include *cathair dà ’làimhe* ‘armchair’ (lit. “chair of two arms”) (**Arg**) and *duine gun tùr* ‘a good-for-nothing man’ (lit. “a man without intelligence”) (**Arg**).

3.8. Possible research questions

It would be useful to broaden our insight to the use of preceding adjectives and to possible intensifiers in Scottish Gaelic. The two major issues to be explored with the help of native speakers, are the *paradigms of improper compounds* and *problematic cases of compoundhood*. As we have seen, there is a number of expressions whose compound status is doubtful: these include preceding adjectives, intensifiers, semantic modifiers, and genitive constructions with definite article among others.

Improper compounds:

Concerning improper compounds, the main question is how we can distinguish them from syntactic phrases by phonological, syntactic and semantic means. From a **phonological** point of view the stress pattern of complex words is essential. With regard to **syntax**, we can ask if the modifying adjective separates the two parts of the compound, if the particular expression has a special plural, or if it follows the same paradigm as syntactic phrases. For instance: if *taigh- 'beag* has the plural *taighean 'beaga*, what is the difference between ‘toilets’ and ‘small houses’? Similarly, the specifier in *gloine- 'fhiona* ‘wine glass’ is lenited in the singular, but not in the genitive singular (*gloine 'fiona*) and nominative plural (*gloinichean 'fiona*) – the question is again: is there a difference between *gloine- 'fhiona* ‘wine glass’ and *'gloine 'fiona* (‘glass of wine’) in these cases, and if so, how can it be described? (Cf also the flexibility of lenition in *bho na luingeas mhòr cogaidh~chogaidh* ‘from the big battleships’ but not in *anns na luingeas cogaidh mòr* (‘in the big battleships’) (Dorian 1978: 107)). Finally, the **semantic** aspect of the question is if an expression consisting of two or more words is non-compositional, felt to be one word, etc.

Problematic cases:

According to Henderson (1903: 264), if a complex shows even stress, we are dealing with separate words, whereas uneven stress indicates compounds. This is true for strict proper (close) and improper compounds; however, in the case of constructional idioms we may encounter double-stressed compounds (e.g. *'leth- 'uair* ‘half an hour’, *'ath- 'latha* ‘next’, *ann an 'corr- 'àite* ‘here and there’). On the one hand, this is a question that is worth investigating; on the other hand (in the case of close and phrase-like compounds at least), it can be used as a test for compoundhood. It is also important to note here that stress may vary according to the rhythmical pattern of a sentence or a phrase, thus compounds may be better studied independently, or both independently and in sentence (preferably by observation, which is, however, not possible in this thesis). Since emphasis influences stress pattern, this should be studied as well – especially in preceding adjectives, where it

may be a sign of productivity or change in meaning. (Examining stress may also be worthwhile in *ath-* + time expressions.)

3.8.1. Old compounds

The first question is if speakers perceive old compounds without secondary stress as consisting of more than one word, since, if they do not, these words should not be considered compounds at all. I give a list of some words with questionable compoundhood in Example 46 (examples are from Henderson (1903: 272–3) (**H**), Ó Maolalaigh (2010; unpublished class handout) (**RÓM**), the *Teach Yourself Essential Gaelic Dictionary* (2004/2010) (**TY**), Oftedal (1956) (**L**), Holmer (1938: 208) (**Arg**), and Ó Murchú 1989 (**EP**)):

Example 46.

- dùbhlán* ‘defiance’ (< *dubh* + *slàn*) **RÓM**
cruinnleum ‘standing jump’ (< *cruinn* ‘compact, neat’ + *leum* ‘jump’) **RÓM**
caiseart < *caisbheart* ‘footwear’ (< *cas* ‘foot’ + *beart* ‘instrument’) **H**
ceannfhionn ‘white-headed’ /of animals/ (< *ceann* ‘head’ + *fionn* ‘white, fair’) **H**
bailgionnach ‘white-spotted, piebald’ (< *ball* ‘spot’) **H**
baintighearn ‘lady’ (< *ban-* ‘female’ + *tighearn(a)* ‘lord’) **H**
banfh(igh)ich ‘weaveress’ (< *ban-* + *figh* ‘weave’) **H**
banaltram ‘nurse’ (< *ban-* + *altraim* ‘nurse, foster’) **H**
banrigh(inn) ‘queen’ (< *ban-* + *rìgh* ‘king’) **L, Arg; EP**
atharraich ‘change, alter’ (< *ath-* + *àraich* ‘nourish, nurture, tend’) **TY**
atharrais ‘imitation, mimicry’ (< *ath-* + *aithris* ‘report, recital; communication, relation, account’) **TY**
seanair ‘grandfather’ (< *sean* ‘old’ + *athair* ‘father’) **H**
seanmhair ‘grandmother’ (< *sean* ‘old’ + *màthair* ‘mother’) **H, Arg, L, EP**
àrdoras ‘lintel’ (< *àrd* ‘high’ + *doras* ‘door’) **H**
beòshlaint ‘livelihood, living’ (< *beò* ‘alive’ + *slàinte* ‘health’) **TY**

3.8.2. Semantic modifiers and other possible constructional idioms

In the case of semantic modifiers we have the problem of the variable stress again: I have mentioned the old compounds containing *ban-* with initial stress, whereas in other cases both elements are stressed, as well as in the case of *leth-* and *ath-*. The compound status of *ath-* may be questionable from both the phonological (stress) and semantic point of view (it may be regarded as a prefix). Constructions with *ath-* can be stressed on the second element, just like those with the preceding adjective *corr-*. Native speakers’ intuition

(competence) should be called for also to understand the position of words like *mac-talla*, *mac-meanmna* and *mac-mallachaidh*; and maybe the status of *neach-* and *luchd-* in their compound forms.

Native speakers may help us interpret double-stressed expressions containing *geur-*, *beò-*, *grad-*, *deann-*, and words with the stressed first element *bun-* and *bith-*. The compound status of words like *àrd-easbaig*, *àrdoras* may also be examined. Furthermore, if *ath-* may be both a prefix and a constructional idiom, can the same be claimed about *iom-* (cf the words *iom-ghaoth* ‘whirlwind’ and *iomraiteach* ‘famous’)?

3.8.3. Genitive constructions with definite article

It should be tested if genitive constructions with definite article (like *bean an taighe* ‘landlady’, *fear a’ bhanais* ‘bride-groom’, *solas a’ ghealach* ‘moonlight’, *sgeap na beachainn* ‘beehive’) are to be considered idioms or compounds.

3.8.4. Tests

The first thing to come to grips with is stress. It is crucial to use different stress patterns in the case of preceding adjectives to distinguish between the different emphatic uses (and with *ath-* and *corr-* to see if a different stress pattern yields a shift in meaning).

Among grammatical tests, informants can be asked to translate the plural of compounds and their adjectivally modified forms. In the case of genitive constructions, the position of the definite article (or possessive pronoun) may be diagnostic.

In this chapter Brittonic (Welsh, Cornish, Breton) and Goidelic (Irish, Manx, Scottish Gaelic) compound words have been discussed. A definition of compounds were given, and the concept of constructional idioms introduced in Celtic languages. After discussing different compound types in Brittonic languages, Irish compounds, constructional idioms, and the classification of Irish compounds, we looked at the signs of compoundhood and stress in Irish and Scottish Gaelic compounds. A detailed section on the classification of Scottish Gaelic compounds was provided, including constructional idioms and phrasal compounds. (I also added prefixed words to the list, despite not reckoning them as compounds.)

The next four chapters are dedicated to the first and core part of the research, i.e. to the corpus study on Scottish Gaelic preceding adjectives and intensifiers.

Corpus study

4. *Deagh-* and *math* ‘good’

The first adjectives which was analysed in the corpus study were the Gaelic words for ‘good’, preceding *deagh-* and plain adjective *math*. This chapter contains the data and the statistic analysis carried out on them, followed by a discussion about their distribution and the possible factors influencing the choice of one over the other.

4.1. Data for *deagh* and *math*

In the 74 sources, I have found 908 examples for *deagh*, of which 378 contain different types, and 1096 examples for *math*, with 363 different types. Table 2 shows how many times the different forms of *deagh* and *math* occur:

Table 2.

	first result	relevant examples	different types
<i>deagh(-)</i>		716	
<i>dheagh(-)</i>		123	
<i>deadh(-)</i>		50	
<i>dheadh(-)</i>		19	
		908	378
<i>math</i>	3076	575	
<i>mhath</i>	1100	410	
<i>matha</i>	11	11	
<i>mhatha</i>	7	5	
<i>maith</i>	276	49	
<i>mhaith</i>	64	32	
<i>maithe</i>	14	14	
	4518	1096	367

Regarding *math*, I had 4,518 tokens to start with, from which I removed 3,422 irrelevant occurrences for various reasons. For instance, in 133 cases *math* was either used in a predicative instead of attributive sense, or it showed adverbial usage after a verb (e.g. *Chaidh e leis glè mhath*. ‘It went very well for him.’, i.e. ‘He did very well.’; *Tha mi a’ faighinn air adhart math dha-rìribh ann an seo*. ‘I’m getting on really well here.’; *Chòrd e uamhasach math ri Scottie*. ‘Scottie really liked it.’; *Tha i a’ coimhead math*. ‘She looks good.’) or stood for *gu math* in a different sense: e.g. *Tha i math aosta*. ‘She’s quite old.’ In 155 cases *math* functioned as a noun; see Example 47. As a noun, it frequently occurs with the verbs *dèan* and *faigh* in the sense of ‘doing (something) good’ (*a’ dèanamh math*) and ‘finding something good, getting something good (out of something)’ (*a’ faighinn math*). It occurs also in expressions together with *olc* ‘something bad/evil’: *fiosrach air*

math is olc ‘knowing/aware of good and bad’, *eòlas air math no olc* ‘knowledge of good or bad’, *olc air mhath* (‘good or bad’), *am math ’s an t-olc* (/an eugcoir ‘crime, injustice, sin’) ‘the good and the bad’, *tha comas maith is uilc aige* ‘he has ability for good and bad’; and it is also common in expressions like *math na dùthcha/rìoghachd/talmhainn/gliob* ‘(to the) advantage of the country/kingdom/land’.

Example 47.

a(-)chum math ‘to the advantage (of someone or something), for a good purpose’

a chum/airson am math fhèin ‘for their own good’

(gu) dè math ‘(for) what good’

dè am math/ciod am math ‘what’s the good/use of’

gun mhath ‘without any good’

gach math ‘every good thing’

cho math ri math ‘really good, as good as anything’ (“as good as Good”)

Additionally, the sources have 1,865 constructions altogether with *gu math*, *is math* (as *math*) and its further forms (e.g. *bu mhath*), *mas math*, etc. (see Table 3). Occasionally these expressions naturally contain intensifiers and other adverbs, like *bu sheachd mhath* ‘it was too/most/extremely good’, *gu sònraichte math* ‘especially well’, etc. Note also the occurrence of *bu dheagh mhath*, where *deagh* combines with *math* giving an intensifying meaning to the phrase: *Ach an ùine a cheadachadh, bu dheagh mhath leam barrachd air aon oidhche a chur seachad ann an Geròna ...* ‘But (the) time allowing, I would have really liked to pass time in Gerona’.

Table 3.

gu math	882
(i)s math	432
bu mhath	287
(‘s) math dh’fhaoidte ³⁰	113
nach math	89
mas math	37
gur(a) math	13
cha mhath	6
guma m(h)ath	3
ge math	3

I have also discounted repetitions of *math* (e.g. *A’ toirt biadh math, math dhaibh*. ‘Giving good, good food to them.’), phrases in which it stands independently (e.g. *O, glè*

³⁰ The sources contain (‘s) *math dh’fhaoidte* ‘possibly, maybe’ in various forms: *(is/’s) math (a) dh’fhaoid(h)te*, *is math (a) dh’fhaodta*, *(is/’s) math dh’fhaoidteadh*, *’s math dh’fhaodadh*.

mhath! ‘Oh, very good.’; *Glè mhath ma t(h)a.* ‘Very good then./Alright then.’), or compounds in which *math* is the first constituent: e.g. *math-ghamhainn* ‘brown bear’. Further discounted expressions containing *math* include *tuilleadh is math* ‘too good’, and phrases in which *is* is dropped, such as *math a shaothair* (really *is math a shaothair*) ‘it’s worth it’, *math d’ fhaicinn* (instead of *is math d’ fhaicinn*) ‘it’s good to see you’) *math an airidh* (also written as *math-an-airidh*) ‘it’s well deserved, it serves /someone/ right’.

Neither have I counted examples modified by adverbs (or intensifiers) like *glè* ‘very’, *ro* ‘too’, *uabhasach* (*fhèin*) ‘(just) awfully, terribly’, *anabarrach* ‘extremely, exceptionally’, *deamhnaidh* ‘devilishly, deuced’ (in *tha fios deamhnaidh math agad* ‘you know it (deuced/)damned well’), *iong(h)antach* ‘surprisingly’, *fior* ‘really, truly’, *neo-chumanta* ‘unusually’, *comharraichte* ‘noteably, definitely’, *meadhanach* ‘fairly, moderately, reasonably’. The occurrences of these in examples which would be relevant are shown in Table 4. As *deagh-* occurs only with *fior*, it can be presumed that *math* is the adjective that is used together with modifiers. I have not included *cho math* in any of my countings due to limitations of time, as my sources contain as many as 628 examples of these (including expressions like *(is) ceart cho math* ‘(it is) just as good’, *a cheart cho math* ‘just as...’, *cho math ri* ‘as well as’, etc). Most of these are predicative or adverbial (e.g. *Sgioblaich sinn ar trusgan cho math ’s a b’ urrainn dhuinn ...*), although there are a few attributive examples as well (e.g. *Sin agad tùrn cho math ...*; *Fhuair e comann air soitheach ùr, ban-seòladair cho math ’s a bha air sàile.*); however, most cases prove to be ambiguous between attributive and predicative use: e.g. *Bha iad uile, a’ fear òg cho math ri càch, eòlach air Iain ...*

Table 4.

glè mhath	13
ro mhath	11
uabhasach math	6
anabarrach math	4
uabhasach fhèin math	3
deamhnaidh math	3
iong(h)antach m(h)ath	2
fior mhath	1
neo-chumanta math	1
comharraichte m(h)ath	1
meadhanach math	1

I have removed all tokens with *math gu leòr* ‘quite good’ as well (44 tokens). I have found no lenited examples at all (cf for instance *Beurla math gu leòr*, where *Beurla* ‘English’ is feminine, thus we might expect *math* to be lenited), therefore I regard these examples as

predicative (just like the example ... *ris gach cleas – math no dona* –... ‘with every trick – good or bad’, which I have not included either)³¹.

On the other hand, I have included among the examples cases in which

- another adjective precedes *math* (these are *ar n-athair caoimhneil math* ‘our good, kind father’, *prothaid bheag mhath* ‘a good small profit’, *latha mòr math (sin)* ‘(that) good big/great day’, and *oighreachd bhriagha mhath* ‘good, fine heritage’)
- *math* qualifies a coordinative expression (*cuimhne(achan) agus iomradh math* ‘good memory/remembrance and account’) (Note that I have counted these tokens as related to *iomradh*, which means that there are actually two more occurrences for *cuimhne math* – see below.) (The same applies to *sgeulachdan* in *sgeulachdan is òrain matha* ‘good stories and songs’.)
- *math* forms part of a coordinative expression (*math is dona* ‘good and bad’; e.g. *ainglean math is dona* ‘good and bad angels’) – this, again – just as in the case of the noun – commonly occurs together with *olc* (e.g. *olc na math/math no olc* ‘evil or good/good or evil’)
- the qualified word is related to another: e.g. *cupan math tea* ‘a good cup of tea’, *cnap math airgid* ‘a good lump of money’; *Bliadhna Mhath Ùr* ‘Happy New Year’ (lit. “a good new year”)

4.1.1. Statistics

I counted the occurrences of all collocates for both words. There is a large number of expressions that occur only once, whereas frequently used combinations are rather rare – the exact distribution is shown in Table 5. Consequently, I calculated the means and standard deviations for *deagh* and *math*, which showed me the range in which these words could be expected to occur.

³¹ An alternative explanation for the lack of lenition is that *math gu leòr* is a fixed adverbial expression, which is not inflected.

Table 5.

deagh:

number of types	occurrence
1x	240
2x	60
3x	25
4x	16
5x	11
6x	4
7x	2
8x	5
9x	2
10x	2
11x	2
12x	1
13x	1
17x	1
19x	2
23x	1
25x	1
37x	1
50x	1

math:

number of types	occurrence
1x	223
2x	62
3x	25
4x	15
5x	4
6x	4
7x	7
8x	4
9x	1
11x	1
12x	2
13x	2
15x	1
16x	4
18x	1
20x	1
22x	1
26x	1
33x	1
54x	1
59x	1
78x	1

The mean for *deagh* is 2.4021 with a standard deviation of 4.1684, and the sum of these makes 6.5705, which means that all expressions containing *deagh* that occur more than 6 times are used more frequently than what could be normally expected. The 22 types, occurring in 329 examples are as follows³²:

50 – **deagh-ghean**~*deagh ghean*~*deadh-ghean*

37 – **deagh fhios**~*fhios*, *deadh fhios*

25 – **deagh bheus**~*deagh-bheus* ~*deadh bheus*~*deadh bhèus*, pl. *deagh bheusan*~*deagh bhèusan*

23 – **deagh charaid**~*deagh caraid*~*deadh charaid*, pl. *deagh charaidean*

19 – **deagh chuimhn(e)**~*deadh chuimhn(e)*; **deagh-dhùrachd**~*deagh dhùrachd*~*deagh dhurachd*~*deadh dhùrachd*

17 – **deagh-rùn**~*deagh rùn*~*deagh(-)run*~*deadh rùn*

13 – **deagh shlàinte**~*deagh-shlàint'* ~ *deagh shlàint*~*deagh shlainte*

³² In my discussion I apply the spelling for each type which occurs the most frequently in the sources (here in **bold**) for convenience.

- 12 – **deagh am**~deagh àm~deagh ám~deagh-amm
 11 – **deagh mhaighistir**~deagh(-)mhaighistir; **deagh eòlas**~deagh eolas
 10 – **deagh thoil**~deagh-thoil~deagh thoigh; **deagh dhòchas**~deadh dhòchas~deagh dhochas
 9 – **deagh chomhairle**~deadh chomhairle~deagh-chomhairle; **deagh chliù**~deagh chliu~deadh chliu~deadh-chliù
 8 – **deagh bhuil**~deadh bhuil; **deagh Mhac**~deagh-Mhac~deagh mhac; **deagh òrdugh**~deagh òrdagh~deagh ordugh (also deagh òrdan); **deagh ghabhail**; **deagh-nàdar**~deagh(-)nàdur
 7 – **deagh aobhar**~deagh adhbhar; **deagh phàigheadh**~ deagh-phàigheadh

The mean for *math* is 2.9864 and the standard deviation 6.7725, which means that the relevant types are those having an occurrence over 9.7589. This resulted in 19 collocations, occurring in 469 examples:

- 80 – **latha/là ma(i)th**, pl. *lathaichean matha/laithean maithe*
 59 – **oidhche mha(i)th**/oidhche mhath
 54 – **ìre/ire mha(i)th** (52 an ìre..., 2 gu ìre...)
 33 – **Nì Math**~Ni math~ni Math~Ni-Math~Ni-math~Ni Maith~nì maith~ni maith~Ni-Math~nì math~Ni-maith (once Nà-math)
 28 – **duine ma(i)th**, pl. *daoine math(a)~maithe*
 26 – **greis mha(i)th**
 20 – **cuid mha(i)th**
 18 – **pìos math**~pìos math, pl. *pìosan math*
 17 – **rud math**, pl. *rudan math(a)*
 16 – **astar math**; **gille math** (also 'ille mha(i)th); **cuimhne mha(i)th** (also *cuimhneachan math*)
 15 – **treis mhath**
 13 – **feasgar math**; **ùine mhath**
 12 – **còrr~corr math**; **obair mha(i)th**
 11 – **àite~aite math**
 10 – **facal ma(i)th**/focail mhath, pl. *facail~focail mhatha*

For *deagh* 908 tokens have given 378 different types (41.6%) overall, in the case of *math* 367 different types make up 1,096 examples (33.5%). These percentages reflect *vocabulary richness*. Out of the 378 types of *deagh* 22 have proved to be relevant (5.8%) for the present study, out of 367 types of *math* 19 are used frequently enough (5.2%).

Furthermore, 329 out of 908 examples are interesting for *deagh* (36.2%), and 469 out of 1096 examples for *math* (42.8 %), which means they are over the range of standard deviation, i.e. where the most examples are (these numbers represent the total amount of tokens for the combinations presented in the above list). The similarity of these ratios suggests that neither *deagh* nor *math* is more productive than the other. The difference between their usage should therefore come from lexicalisation alone, although *deagh* is more likely to be used in fixed expressions (collocations/compounds) (see below).

4.2. Distinction between *deagh*- and *math*

From the word combinations included in this study 9 appear with *deagh* only, and 5 with *math* only. These are listed in Example 48 below (the numbers stand for the occurrences of each phrase).

Example 48.

a) with *deagh* only:

deagh(-)bheus 25 ‘good virtue, good character’

deagh(-)dhùrachd 19 ‘good wish’

deagh(-)chliù 9 ‘good reputation, good name’

deagh mhac 8 ‘good son’ (often with names; see example below)

deagh òrdugh 8 ‘good order’

deagh(-)mhaigh(i)stir 11 ‘good master’

(but: *maighstir-sgoile math* ‘good headmaster, head teacher’: 1,

deagh-mhaighstir-sgoil: 1)

deagh-nàdar 8 ‘good nature, good temper’

deagh ghabhail 8 ‘good let/tenement’

deagh(-)phàigheadh 7 ‘good payment’

b) *deagh* >>>> *math*:

deagh(-)ghean 50 (*gean-math*: 1) ‘goodwill’

deagh fhios 37 (*fios math*: 4) ‘good knowledge’

deagh charaid 23 (*caraid math*: 4) ‘good friend’

deagh(-)rùn 17 (*rùn math*: 2) ‘good purpose’

deagh(-)shlàinte 13 (*slàinte mhath*: 1) ‘good health’ (often in the sense
‘Cheers!’)

deagh(-)am 12 (*am math*: 3) ‘good time’

deagh eòlas 11 (*eòlas ma(i)th*: 4) ‘good knowledge’

deagh(-)thoil 10 (*toil mhath*: 2) ‘great pleasure’

deagh dhòchas **10** (*dòchas ma(i)th*: **4**) ‘good hope’

deagh(-)chomhairle **9** (*comhairle mhath*: **1**) ‘good advice’

deagh bhuil **8** (*buil mhath*: **3**) ‘good result, good effect, advantage/benefit’

deagh aobhar/adhbhar **7** (*adhbhar math*: **2**) ‘good reason’

c) with *math* only:

an ìre mha(i)th (**52**) ‘quite, moderately’ (*gu ìre mhath* (**2**) ‘to a good extent’)

Nì(-)Math **33** ‘God’ (lit. “good thing”)

treis mhath **15** ‘a great while, a long while’

còrr math **12** ‘a great more’

feasgar math **13** ‘good afternoon’ (mainly a greeting)

d) *math* >>>> *deagh*:

latha/là ma(i)th **80** (*deagh(-)latha*: **3**) ‘good day’ (with *math*, mostly a greeting)

oidhche mha(i)th **59** (*deagh oidhche*: **3**) ‘good night’ (with *math*, mostly used before going to sleep)

duine ma(i)th **28** (*deagh dhuine*: **2**) ‘good man, good person’

greis mha(i)th **26** (*deagh ghreis*: **2**) ‘a great while’

cuid mha(i)th **20** (*deagh chuid*: **3**) ‘a good portion, a great many’

pìos math **18** (*deagh phìos*: **2**) ‘a great/large part of’

astar math **16** (*deagh astar*: **4**) ‘a great distance/speed’

gille math **16** (*deagh ghille*: **1**) ‘good boy’ (often in the vocative, like *mo ghille math* ‘my good boy!’ or *ille mha(i)th* ‘you good boy!’)

rud math **17** (*deagh rud*: **2**) ‘something good, a good thing’

ùine mhath **13** (*deagh ùine*: **4**) ‘a long while’

obair mha(i)th **12** (*deagh(-)obair*: **5!**) ‘good work’

àite math **11** (*deagh(-)àite*: **3**) ‘good place’

facal/focal ma(i)th **10** (*deagh fhacal*: **1**) ‘good word’

e) both:

deagh chuimhne **19/908** (2.1 %) – *cuimhne mha(i)th* **16/1066** (1.5%) ‘good memory, remembrance’

Deagh ghabhail is particularly interesting as here *deagh* is accompanied by a verbal noun (although with the nominal meaning ‘let, tenement’), as well as *deagh(-)phàigheadh* ‘good payment’. Regarding *math*, it can be uniquely found only in abstract or highly lexicalised phrases where it rather functions as a kind of intensifier (except for *Nì Math*): the set

phrase/expression *an ìre mhath* ‘quite, moderately’ from *ìre* ‘grade, level’, *Nì Math* lit. “good thing” meaning ‘God’, *treis mhath* ‘a great while, a long while’ (this is the same as *greis mhath*³³ – which occurs with *deagh* in a few cases), *còrr math* ‘a great more’ (it is worth noting here that the only example with the similar-sounding *cor* ‘condition, state’ occurs with *deagh*: *deagh chor* ‘good condition, good state’, making the distinction clearer between the two phonologically and semantically different words), and *feasgar math* ‘good afternoon’ (which is mainly a greeting). Since the numbers of occurrences are so similar for both words (i.e. *math* and *deagh*-), there might be a change in progress from *x math* to *deagh x*, or vice versa – consider the case of *obair* below.

Deagh is often found in expressions that are related to abstract nouns, including physical, emotional and mental state, such as *ann an deagh shlàinte* ‘in good health’, *do dheagh shlàinte* “to your good health” (‘Cheers!’). It may be combined with words referring to feelings (*toil* ‘pleasure’, *dòchas* ‘hope’, *dùrachd* ‘wish’), mental concepts (*fios* ‘knowledge, information’, *eòlas* ‘knowledge, experience, acquaintance’, *comhairle* ‘advice’, *rùn* ‘intention, purpose’, *aobhar* ‘reason’ – and its opposite, *buil* ‘result, consequence, effect’), morality (*beus* ‘virtue’, *cliù* ‘reputation’, *deagh-ghean* ‘goodwill’, *deagh-nàdar* ‘good nature/good temper’). Also *deagh òrdugh* ‘good order’ refers to an ideal state. *Deagh charaid* ‘a good friend’ may refer to the emotional relationship rather than a friend’s qualities, emphasising the intimate nature of the friendship in order to show respect or affection (I discuss the role of emphasis later on). *Deagh mhaighistir* ‘good master’ and *deagh mhac* (often in names: e.g. *Eagal deagh Mhac Leoid* ‘Good MacLeod’s fear’; *dh’ fhàg iad an deagh Mhac ’Illeathain* ‘they left good Maclean’) may reflect the same pattern. (This observation could be usefully investigated with native speakers.)

Math occurs in references to people (*duine* ‘man’, *gille* ‘boy’), things (*rud*), place (*àite*) and time (*ùine* ‘time’, *greis~treis* ‘while’; *latha* ‘day’, *oidhche* ‘night’, *feasgar* ‘afternoon’), it can be related to distance (*astar*) or quantity (*cuid* ‘portion’, *pìos* ‘piece’; *còrr*³⁴ ‘excess’). Thus it is encountered in a number of fixed phrases (such as *rud math* ‘a good thing, it is good’; *greis mhath* ‘for a while’, *astar math* ‘a long way’, *cuid mhath* ‘a great many, a large part of’, *pìos math* ‘a great deal of’, *còrr math* ‘s ceithir fichead bliadhna a dh’aois ‘as much as eighty years old’), greetings (*latha math* ‘(have a) good day’, *feasgar math* ‘good afternoon’, *oidhche mhath* ‘good night’) and vocatives (*mo ghille math* ‘my good boy’, *’ille mhath* ‘good boy!’)³⁵. To sum up, *math* tends to occur with

³³ also *greiseag mhath* (1) ‘for a good little while’

³⁴ *còrr math* is often associated with time

³⁵ Although grammatically only the second example is a vocative, in the texts both function as vocatives.

words of measurement, time periods and concrete or countable nouns, which might belong in the group of *enumerators*³⁶.

As is apparent from Example 48 above, a number of words occur with both adjectives but always favour one over the other. It is an intriguing question what difference, if any, is signalled by *deagh x* and *x math*, particularly when the relative occurrences are similar, but also what triggers the existence of the exceptions. On the other hand, there are a number of words with lower occurrences that are encountered with both adjectives in the corpus. These also may be worth looking at. There are more loan words in the corpus with *math* than with *deagh-*, although a few are encountered with *deagh-*. As most of the latter, however, qualify abstract concepts, whereas those with *math* tend to refer to people, tangible or countable nouns, just as with verbal nouns, the distribution might be influenced by other factors, such as conceptualisation, speakers' intention (emphasis), subjectivity (grammar), register or dialect, each of which comes to discussion later in this chapter. Loan words with *deagh-* and *math* are shown in Example 49 (occurrences are in brackets):

Example 49.

<i>deagh idea</i> (5) 'good idea'	<i>idea math</i> (2) 'good idea'
<i>deagh-charagtair</i> (1) 'good character'	<i>boyfriend math</i> (1) 'good boyfriend'
<i>deagh sgil?</i> (1) 'good skill'	<i>crowd math</i> (1) 'good crowd'
	<i>feature math</i> (1) 'good feature'
	<i>forecast math</i> (1) 'good forecast'
	<i>toast math</i> (1) 'good toast'
	<i>actress mhath</i> (1) 'good actress'
	<i>dug out mhath</i> (1) 'good dug out'
	<i>genes mhath</i> [sic] (1) 'good genes'

As opposed to the 5 tokens with *deagh-*, there are two tokens for *idea* with *math* in the corpus, one is accompanied with *uabhasach* 'terribly, awfully': *chan e idea uabhasach math tha sin* 'that isn't a terribly good idea', the other occurs in the structure *tòrr ideas mhath*. *Math* tends to occur more frequently in certain structures such as *ioma toast math* 'many good toasts', *tòrr ideas mhath* 'plenty of good ideas' (structures of quantity!); *'s e actress mhath a bh' innte* 'she was a good actress'; or *Bha mi nam fhear-teagaisg math* 'I was a good teacher' (lit. "in my good teacher"), *Thionndaidh am bràthair bu shine gu bhith 'na bhràthair math* 'Their elder brother turned out a good brother/ turned into a good

³⁶ "a small number of nouns", with certain semantic and/or grammatical properties, which "are followed by the singular after the numerals 'three' to 'ten' (such as *dusan* 'dozen', *duine* 'man/person', *latha* 'day', *bliadhna* 'year', etc) (Ó Maolalaigh 2013: 126)

brother’ (lit. “in *his* good brother”). Consider that *reusan* ‘reason’ occurs once with *deagh-* and three times with *math* (compare with the distribution of its Gaelic counterpart *aobhar~adhbhar*) – where *deagh reusan* refers to mental capacity, while *reusan math* (both tokens from the same source) to a cause:

Example 50.

- a) *do thuigse ’s do dheagh reusan* ‘your understanding and your good reason/sense’
- b) *ma bha reusan math aige air a bhriseadh* ‘if he had a good reason to break it up’
(i.e. the engagement/vow)
- c) *gu ’n robh reusan math aig Iain am pòsadh a chur ’m a sgaoil* ‘that Ian had a good reason to unbind their marriage’

In this respect those words can be of interest which can be encountered at low occurrences with both adjectives. As I have referred to it above, verbal nouns can be found with both adjectives in equal measures, see *deagh-bhlàthachadh* ‘heating well/well-heated’ and *blàthachadh math* ‘good heat’ (intensified expression), each occurring once in the corpus (in which case the choice of adjective may relate to a shift in meaning and grammatical function):

Example 51.

- a) *Theòraich an duin’ òg i do sheòmar briagha air a dheagh-bhlàthachadh le teine mór guail.* ‘The young man led her to a lovely room **heated well** with a big coal fire.’ (functions as a verbal noun)
- b) *Aon oidhche Bliadhn’ Uire, nuair a bha Doilidh mu leth-cheud bliadhna a dh’aois, bha blàthachadh math daoraich air is e ’na shuidhe le grunnan eile ag òl leann.* ‘One New Year’s Eve, when Dolly was fifty years old, a good **drinking spree** was on him (lit. “**warming/heat of drunkenness**”), and he was sitting with other folks drinking beer.’ (functions as a noun)

The two tokens for *biathadh* (one with each adjective) are from the same source:

Example 52.

- a) *Ceud agus trì fichead dubhan air an deagh bhiathadh le rionnach, ...* ‘A hundred and sixty fish-hooks **well-fed** with mackerel, ...’
- b) *Bhuaineadh ’ad scrom (feusgan beag dubhghorm) agus phronnadh – biathadh math chudaigean.* ‘They would harvest *scrom* (small dark-blue mussels) and would crush it – **good cuddie bait**.’

Other examples for shared words at lower occurrences are: *deagh riaghladh* (2) – *riaghladh math* (1) ‘good administration/government/management’, *deagh chomharradh/chomharra* (2) – *comharra math* (1) ‘good sign/feature’, *deagh thòiseachadh* (2) (also *deagh thoiseach* (1)) – *tòiseachadh math* (2) ‘good start/beginning’, *deagh(-)chuideachadh* (4) – *cuideachadh math* (3) ‘good help’, *deagh bhuachaille* (4) – *buachaille math/maith* (4) ‘good herdsman’, *deagh shunnd* (3) – *sunnd math* (2) ‘good mood/humour’, *deagh sgioba* (1) ‘good crew’ – *sgioha math* (1) ‘good team’. Let us discuss the cases of *deagh bhiadh* (5) – *biadh/biathadh math* (8) ‘good food’ and *deagh dhòigh* (4) – *dòigh mhath* (1) ‘good mood/spirit’ in more detail.

Example 53.

deagh bhiadh:

- a) *Am meadhan a’ Mhàirt tòisichidh an eunachd le marbhadh an t-sùlaire. Air an sgoltadh air fad an droma, agus air an nighe ann an sàl, dheigheadh na closaichean a chàradh anns na cleitean – deagh bhiadh rè iomadh seachdain.* ‘In the middle of March the fowling begins by killing the gannet. They are split through their backs, and they are washed in salt, the carcasses would be laid on the cliffs – **good food** for many weeks.’
- b) *Cha robh fada gus an do chuir Màiri, bean Dhòmhnail, agus Seonag, a nighean, deagh bhiadh de mharag agus uighean air am beulaibh.* ‘It wasn’t long until Mairi, Donald’s wife, and Joan, her/his daughter, put **good food/a good meal** of pudding and eggs before us.’
- c) *Dh’ith sinn deagh bhiadh agus dh’òl sinn rud math à pigidh anns an robh galan uisge-beatha.* ‘We ate **good food** and drank a good bit from the pitcher in which there was a gallon of whisky.’

biadh math:

- d) *Bha pailteas bìdh againn – biadh math...* ‘We had plenty of food – **good food**...’
- e) *Ach thug am biadh math fallain mo neart thugam a rithist.* But the **good healthy food** gave back my strength.’
- f) *... thuir muinntir an àite gur e breitheanas a thàinig orra a chionn am biadh math a mhilleadh.* ‘the habitants of the place (i.e. locals) said that it was judgement that came upon them for destroying the **good food**.’
- g) *Gach sgioba a chuir na Gearmailtich nan aghaidh, bhuannaich iad... gus an do thòisich na Gearmailtich a’ cur chluicheadairean proifiseanta... gan trèanadh. A’ toirt biadh math, math dhaibh. Fhathast, bhuannaich na Ruiseanaich!* ‘They defeated each team the Germans put against them... until the Germans began taking

professional players... training them. Giving **good, good food** to them. Still, the Russians won!’

Judging from the examples above, *deagh bhiadh* may emphasise the abundance (and taste?) of food, while *biadh math* appears to relate to nutrition value and the quality of food (for retaining good health and strength), although this distinction has not been proved by native speakers’ opinion on the subject (see section 9.4.1.3 for an alternative explanation). The distinction is not clear in the case of *dòigh* either:

Example 54.

deagh dhòigh:

- a) *Bha sinn air sia seachdainnean a chur seachad a Mülhausen, ’s bha sinn **air ar deagh dhòigh**.* ‘We had spent six weeks in Mülhausen, and we were very happy (lit. “on our good way”, “in our good mood”).’
- b) “[...] *cha bhàth muir thu, agus cha loisg tein’ thu, agus cha gheàrr faobhar thu, agus chan fhàg do chladheamh fhéin fuidheal beuma an aon àite go bràth anns am buail thu e. Agus cha ’reid mi nach eil **deagh dhòigh** agad air tighean romh ’n t-saoghal a-nist.*” “... sea won’t/does not drown you, and fire won’t/does not burn you, and edge (of a weapon) won’t/does not cut you, and your own sword won’t/does not leave a trace of a blow on any place that you ever strike. And I believe you now have (lit. “I don’t believe you don’t have”) a good way of confronting/getting through the world.”
- c) *Neo air thaing nach robh Mànus **air a dheagh dhòigh**.* ‘Of course/Needless to say Manus was very pleased (lit. “in his good mood”).’
- d) “*Bha duine bh’ **air a dheagh dhòigh**, [...] ach duine neònach, cuideachd. Bu sheann saighdear e: sean chòirneal airm.*” “‘He was a man of good humour (lit. “in his good humour”), [...] but a strange man, too. He was a veteran: an old colonel of (the) army.’”

dòigh math:

- e) “*Tha mo phàrantan-sa ’an dòigh mhath ’an taobh deas Shasuinn, ...*” “‘My parents are (very) pleased (lit. “in a good way/good form”) in South England, ...’”

Notice the different structures used with the two adjectives: *air a dheagh dhòigh* “on his good way” vs *’an dòigh mhath* “in a good way”.

Cuimhne ‘memory, recollection, remembrance’ occurs equally with *deagh* and *math* (in the form of *tha deagh chuimhn(e)/cuimhn(e) mhath agam* ‘I remember well’ etc). (Note again that there are 3 examples of the coordinative phrase *cuimhne(achan) is iomradh*

math ‘good memory/memories and account’, which means that arguably *cuimhne mhath* occurs 19 instead of 16 times among 1066 examples (1.8 %), and this draws the percentages of *deagh chuimhn(e)* and *cuimhn(e) mhath* even closer.) It could be worth mentioning that the predicative construction *fios [aig] glè mhath* etc (32 occurrences) only occurs with intensifiers (*glè* ‘very’, *ro* ‘too’ and *deamhnaidh* ‘devilish(ly), deuced’; e.g. *tha fios/fhios agad deamhnaidh math...* ‘you know it deuced well...’; *Tha fhios agam glè mhath carson a tha mi anns an oilthigh* ‘I know very well why I’m at the university’; *Cha robh fhios aige ro mhath ciod a b’ fheàrr a dhèanamh*. ‘He didn’t know too well what would be best to do.’) – there are 3 similar examples for *cuimhne* as well – whereas intensifiers are not attested with *deagh-* (except in *fior dheagh eolas* ‘really good knowledge’, *fior dheagh shlàinte* ‘really good health’, *fior dheagh ùrnaigh* ‘really good prayer’, *fior dheadh chùram* ‘really good care/caution’, etc), which may suggest that *math* tends to occur together with intensifiers. *Fior*, at least in certain cases, may reflect a different meaning in connection with *deagh* and *math*, which would be best to check with native speakers. In phrases with *math*, *fior* may be related to the noun, conveying the adjectival meaning ‘true; real, authentic’, although these nouns are usually used with *math* anyway: *fior dhuine ma(i)th* ‘a true, good man’ (28 with *math* – 2 with *deagh*), *de fhior stuth math a’ Ghàidheil* ‘of real good Gael material’ (3 with *math* – 1 *deagh stuth*), but: *fior aite math airson port iasgaich* ‘a really good place for a fishing port’ (11 with *math* – 3 with *deagh*), *fior cheilidh mhath* ‘a real(ly) good ceilidh’ (2 with *math* – none with *deagh*).

The occurrences of *obair mhath* in 12 out of 1066 examples (1.1%) and *deagh(-)obair* in 5 out of 908 examples (0.6%) may be close enough to consider *obair* as a word occurring in both constructions to a similar degree (note that 5 is not too far from the threshold (7) above which occurrences with *deagh* may be worth for study – see above). Although the majority of examples for *obair* occur with *math*, in 6 out of 12 tokens *obair mhath* refers to placement, employment (Example 55a), rather than the work itself, which makes it similar to *àite*. In examples 55 b, c *obair mhath* appears to denote a work which presumably has a tangible outcome. With *deagh*, it refers to a more abstract concept (Example 55 d, e and f).

Example 55.

- a) *Fhuair e deagh fhoghlum; fhuair e obair mhath; ach fhathast cha robh e riaraichte*. ‘He received good education; he found a good job; but he still wasn’t satisfied.’

- b) *Rinn e **obair mhath** an sin, gu sònraichte ann am mathematics...* ‘He carried out good work there, particularly in mathematics...’
- c) *...a nis air faicinn na h-oibreach **mhath**, ùrail a tha chlann ri deanamh le Beurla...* ‘...now that we have seen the fresh, good pieces of work that the children are doing in English...’
- d) *...’s tha iad an diugh pòsda ’s a’ dèanamh **deagh obair** anns an t-saoghal.* ‘...and today they are married and do a good job in the world.’
- e) *Ma rinn sinn **deagh-obair** anns na làithean a dh’fhalbh, molaidh an obair sin i fhéin...* ‘If we did a good job in days that have passed, that work will praise itself...’
- f) *Cha rachainn-sa an urras ort fhèin nach tu a rinn e air son **deagh-obair** fhaighinn dhut fhèin!* ‘I wouldn’t trust you not to have done it to get a good job/work for yourself!’

In the last example *deagh* seems to convey the same meaning as *math*; however, the hyphen may indicate that it belongs to another class for this speaker. Nevertheless, it still seems to be less specific than the previous examples with *obair mhath*.

Sometimes it proves to be very difficult to tell whether there is any difference at all, or if the preference for one combination over the other is only the writer’s individual choice, especially if the number of exceptions is low. These exceptions can be clearly understood in the case of *rùn*: Aonghas Caimbeul distinguishes between *deagh rùn* ‘good intention’, and the adjectival form *deagh-rùnach* ‘benevolent’ in orthography, which suggests that he does not regard the nominal form as a compound, in contrast with the adjective. Interestingly, when plural, he writes *rùintean math* ‘good intentions’. (I have only one example for each occurrence from him; however, compare his use of *deagh chuimhne* for ‘good memory’ and *cuimhneachan math* for ‘good memories’ later, in Example 61.) The other exception has to do with emphasis and variation: *Ged a tha **rùn math** air a bhith aig an S.E.D. do’n Ghàidhlig anns a’ bhun-sgoil cha dean **deagh-rùn** leis fhèin a’ chùis* ‘Although the S.E.D. has had good intentions (i.e. is favourably disposed) towards Gaelic in the primary school, good intention will not suffice on its own’. Here, *deagh-rùn* functions as a conventionalised expression (a *compound*), while the meaning of *math* is emphasised in *rùn math*: the intention was *good*. (Variation also occurs with *àite* ‘place’ and *slàinte* ‘health’ – see below.) (For *rùn* see further discussion in section 4.2.1.)

Other data are more confusing at the first glance. For instance, the case of *dòchas* (in Example 56), where the examples with *deagh* appear to show a kind of abstraction; however, among the three examples with *math*, we find examples for both statements

(Example 57 b, c) and abstract concept (Example 57a). *Deagh dhòchas*, *dòchas* being an abstract noun, is the default collocation, and thus it occurs both in concrete (/objective) and subjective examples (see section 4.2.1 on subjectivity). The conventionalised structure *tha dòchas agam* ‘I hope’, can be found both with *deagh* and *math*.

Example 56.

- a) ... *Do gach nì a nì gluasad/ Air slighe nuadh an **deagh dhòchais*** ... ‘... to all the things that move on the new way of good hope ...’
- b) *’Na chaithe-beatha bha Dòmhnall Ros a’ deanamh earbsa an **deadh dhòchas**.* ‘Placing trust in good hope was typical of Dòmhnall Ros’s approach to life.’
- c) ... *bha e ag altruim **deagh dhòchas** gu robh iomairt an tàillear dorcha oirre.* ‘... he cherished good hope that the tailor’s campaign was unknown to her.’
- d) ... *gu robh clann nan daoine beò le misnich is **deagh dhòchas**...* ‘... that courage and good hope kept the child of man alive ...’
- e) **Deagh Dhòchas** ‘Good Hope’ occurs four times as the name of a boat
- f) ... *bithidh **deadh dhòchas** agam gu’n coinnich sinn fhathast.* ‘... I do hope we’ll meet again.’

Example 56b, still as an abstract concept, occurs in a dialogue, despite that it is expected to reflect direct speech, i.e. more informal language. Example f is said in a dialogue at parting – as such, it reflects politeness, which can be a pragmatic reason for emphasis (see later in section 4.2.2); nevertheless, due to the future tense it is also subjunctive (section 4.2.1). The main clue for the occurrence of *dòchas math*, however, may lie in register:

Example 57.

- a) *le **dòchas maith** nan gràs* ‘with the good hope of grace’
- b) *Carson a tha sibh brònach,/ Is **dòchas math** dha taobh/ gun d’ fhuair i null thar Iòrdain/ gu glòir is fois nan naomh,* ... ‘Why are you sad, there is good hope is that she got to Jordan, to the glory and peace of heaven ...’
- c) *Bha **dòchas math** agam gu robh i deanamh ionnsaigh cho math ’s a b’ urrainn dhi* ‘I really hoped she was making as much effort as she could.’

Example 57b is from a religious hymn, and the context of 58a has at least a religious context (note also conservative writing of *maith*, which indicates high register).

The examples above reflect how complicated the distribution may be. If we consider examples 56 b and f, for instance, which both contain *deagh*, this similarity may well be due to the fact that they are from the same source. *Deagh* also frequently occurs in religious hymns (e.g. Example 56a). Some examples suggest that the use of *deagh* instead

of *math* may have to do with pragmatic emphasis (discussed below) or else, with abstraction. This clearly indicates that dialect, register (discussed in detail in section 4.2.7). and other, semantic/pragmatic reasons all play their part in the distribution.

In several cases both combinations occur in the same text(s), which can be really useful. In *Na Klondykers*, for example, the two occurrences of *duine math* appear in neutral, descriptive sentences, meaning ‘a good man’ ... *cha do thionndaidh duine math eile an-àirde*. ‘... no one else good turned up.’; *’S e duine math a bh’ann. Iain. Duine snog*. ‘He was a good man. Iain. A nice man.’ In contrast, *deagh* can be observed in the sense ‘the right man’, as in the paragraph below:

Example 58.

Agus an uair sin, dh’fhaighnich iad dha Iain an deigheadh e ann. Bha aon àite eile air a’ bhàta agus bha Iain aon uair anns an Oilthigh, agus mar sin ’s e deagh dhuine a bhiodh ann air an sgioba bheag aca.

‘And then they asked Iain if he would go (there). There was one more space on the ship and Iain was once at University, and therefore he would be a good man in their small crew.’

(Remember that the default collocation for *duine* is with *math*, i.e. that occurs in most constructions, due to its (concrete) reference to a person.)

On the other hand, there are cases when the two different examples from the same text do not help to understand the difference between the two usages – cf the examples from *Air mo Chuairt*: ...*thog mi an deagh chuid dhe na h-òrain*. ‘I learnt many of the songs’ vs ...*bha mo chuid mhath agamsa de bhadan rìomhach na tubaist*. ‘I had my good portion of (the) beautiful bunches of (the) accident’. The word choice here might be driven grammatically, but again, there is no explanation then, why in *Ugam agus Bhuan*, another source, *cuid mhath* occurs 5 out of 6 times with *de*, whereas *deagh chuid* – in the same sense – does not take *de*, which is just the contrary to what can be observed in *Air mo Chuairt*:

Example 59.

- a) ...*nuair a bha gille Rìgh na h-Airde Tuath cuid mhath dhen astar air a’ rathad*...
‘when the boy of Airde Tuath’s king was a long way forward on the road...’
- b) ...*bha cuid mhath aige cuideachd de sheann sgeulachdan*. ‘he also knew a great many old stories’
- c) *Chuala e deagh chuid aig athair agus aig a mhàthair*. ‘He heard a good number [of them] from his father and his mother.’

In the case of *cuimhne*, for instance, which word has a high occurrence both with *deagh* and *math*, I was not able to differentiate between the two groups – neither do dialects or register/style of writing show any preference to one over the other, not even in the same work (cf examples from *Hiort* in Example 60).

Example 60.

- a) *Tha deagh chuimhne agam air Hiortaich a' tighinn chon an taigh againn...* 'I remember well people from St Kilda coming to our house...'
- b) *Bha deagh chuimhne fhathast aig Lachlann Dòmhnallach air an latha...* 'Lachlann Dòmhnallach still remembered the day well...'
- c) *Tha cuimhne mhath agam a bhith a' coiseachd sìos chun na h-Eaglais...* 'I remember well walking down to the church...'
- d) *Bha cuimhne mhath air aon earrach air an tàinig a'churrach Hiortaich gu Baile Raghnaill airson sìol-cura fhaighinn.* 'They remembered well one spring during which the coracle from St Kilda came to Balranald for seeds.'

On the other hand, in most tokens of *cuimhne* the two words are distributed among the sources so that both do not occur in the same work, which suggests there must be personal preference for one adjective or the other. There is only one source (*Suathadh ri Iomadh Rubha*) where both types occur and a change in meaning can be observed, although only three tokens occur in this source. Here, *cuimhne mhath* carries the most frequent meaning 'to remember well', whereas *deagh chuimhne* shares its meaning 'good memory' with *cuimhneachan math* 'good memories'. Note that the same pattern of pluralisation can be observed in this example as in the case of *deagh rùn – rùintean math* above, which can be found in the same source. Furthermore, *air* never precedes any collocations with *math* in the corpus.

Example 61.

- a) *Bha cuimhne mhath aige nuair...* 'He remembered well when...'
- b) *Cuimhneachan math.* (in a dialogue) 'Good memories.'
- c) *B' fhiach e thàmh a bhi ann an sìochaint agus a chliù air dheagh chuimhne.* 'It was good for him resting in peace and leaving good memories about himself.'

In general, the examples for *cuimhne* appear to show a random distribution among the writers, indicating their individual preference, rather than referring to dialect or register. This arbitrary usage is rather frequent throughout my data and creates exceptions and uncertainty in most cases. However, some patterns may be discerned, even in cases where exceptions are rather rare.

4.2.1. Subjectivity

Time expressions (*ùine* ‘time (interval)’, *latha* ‘day’) and, presumably, abstract nouns which have a subjective meaning themselves (such as *rùn* ‘intention’) are sensitive to subjectivity – in other cases (e.g. *fios* – discussed later on) emphasis seems to make a stronger influence. (Note that *fios* ‘knowledge’ suggests more certainty in meaning than words such as *rùn* or *aobhar*!)

Subjectivity means that in concrete, factual tenses (i.e. present, past) *math* is normally used in adjectival phrases, whereas in an uncertain, subjective context (i.e. with future, conditional tenses; in quotation (after *thuirt* ‘said’, *innis* ‘tell’, *gealltainn* ‘promising’, etc); in contexts which imply the speaker’s opinion or modality (uncertainty) (e.g. *creidsinn* ‘believing’, *feumaidh (gun robh)* ‘must (have been)’, *’s dòcha* ‘perhaps’, *amharas* ‘doubt, suspicion’); or conjunctions related to time or modality (such as *ma* ‘if’, *mus* ‘before’)), *deagh* is the expected qualifier.

Let us recall the example for *rùn*: *Ged a tha **rùn math** air a bhith aig an S.E.D. do’n Ghàidhlig anns a’ bhun-sgoil cha dean **deagh-rùn** leis fhèin a’ chùis* ‘Although the S.E.D. has good intentions (i.e. is favourably disposed) towards Gaelic in the primary school, good intention will not suffice on its own’. *Deagh-rùn* in the previous example (just like *deagh dhòchas* ‘good hope’ for instance) represents an abstract concept, while *rùn math* refers to a more concrete, more specific/definite aim. Also there is a clear difference in subjectivity here: the first part of the sentence is a present tense statement, whereas the second clause is in the future.

Words referring to time intervals are more common with *math*, which is the normal qualifier for them. *Latha math* occurs 10 times as a greeting; it is often encountered in the expressions *latha math a ghabhail/ri ghabhail* ‘to have a good day/having a good day’ and *latha math airson rudeigin* ‘a good day for something’; it often refers to the weather or the quality of a day passed – often as a statement in a diary. We can also come across examples for starting a conversation: *Latha math ann an-diugh, Uilleam.*, literally ‘Today’s a good day, William.’ which is halfway between a statement and the actual greeting. With regard to *deagh*, it may function as an emphasising device: e.g. *Thàinig an latha, agus **deagh latha** cuideachd...* ‘The day came, and it was a good day indeed...’ However, the other example of *deagh latha* (although with hyphen) can be found in reported speech, i.e. under more subjunctive/subjective circumstances: *Thuirt mi [...] gu robh **deagh-latha** air son feòir an diu ann...* ‘I said that today was a good day for the grass’. Similarly, *oidhche mhath* occurs 36 times as a farewell, and it may also refer to the weather or stand as a neutral statement: *Bha **oidhche mhath** roimhe.* ‘A good night was

ahead of him.’ It can also serve as a greeting, just like *latha math*: ‘*Tha oidhche mhath ann!*’, *arsa guth*. ‘‘It’s a good night!’’, a voice said.’ None of the 3 occurrences of *deagh oidhche* represents a farewell or a greeting. Here, again, we can find examples both of subjectivity (future): *Ni e deagh oidhche iasgaich a nochd*. ‘It will make a good night for fishing tonight.’, as well as of a kind of emphatic usage, reflected in the paragraph below:

Example 62.

Tha am bar làn. Tha daoine air an stobhaigeadh anns a’ chreathaill bhlàth. Chan eil càil eile ann. An deoch mar abhainn, an ceòl a’ cur dhaoine air mhisg. Tha na fir a’ feuchainn ri faighinn gàire bho na boireannaich. Còmhradh tiugh, fuaim fuaim. Daoine a’ smocadh. Deagh oidhche.

‘The bar is full. People are basking in the warm grate. Nothing else matters. The drink flows like a river, the music makes people fuddled. The men are trying to catch a smile from the women. Thick conversation, noise, noise. People smoking. Excellent night.’

In this example we can see a description of a setting, absorbed in the pleasant atmosphere of the night, preparing and supporting the brief summary at the end: *Deagh oidhche*. ‘It was evidently a good night.’

The case of *ùine* ‘time’ may be more convincing: although it often occurs with *math* even in subjective contexts (see Example 63a), 3 out of the 4 tokens for *deagh ùine* are connected to uncertainty (it is to be clarified by native speakers’ judgement if habitual present can be described as subjective, especially in a Biology textbook) (Example 63d). Example 63 e–g show examples for the objective use of *ùine mhath*.

Example 63.

- a) ... *tha droch amharas agam gun toir i ùine mhath air leabaidh a bàis*. ‘... I have a terrible (bad) suspicion that it [i.e. Gaelic] will spend a long time on its deathbed.’
- b) *Thuir iad ris gum biodh Hector fo ghlaig airson deagh ùine, agus cha chuireadh duine dragh air Jock*. ‘They told him that Hector would be locked up for a long time, and no one would bother Jock.’
- c) *A luchd nan ciabhagan geala,
’S an aois air ur glasadh cho liath,
Toirt cunntais gun d’ fhuair sibh air thalamh
Deagh ùine gu gabhail ri Crìosd, ...*

‘O people of the white curls,
 whose hair has turned so grey with age,
 attesting that you had on earth
 plenty of time to accept Christ, ...’

- d) ...*bheir iad **deagh ùine** mus bi iad ’nan inbhigh a’ tha a’ tarraing anail anns an àile...* ‘it takes them a long time to develop into an adult that inhales from the atmosphere’
- e) *Cha robh Dolan air a bhith ’g obair airson **ùine mhath*** ‘Dolan hadn’t been working for a good while’
- f) ... *a chaith **ùine mhath** le companaich air Boraraigh, ri saothair an taighe.* ‘... who spent a good while with companions on Boraray, working on the house.’
- g) *Bha e **ùine mhath** an sin.* ‘He was there for a good while.’

Although the origin of their usage is unclear, the next piece of discussion (related to *fios*) may shed light on a possible shift in gradience between *deagh-* and *math*, which can result in a parallel use – or, to the contrary, on a possible split of meanings if both combinations are used and known by the speaker/writer. (It is interesting to note that both words in question, *fios* and *cuimhne* can be typically found in the constructions *tha fios agam* ‘I know’, *tha cuimhn(e) agam* ‘I remember’, which can be intensified as *tha fios agam glè mhath* ‘I know very well’, *tha cuimhn(e) agam ro mhath* ‘I remember too well’, etc. This emphasised structure might reinforce the sentence structures *tha fios math agam* ‘I know well’, *tha cuimhne mhath agam* ‘I remember well’.)

4.2.2. Emphasis

Regarding *fios* ‘knowledge’, the corpus include only 4 tokens for *fios math*; however, all of these are concrete. The trouble is that we encounter plenty of examples for *deagh fhios* under the same circumstances. This means that its use is more related to pragmatic factors, such as emphasis. In certain languages (e.g. Spanish, Hungarian, Hindi, Tagalog, etc) the word order of a sentence is not based only on syntactic categories (note the compulsory subject – verb order in English affirmative statements for example), but the speakers’ intention also plays an important role in it. Such languages differentiate *topic* and *focus* (emphasised or highlighted (preposed) elements), which are placed at the beginning of the sentence, as opposed to the rest of the utterance (neutral elements), which is called the *comment* (topic–comment construction vs subject–predicate construction; cf the Oxford Concise Dictionary of Linguistics, 2007). It may be the case that such factors work on a

lower level of the grammar in languages with different basic construction as well – for example in adjectival phrases.

In a number of cases I have found that *deagh-* conveys an emphatic meaning over the phrase. The most obvious reason for this emphasis is contrast. Emphasis is a frequent colloquial device; however, it easily loses its strength after it has been in use for a while. (Linguistic changes are likely to occur in speech at first and spread gradually to other aspects of the language, constantly interacting with dialect and register.) This theoretical change in emphatic usage may be well illustrated by the different examples for *fios* (see Example 64).

Example 64. (*fios*)

a) focalised³⁷ (contrast):

- a. *Cha robh fios aig an tè bhig gu de ciall nam faclan no idir carson nach fhaodadh i an labhairt tuilleadh, ach bha deagh fhios aig a màthair.* ‘The little girl didn’t know what the words meant or at all why she wasn’t allowed to utter them anymore, but her mother knew very well.’
- b. *Chan eil fios agamsa air treas-cuid t’ oibreach, ach bha deagh fhios agam gum biodh cabhaig ’sa ghnothach latha-eigin.* ‘I do not know a third of your work, but I knew very well that haste would be needed some day.’

b) topicalised³⁸ (back-reference):

Bha deagh fhios aig Dòmhnall air a-sin... ‘Dòmhnall knew that well...’ (i.e. that has been described in previous paragraph)

(It is difficult to find neutral examples for *deagh fhios*, as it appears to refer back to previous context in all texts in the corpus.) Since speakers always feel the subject of their conversation important, it tends to become focalised. As a result, not only may contrastive examples turn up after a while, but also topicalised ones, where *deagh* refers to a subject already mentioned in the previous text (the two examples below are from the same source):

Example 65. (topicalisation)

- a) *Gach sgioba a chuir na Gearmailtich nan aghaidh, bhuannaich iad... gus an do thòisich na Gearmailtich a’ cur chluicheadairean proifiseanta... gan trèanadh. A’ toirt biadh math, math dhaibh. Fhathast, bhuannaich na Ruiseanaich! B’ e*

³⁷ *focalisation*: giving prominence to an element or part of a sentence by intonational or other means – usually where there is contrast or emphasis, or a distinction of new vs given (see *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Linguistics* 1997/2007 on *focus*)

³⁸ *topicalisation*: giving prominence to an element of a sentence which is already given, i.e. known or recoverable from earlier information in a text/conversation (see *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Linguistics* 1997/2007 on *topic*)

deagh rud a bh' ann dha na daoine bochda anns a' champ. 'They defeated each team the Germans put against them... until the Germans began taking professional players... to train them. Giving good, good food to them. Still, the Russians won! It was a good thing for those poor men in the camp.'

- b) *Cha robh e eòlach air na ceanglaichean anns an t-slabhraidh de dhaoine a bha os a chionn. Ann an dòigh, 's e rud math a bha sin, gun fhios nach deigheadh rudeigin ceàrr.* 'He wasn't aware of the links in the chain of people who were above him. In a way, that was a good thing in case something would go wrong.'

As regards *deagh fhios*, beside being contrastive, it often appears at the beginning of paragraphs or refers to what has already been stated, which is the definition of topicalisation (another linguistic factor that moves expressions to the beginning of sentences). Pragmatic factors include explanation, excuse, persuasion or conviction, and concern:

Example 66. (Pragmatic factors)

a) explanation:

Bha Iain beag a' dol a choimhead air a sheanmhair, agus b' e so an earail a bha 'mhàthair (Bean Chalum Phost) a' toirt air nuair a bha e dol a mach an dorus. Bha deagh fhios aice gun robh Iain – mar an corr dhe 'sheòrsa – furasda thoirt a thaobh.

'Little Iain was going to see his grandmother, and this was the warning that his mother (Calum Post's wife) gave him when he was going out of the door. She knew well that Iain – like the rest of his kind – is easy to influence.'

b) persuasion:

Is ann aig Gàidheil na h-Alba a tha deagh fhios air so agus cha deanadh e ach feum, sinn a bhi a' co-phàirteachadh bòidhchead ar dùthcha is cùineas ar nàduir ri ar co-chreutairean.

'It is the Gaels of Scotland who know this perfectly well, and it would do only good if we participate in the beauty of our country and the tranquility of our countryside with our fellow-creatures.'

c) concern (likely to occur together with future or conditional!):

- a. *Bha deagh fhios agam gur e mi fhìn, am fear-faire, a' chiad duine a dh'fhiachadh iad ri marbhadh.* 'I knew very well that it was me, the watchman, whom they'd first try to kill.'

- b. *Dh'innis mi dha dìreach an rud a bha e airson a chluinntinn, agus tha amharas agam gu robh **deagh fhios** aige gu robh mi air a' bhreug innse.* 'I told him exactly what he wanted to hear, and I had a feeling that he knew very well I had told a lie.'

In essays, *deagh fhios* can often be encountered in dialogues, which may support the suggestion that its use is related to (pragmatic) focalisation/topicalisation, as speakers intend to emphasise their subjects. In these sources, one of the examples containing *deagh fhios* shows both contrast and explanation (see Example 67), in others it occurs in the fixed expression *mar tha deagh fhios agaibh* 'as you know very well', which attempts to influence the reader, making the suggestion that everybody knows (or should know) about the fact that follows (persuasion).

Example 67.

*O àm gu àm bhiodh an smuain a' dol troimh chlagan gu'm bu toil leam tigh a thogail dhuinn fhèin a rèir ar miann. Na òige bha m' athair air tigh a thogail dha fhèin air an eilean, ach bha **deagh fhios** agam gun robh eadar dhealachadh mor ann am baile seach eilean agus cha do chuir mi moran seadh anns na smuaintean a bhiodh a tighinn orm.*

'From time to time the thought would come to my mind that I'd like to build a house for us according to our desire. When he was young, my father built a house for himself on the island, but I knew very well that a town was much different from an island and I didn't give much import to the thoughts which would come to me.'

The occurrences of *deagh fhios* among the data which are certainly the most distant from everyday speech can be encountered in a Biology textbook. As such, this is a very good source of pragmatic emphasis. We may expect *fios math* in a text which is so far from being passionate and emotional; interestingly enough, though, both examples in this text include *deagh fhios*. At first it occurs in the preface, then in the actual lessons (Example 68):

Example 68.

*Tha **deagh fhios** againn gu bheil duine nas trice a' laighe fo diabetes ma tha mòran de ghualuisgean 'na bhiadh.* 'We know very well that people more frequently suffer from diabetes if their food contains more carbohydrates.'

Here (just as in Example 66b and Example 67 above) *deagh fhios* serves as a coercive, persuading device: referring to a known, proven fact.

Fios math, on the other hand, can be found in neutral sentences that only describes or gives account of something that is known well (Example 69 a, b). In some cases it can occur in explanations (Example c) as well (perhaps in which the need for pragmatic reasons (such as persuasion or conviction etc) is not so strong).

Example 69.

- a) *Bha **fios math** aige gun robh an gnìomh a rinn e air a chur air leth a nise bho chàch.* ‘He knew well that the deed he had done had left him apart now from everyone.’
- b) ‘*Dé man a tha balach beag a’ ghlinne an diugh? Eil do sheanair air a chasan?*’ ‘*S bhithinn-s’ a’ feitheamh, **fios mhath** [sic] aige carson...*’ ‘How’s the wee boy of the glen today? Is your grandfather up?’ And I would be waiting, (and) he knowing fine why...’
- c) *Fhreagair Tormod sa Ghàidhlig, oir bha **fios math** aige gu robh làn a chinn dhith aig an fhear...* ‘Norman answered in Gaelic as he knew well that there was plenty of it in the head of the man (i.e. he spoke Gaelic very well)...’

The observation that does not support my suggestion about the spread of *deagh fhios*, is that the few tokens for *fios math* are from Lewis and from the 1970s onward, whereas there are plenty of examples for *deagh fhios* from earlier sources (and various dialects of course). This suggests that *deagh fhios* was the original connotation (which is not surprising, *fios* being a mental concept), and *fios math* has appeared in the Lewis dialect, probably spreading among younger speakers (perhaps influenced by the expressions/phrases *fios glè/deamhnaidh m(h)ath* – see below). For the speakers who use both connotations, there may be a distinction between the meanings of the two. In the corpus *The Klondykers* is one of the most modern sources from Lewis and its vocabulary has proved to be rather colourful with respect to the use of *deagh* and *math*. (Unfortunately, however, in the case of *fios* it only contains one token for *deagh fhios*, and none for *fios math*.) The picture is rather complicated, as other factors such as dialect, register, style, individual preference may just as well be influential as semantic-pragmatic reasons.

Examples with *glè mhath* (contrast, disapproval, anger – note repetition in Example 70b and d) and *deamhnaidh math* (conviction, contrast – responds to a negative statement, confirming the opposite; in Example 71c the speaker is upset again) are very similar to the usage with *deagh*, which may serve as evidence for its emphatic, intensifying sense. The reason for choice between these and *deagh fhios* again is obscure, although the structure

intensifier + *math* appears to be preferably used in situations (particularly in dialogues) where the speaker is angry or upset, not understanding their interlocutor's reasons.

Example 70. (*glè mhath*)

a) contrast:

Ged a bha fhios glé mhath aca càit' an do dh'fhàg iad na lìn, bha e duilich a dhéanamh a-mach dé a' bhuaidh a bhiodh aig sruth agus gaoith orra. 'Although they knew very well where they left the nets, it was difficult to make out what effect the stream and the wind would have on them.'

b) disapproval:

... 's e tha mì-mhodhail, na mo bheachd-s', ach duine tha cumail air a' bruidhinn ann an cainnt ri duin' eile fad na h-ùine nuair tha fios aige, fhios glé mhath, nach eil an duin' eile ga thuigsinn. '... the rude one, in my opinion, is someone who keeps on talking to someone else in a language all the time when he knows, knows very well, that the other does not understand him.'

c) anger:

Thug, mun do chuir e teine ris a h-uile tigh 's a' bhaile. Ach chaidh e ro fhada 'nuair a chuir e teine ri tigh mo mhàthar is fhios glé mhath aige gu robh i fhathasd gun éirigh. Dh'fhaodadh e a bhith air a losgadh gu bas.

'Yes, before he set fire to all the houses in the village. But he went too far when he set my mother's house on fire knowing very well that she hadn't yet got up. He could have burnt her to death.'

d) conviction:

"Uill... ach dé tha sinn a' déanamh...?"

"A' cur cheistean air. Fios glé mhath agad dé tha sibh a' déanamh. 'Na chruthaich Dia barrachd air aon dhuine?' ... 'Eil e ceadaichte a dhol dhan an eaglais Latha na Sàbaid air baidhsagal?' ... Fios glé mhath agad dé tha sibh a' déanamh."

"Well... but what are we doing...?"

"Asking him questions. You know very well what you are doing. 'Did God create more than one man?' ... 'Is it allowed to go to church on Sunday on a bicycle?' ... You know very well what you are doing."

Example 71. (*deamhnaidh math*)

a) conviction:

Bha m' athair le chridhe, mo mhàthair agus mo sheanair – 's ma 's math mo chuimhne, bha agus mo sheanmhair Lèineabroc. Agus tha mise le mo chridhe – fìos deamhnaidh math agam gu bheil rudeigin fada ceàrr air...

‘My father had a heart condition, my mother and my grandfather – and if I remember rightly, my grandmother Lèineabroc likewise. And I have a heart condition – I know damned well that something is seriously wrong with it.’

b) contrast:

- *Cha robh fhios agams' air càil mu dheidhinn.*

- *Tha fìos deamhnaidh math agad.*

‘- I didn't know anything about it.

- You know damned well.’

c) frustration:

- *Déan an rud a thogras tu. Chan fhaigh thu an seo i. Tha coltas... dé tha ceàrr?*

- *Tha fìos deamhnaidh math agad dé tha ceàrr. Tha i air fàgail.*

‘- Do as you wish. You won't find her here. It looks... what's wrong?

- You know damned well what's wrong. She's left.’

Another interesting observation is that *deagh fhios* is always preceded in the corpus by the substantive verb (*tha/bha/...*), which is not the case in all tokens with *math*: see Examples 69b, 70c, 71a.

Similar to the example with *deagh fhios* above (i.e. persuasion in Example 68), other types of emphasis may emerge for pragmatic reasons: when the speaker/writer intends to show their **respect or affection** towards the other (*B' e sin an naidheachd dhuilich air deagh ghille – balach cho tapaidh, snog 's a dh'fhàg am baile seo riamh*. ‘That was sad news about a good fellow – a boy as clever, nice as any other who ever left this town.’ – showing respect for the deceased). Further examples for ‘pragmatic emphasis’: **reason** (cf the afore-mentioned example (under Example 58) *...mar sin deagh dhuine a bhiodh ann air an sgioba bheag aca* ‘...and like that he would be a good man in their small crew’); **conviction+contrast** (responding to a different opinion in the dialogue): *A bhana-charaid, faodaidh e bhith gu bheil e na's fheàrr na chollas; ach cha'n'eil aodann deadh dhuin' air...* ‘My (female) friend, he might be better than he looks; but he does not have a good man's countenance.’ (Compare with *gnùis duine mhath* in the answer to a riddle, thus completely neutral; and note also that *fior dhuine math* in *Tha mi-fhein de'n bheachd gur h-e fìor dhuine math a th' ann a Mac Neill* ‘I myself am of the opinion that Mac Neill is a

really good man’ only emphasises that Mac Neill was a good man, instead of making the whole statement salient for some particular intention³⁹.) Yet another pragmatic cause can be **suspicion, accusation**: *Tha deagh aobhar againn a bhith ’creidsinn gun d’thainig e ’n taobh sa.* ‘We have good reason to believe that he came here.’ (note that *a bhith ’creidsinn* ‘to be believing’ is in the continuous, which arguably reflects the speaker’s conviction again). (As *duine* and *gille* are concrete nouns, referring to people, thus are expected with *math* in neutral sentences/utterances.)

Interestingly enough, the time expression *greis* ‘a while’ does not show a subjective sense like *ùine* ‘time (interval)’ in the previous section; quite the contrary we may even argue that it gains an intensified, new meaning through emphasis (cf the quotations under Examples 72 and 73).

Example 72.

- a) *car ghreis mhaith* ‘for quite a good while’
- b) *Bha mi greiseag mhath an sin* ‘I was there for a good little while’
- c) *Thug Mèireag a bhean greis mhath air mhuinntireas ann an Lunnainn.* ‘His wife Mèireag spent a good while in service in London.’
- d) *Bha i greis mhath ’n a tamh agus an sin thuirt i air a socair ...* ‘She stayed silent for a good while and then she said gently ...’
- e) *bha greis mhath mun do thuig e* ‘it took a good while before he understood’
- f) *Dh’fhaodadh Oighrig a bhith greis mhath fhathast* ‘Effie could be a good while yet’ (i.e. without coming)
- g) *Ged bha strì gu leór a dol ’s an Eadailt greis mhath roimhe so, bha deagh thuigs’ againn nach b’ ann bho’n taobh sin a thigeadh cobhair idir.* ‘Although there had been a lot of struggle in Italy a long time before that, we understood/knew well that from there no help will come.’
- h) *Bha Màiri air a ràdh riutha nach biodh i fhèin no Seonag a’ cur feum’ air an taigh gum biodh greis mhath dhen là air a dhol seachad.* ‘Mary had told them that neither her nor Joan would need the house until a good part of the day had passed.’

Example 73.

- a) *...an dèidh dhaibh a bhith sàmhach deagh ghreis...* ‘after they had been quiet for quite a while’
- b) *Cha robh na brògan donna air òraid cho fada a dhèanamh bho chionn deagh ghreis* ‘The brown shoes hadn’t given such a long speech for a long time.’

³⁹ Another possible translation is ‘true, good man’, see native speakers’ judgement in chapter 8.

Examples 72 a and b are intensified to a lesser degree due to the presence of the word *car* ‘somewhat, rather’ in example a and to that of the diminutive in example b. Example 72c still seems less emphatic. Sometimes it cannot be decided how important the length of time is (see Example e and f), and we can find counterexamples as well (72g and 73b). Besides these (with *greis mhath*), the examples with *deagh* (Example 73) are evidently emphatic. The only example for diminutive *greiseag* and all the occurrences of *treis* (all but one in *Na Klondykers*) stand with *math*, probably not carrying so much emphasis. (In *Na Klondykers* *deagh* always qualifies *ùine*.)

4.2.3. Lexicalisation

At the other end of the scale, if the emphasising sense fades completely (or is not present), we can encounter examples where *deagh* seems to be an inherent feature of the word – a fixed, *lexicalised* part of the expression. The meaning of *deagh* is somehow reduced in such cases, it does not specifically add to the meaning of the whole expression, but rather, it forms a kind of integrated meaning with the (quasi-)qualified word (cf Example 74). As Robertson and Taylor (2003²) put it about placenames, “the adjective before the noun identifies the physical feature as being specific”: *eilean garbh* could refer to any island that is rough, whereas *garbh eilean* would refer to a particular island. Similarly, *caraid math* can refer to any friend that can be described as ‘good’, while *deagh charaid* refers to a person who is special to someone.

Example 74.

- a) *An dèidh sin thòisich ceòl is dannsa, càirdean agus luchd-cinnidh Rasaidh a’ cur na h-aimsir gu **deadh bhuil** gu deireadh na h-oidhche.* ‘After that music and dance began, Rasaidh’s friends and clansmen creating a good atmosphere till the end of the night.’ (lit. “putting the time to a good outcome”)
- b) *...rinn e **deagh bhuil** de’n teagasg a fhuair e.* ‘He took benefit of the teaching he received.’
- c) *Dèanamaid **buil mhath** de’n latha th’ againn [...] dèanamaid **buil mhath** de ’n àm a th’ air a bhuileachadh oirnn.* ‘Let us make good use of the day we have [...] let us make good use of the time that has been bestowed on us.’
- d) *...gu dearbh ’s ann aige bhios an cothrom airson a airgiod a chur gu **buil mhath**...* ‘...indeed he will have the opportunity to put his money to good purpose...’

Here, by consequence, the few examples with *math* seem to become more emphatic, making an assessment rather than merely describing something; just like in Example d, where we can see a tacit contrast: he will have the opportunity to use his money for a good

purpose, and not a bad one. (Of course, it would be good to see how native speakers interpret these expressions.) Further examples for this phenomenon are as follows:

Example 75.

- a) *Cha bu tusa a' chiad duine chuir sin as a' seo. 'S àite math an seo nam biodh esan as an droch-àite, e fhéin 's a bhean!* 'You weren't the first man whom that had) sent away (i.e. who had left because of that). This is/would be a good place if he were in hell (lit. "bad place"), himself and his wife.'
- b) *Tha mi 'n dòchas gur i comhairle mhath an abstoil, ma tha, a ghabhas gach duine aig a bheil ùidh 'an eachdraidh, beul-aithris, agus litreachas ar daoine.* 'I hope that it's the apostle's good advice, then, that everyone will take who is interested in the history, oral tradition, and literature of our people.'

Compare the example for *deagh chomhairle* from the same source:

Example 76.

Fhuair i fìor ghille gasda, 's tha mise làn-chreidsinn gur iomadh latha thug i beannachd air an fheadhainn a thug an deagh chomhairle oirre 'She got a really nice man (/true, nice man?), and I fully believe that many a day she blessed those who gave her the good advice' (i.e. to marry him)

In the latter case, *deagh-chomhairle*, *deagh-bhuil*, etc. may be regarded as a sort of compound, and thus written with a hyphen. Even in the case of *deagh charaid*, *deagh*, being attached to *caraid* so many times to show respect – as I explained in the case of emphasis –, may lose its original function, and occur in mere statements about (or reference to) a friend. *Caraid math*, by contrast, may not refer to a specific person (or a person at all – in a poem), or may be more emphatic, highlighting the good virtues of the friend (Example 77c):

Example 77.

- a) *Ach, O, bha 'n giomach math, 's b' ann le deadh-ghean caraid math a fhuair sinn e* 'Ah, oh, the lobster was good, and it was by the goodwill of a good friend that we got it'
- b) *'S cha bu charaid math 'san oidhch' e* 'And it wasn't a good friend in the night' (i.e. the eyes of an animal)
- c) *Caraid math a bh' ann Mgr. Iain Sands.* 'Master Iain Sands was a good friend.'

In Example 77a it may not be the identity of the friend which is important but that he was a *good* friend (alternatively, the word choice may be influenced here by the associated word *deadh-ghean* – see section 4.2.6 on stylistic variation).

To the contrary, *deagh charaid* always refers to a particular person, even if (s)he is not addressed specifically by the writer. (e.g. *ri Seòras, a deagh charaid* ‘with Seòras, her good friend’; *litir a dh’fhàg deagh charaid dhomh na thiomnadh* ‘a letter that a good friend left me in his will’). Consider the following example as well: *Co e an deagh charaid dileas a’s trice a ghiulanas gu diblidh d’eallach? – Do dhruim fein.* ‘Who is the faithful good friend who humbly carries your load the most often? – Your own back.’ Here, *deagh charaid* does not refer to a person; however, it intends to be meant that way.

The same may apply to *deagh-rùn* in the example where *rùn math* can be found in the first clause introducing contrast: *Ged a tha rùn math air a bhith aig an S.E.D. do’n Ghàidhlig anns a’ bhun-sgoil cha dean deagh-rùn leis fhèin a’ chùis* ‘Although the S.E.D. has good intentions (i.e. is favourably disposed) towards Gaelic in the primary school, good intention will not suffice on its own’ (note that this example is written with a hyphen). (Interestingly, we have seen a similar example for *fios glè mhath* as well – introducing contrast in the first clause: *Ged a bha fhios glè mhath aca càit’ an do dh’fhàg iad na lìn, bha e duilich a dhéanamh a-mach dé a’ bhuaidh a bhiodh aig sruth agus gaoith orra.* ‘Although they knew well where they left the nets, it was difficult to make out what great effect the stream and the wind had on them.’)

4.2.4. Abstraction with *deagh*

As we have already seen in examples for *obair* ‘work’ (in Example 55), *deagh* may have a conceptualising function as well. (I give a further example for *comhairle* ‘advice’ under Example 78.)

Example 78.

a Mhàthair na deadh chomhairle ‘oh, Mother of good advice’ (in a prayer)

If we consider its frequent occurrence with words referring to emotions, mental concepts and morality, it can easily be understood why it is appropriate for this function. As discussed above, in some cases it is associated with respect (*deagh charaid* ‘good friend’, *deagh mhaighistir* ‘good master’), and frequently occurs with verbal nouns as well (*deagh ghabhail* ‘good let’, *deagh phàigheadh* ‘good payment’, and see *deagh oibreachadh* ‘good working’ below). Having an abstract sense is not surprising in the case of *deagh dhòchas* ‘good hope’ and *deagh chomhairle* ‘good advice’, which do belong in this category, and occur mostly with *deagh*. What really is of interest here, is the abstraction present in

examples with *deagh obair*, but usually absent from those with *obair mhath*. The ability of *obair* to have a more abstract meaning as well as a more factual one, therefore, may be a good reason for its more frequent occurrence in both combinations.

Example 79.

*Aig inbhe an reic, bha na brògan air an **deagh oibreachadh** agus glè shealltanach.*

‘In selling condition (lit. “at the selling stage”), the shoes were “worked” (i.e. fashioned) well and were very attractive.’

4.2.5. Meaning change

So far, we have seen *cuimhne* and *obair* showing a kind of shift in meaning (in Examples 61 and 55). The word choice may be influenced by semantics in *astar* as well, where *astar math* usually refers to distance or size of an area, and *deagh astar* to speed (note that we perceive distance and size as more concrete compared to speed). The four examples of *deagh astar* originate from three different sources. One of them does not fit this theory referring to distance. However, it is encountered in a poem, from the same writer as one of the other examples, and as such, does not necessarily follow the general rules of the language. There also might be an exception among the examples with *math* (Example i), but it may be ambiguous as well.

Example 80.

- a) *...bha e air **astar math** a chur às a dhèidh.* ‘...he had left a long way behind.’
- b) *...ged a chumadh sinn **astar math** eadar rinn is Loch a’ Bhaile Mhargaidh.*
‘...although we would kept a good/great distance between us and the Loch of Baile Mhargaidh’
- c) *...bha Murchadh **astar math** gu Galldachd.* ‘...Murchadh was a long way towards the Lowlands.’
- d) *Thug an rathad so sinn **astar math** a mach as a’ bhaile.* ‘This road took us a long way out from the town.’
- e) *...a tha a’ ruith troimh dùthchannan anns am faighear daoimein agus **astar math** de ùrlar a’ chuain aig bèul nan aibhnichean sin...* ‘...that runs through countries in which diamond and a good piece of sea floor can be found at the mouth of those rivers...’
- f) *Bha iad a nise a’ dèanamh **deagh astar**...* ‘Now they travelled at great speed...’
- g) *Le gaoth bho ’n ear dheas bha an **deagh astar** aice...* ‘With the wind from southeast it travelled at great speed...’ (i.e. the ship)
- h) *...Bha i **deagh astar** uap’.* (in a poem) ‘...it was a long way from them.’

- i) *Tha na ròidean anns a' chuid mhóir de'n Fhraing farsaing agus dìreach, agus dhèanadh càr **astar math** 's gun mhóran coileid orra...* 'The roads in a great part of France are wide and straight, and the car would travel at speed (/a good distance) and without much stir on them...'

By contrast, *àin math* and *deagh ain* seem to show different meanings without exception: *àin math* stands for 'appropriate time' (e.g. *Tha sinn an dochas gu'n toir gach ni a tha ain Freasdal a' toirt mu'n cuairt 'n a **ain math** fhein, luathachadh latha mor na siithe*. 'We hope that everything that the Goodness (i.e. Heaven/God) brings about, will bring the big day of peace closer in its own good time'; ...*chan e **àin math** a th' ann dha duine, tha cadal gad iarraidh*. 'it's not a good time for a man, sleep wants you'), while (*ain*) *an deagh ain* means 'in time, in its time' (*Thill sinn an **deagh ain** air son dinneir...* 'We returned in good time for dinner.'; ...*rainig iad an Druim-ghlas an **deagh ain***. 'they reached Druim-ghlas in good time.'; *Tha thu dìreach ann an **deagh ain**...* 'You were just in (good) time.'; *Cluinnidh sibh sin an **deagh ain***. 'You will hear that in (good) time/when its time comes.'), or *Nuair a tha sinn a' feitheamh an latha anns ain bi barrachd smachd againn air ar dòigh-beatha fhéin ann an Albainn, 'se **deagh ain** a th' ann beachdachadh air an inbhe 's air an obair tha gu bhith aig a' Ghàidhlig 's na tha fuaighte rithe ann ain beatha ar dùthcha*. 'When we are waiting for the day when we'll have more control over our own lifestyle in Scotland, it's a **good time** to consider the status and work that Gaelic is going to have and which is attached to it in our country's life.' This latter example occurs in the only formal text among the relevant tokens. (See also *deagh dhuine* meaning 'the right man/person' as opposed to *duine math* for 'good/religious man/person' – Example 58 at the beginning of section 4.2.)

4.2.6. Variation as a stylistic device

Writers/storytellers intend to avoid redundancy to make their work more colourful and expressive. This sometimes results in the use of both combinations in the same context. We have already seen a kind of variation in the case of *rùn*. *Deagh shlàinte* 'good health' is often encountered in the conventionalised expression meaning 'Cheers!' (also (*air*) *do dheagh(-)shlàint(e)* "(to) your good health"), but it also occurs literally as (*ain*) *an deagh shlàinte* 'in good health', whereas I have come across *slàinte mhath* only in a dialogue, where the salutation is repeated several times in a row:

Example 81.

'Ar deagh shlàint,' arsa Coinneach. 'To our health,' said Kenneth.

'Slàinte mhath.' 'Cheers.' (lit. "Good health.")

‘*Slàint.*’ ‘Cheers.’ (lit. “Health.”)

This suggests that *slàinte mhath* appears here as a device to avoid repetition.

4.2.7. Register

Eòlas math can mean ‘good acquaintance’ beside ‘good knowledge’ (e.g. ...*a lionadh le iomradh air an eòlas mhaith agus an daimh dhiamhair a bha eadaruinn*... ‘...to fill it with reference to the good acquaintance and the deep friendship that was between us...’). However, according to the majority of examples, the word choice may have much more to do with a change of register: I have found *deagh eòlas* in novels, other literary texts and prefaces for prose and poems, whereas *eòlas math* mainly occurs in more traditional sources (narratives, autobiography), which might suggest the preferred use of *deagh eòlas* in a higher register.

Example 82.

- a) *Chuir sinn an deagh eòlas air mu-thràth, nuair a bha e am paraist a’ Bhàigh a Tuath.* ‘We became well acquainted with him already when he was in the parish of Bàigh a Tuath.’
- b) *Ged a tha deagh eòlas mu thràth air òrain Dhòmhnail Ruaidh Chorùna ’na eilean fhèin...* ‘Although Dòmhnall Ruadh Coruna’s songs are already well-known on his own island...’
- c) *Nach eil maireann ach air an robh deagh eòlas againn.* ‘Who is deceased but whom we knew well.’
- d) *...aig an robh an deagh eòlas air cànan nam Frangach...* ‘...who knew the language of the French well...’
- e) *bha deagh eòlas aca air Jock a-nis* ‘now they knew Jock very well’

Example 83.

- a) *Bha eòlas math agam air Mìcheal Dhòmhnail...* ‘I knew Mìcheal Dòmhnall well...’
- b) *Riamh on a b’ urrainn domh coiseachd, bha eòlas maith agam orra, an dà chuid anns na h-eileanan agus aig tir-mòr.* ‘Ever since I could walk, I’ve known them well, both on the islands and on the mainland.’

The conservative spelling of *eòlas maith* in the first example above and in Example 83b is also indicative of high register. The spelling *maith(e)* can be encountered in texts from the early 20th century, in narratives and other traditional texts, as well as in religious and official texts. It is very probably related to the age of the speaker (i.e. representing the

standard of their period), and it often has a religious connotation (consider the words occurring with *maith(e)* in the corpus: *duine maith* ‘virtuous, religious man’, *boireannach maith* ‘virtuous, religious woman’, *Iosa mhaith* ‘good Jesus’, *dòchas maith* ‘good hope’, *rùintean maithe* ‘good intentions’, *(dèanamh) nithean maithe* ‘(doing, carrying out) good/religious deeds’, *smuaintean maithe* ‘good/religious thoughts’).

The default adjective with both *dòchas* ‘hope’ and *aobhar* ‘reason’ is *deagh*, as they both represent abstract concepts. The 2 tokens for *adhbhar math* (repetition from the same text) occur in religious context, and the few examples for *dòchas ma(i)th* may show the same tendency (see Example 57 in the introductory part of section 4.2).

Example 84.

*Tha mi creidsinn g’eil Dia ann... ’s mi dh’fheumas... ’s chan e mhàin gun chruthaich e an saoghal ’s an domhainn, ach gu robh **adhbhar math** aige airson sin a dhèanamh... gu robh **adhbhar math** air a chùl.*

‘I believe that there is God... and I have to... and not only that he created the world and the universe, but that he had a good reason to do that... that there was a good reason behind it.’

In general, *math* is associated with religion when connected to words as *duine*, *leabhar* and *nì*. In the case of *duine math*, it is difficult to distinguish between the meanings ‘religious/ virtuous man’ and ‘good man’, as their connotation is overlapping, both showing a similar distribution in the corpus (cf *Duine maith anns a h-uile dòigh* ‘A good/Christian man in every respect’). On the other hand, *duine math* often occurs in religious texts, while both occurrences of *deagh dhuine* is found in novels, in one of them referring to ‘the right man’ as opposed to *duine math* ‘a good man’ in the same novel (see the introduction to section 4.2 for discussion). Furthermore, all 6 tokens for the plural *daoine math(a)/maithe* show religious connotation (e.g. “*daoine maithe*” an là “‘Christian/religious people/clerks’ of the day”).

Example 85.

a) *Cha ’n urrainn daoine eile – ministeirean, éildeirean, daoine maithe, sagartan de sheòrsa air bith – deanamh air ar son na ’s urrainn Dia a-mhàin a dheanamh.*

‘Other people – ministers, elders, Christian people/clerks, priests of any sort – cannot do for us what only God can do.’

b) *Agus an uair sin, dh’fhaighnich iad dha Iain an deigheadh e ann. Bha aon àite eile air a’ bhàta agus bha Iain aon uair anns an Oilthigh, agus mar sin ’s e **deagh dhuine** a bhiodh ann air an sgioba bheag aca.*

‘And then they asked Iain if he would go (there). There was one more space on the boat and Iain was once at University, and therefore he would be a good man in their small crew.’ (Example 58 repeated here.)

- c) “... *ciod e thàinig oirbh gu’n cuireadh sibh a leithid de mhuighin ann an Éireannach?*” “*Nach gòrach thu,*” *fhreagair a mhaighstir,* “*tha na h-Eireannaich mar mhuinntir eile, droch dhaoine ’s daoine maithe* ’nam measg. “...what came over you that you would put such faith in an Irishman?” “Don’t be foolish,” replied his master, “the Irish are like other folks, bad people and good people (/non-religious and religious) among them/mixed.’

I have encountered three tokens for *leabhar math*, one with capital letters (*Leabhar Math*), referring to the Bible, a plural (*leabhraichean matha*), with the meaning ‘religious books’, and a third example, which apparently contrasts with *leabhar diadhaidh* ‘divine book’, therefore it may stand for ‘good book’, rather than ‘religious book’ (although in the context of religion), as we can see in the paragraph quoted below:

Example 86.

Tachraidh tu ri lighichean is ministearan is luchd-teagaisg air an aithnich thu sa’ mhionaid nach do leugh iad rud ris an canadh tu leabhar math riamh; tha dusanan mhinistearan san tìr le sgealpaichean làn de sheann diadhachd thioram, ’s de shearmonan mòra, nach robh ro mhath riamh, gun ghuth air an latha ’n diugh, ’s chan fhaigh thu leabhar air bonn an tighe nach eil “diadhaidh”! Thig eòlas, is eòlas nas firinniche – air gnè na beatha so, ’s air nàdur a iuinibhears, an diugh gu h-àraidh, bho thaobhan eile seach iad sud; ’se sin a fhuair mise a mach co-dhiùbh. “Leugh gu leòr “diadhachd”!” ars iadsan rium sa’ chonaisde; ach obh, obh, airtneal an leughaidh ud!

‘You meet doctors and ministers and teachers about whom you know at once that they have never read (lit. “didn’t read”) anything that you could call a good book; there are dozens of ministers in the land with shelves full of dry old theology, and of big sermons, which were never too good, let alone nowadays, and you won’t find a book anywhere in the house that is not “religious”! Knowledge, and knowledge of the truth – about matters of this life, and about the nature of the universe, especially today, comes from places other than those; that’s what I (have) found anyway. “Read a lot of “religion”!” they said to me at college; but, oh dear, what dreary reading that was!’

With regard to *Nì Math~nì math* (both written with capitals and without), the singular refers to ‘God~god’ in all cases, whereas the plural *nithe/nithean maith(e)* means ‘good

things’ or maybe ‘good deeds’, but all 6 tokens with the old-fashioned spelling *maith(e)*, and mostly in religious texts. It would be interesting to see if *math* (or *maith*) occurs more commonly in the Bible than the preceding adjective *deagh-*.

4.3. Questions to native speakers

The suggested explanations could be checked with native speakers – for instance, whether placing *deagh* in front of a word instead of qualifying it with *math* will conceptualise it, or whether an example with *deagh* or *math* will be more emphatic, etc. It would be good to find out what the difference is between *fior x math* and *fior dheagh x*.

Hyphens in spelling may be good indicators of a different stress pattern (probably of initial stress). However, not only is this uncertain, but some writers may not bother with it, or may be inconsistent in indicating their pronunciation in spelling. Dialectal variation could also be examined with the help of informants, as the corpus has proved to be rather confusing in this respect.

4.4. Summary

The data analysed in this chapter has indicated that *deagh-* is related to conceptuality, while *math* to tangibility; and that *deagh-* may be used in subjunctive utterances (subjectivity) - especially in time expressions or with abstract concepts. A great number of examples show that emphasis may play an essential part in the use of the preceding adjective *deagh-*; regarding register, in religious texts *math* (as well as the older form *maith(e)*) is a more commonly used adjective. We have seen that *deagh fhios* may exhibit an emphasised meaning as opposed to *fios math* ‘good knowledge’, whereas collocations such as *deagh charaid* ‘good friend’ carries a specific, lexicalised meaning (i.e. a person who is close to someone) as opposed to adjectival phrases such as *caraid math* ‘a good friend’, in which the quality is more salient (i.e. the behaviour as a friend). In certain cases the use of a different adjectival type even introduces a meaning change (cf *deagh astar* ‘good speed’ vs *astar math* ‘good distance’). Sometimes the choice can be explained by stylistic reasons, as to avoid unnecessary repetition of the same adjective.

In the next chapter I turn to the adjectives with the opposite meaning ‘bad’: namely to preceding *droch-* and plain adjective *dona*.

5. *Droch-* and *dona* ‘bad’

In this chapter I analyse the data for *droch-* and *dona*. Since the number of the tokens for these adjectives were considerably lower, I focus on case studies of individual words, such as *rud* ‘thing’, *duine* ‘man; person’, *àite* ‘place’, *bean* ‘wife; woman’, *boireannach* ‘woman’, *tinneas* ‘illness, disease’, *galar* ‘illness, pain’, etc, qualified both by *droch-* and *dona*.

5.1. Statistics and function

Droch is used much more commonly than *dona*. I have found 568 tokens for *droch*, from which 245 represent different types, and 41 examples for *dona*, with 23 different types (3 of which are names). How these occurrences are distributed between the different types, is shown in Table 6.

Table 6.

<i>droch:</i>		<i>dona:</i>	
number of types	occurrence	number of types	occurrence
1x	154	1x	18
2x	37	2x	2
3x	16	3x	1
4x	10	4x	1
5x	4	12x	1
6x	5		
7x	6		
8x	4		
10x	2		
12x	2		
13x	1		
15x	1		
17x	1		
19x	1		
20x	1		

Referring to the statistics, the mean for *droch* is 2.3184, the standard deviation is 2.8935, which means that the combinations which are frequent enough for analysis (over 5.2119 tokens) are as follows:

20 – ***droch nàdur***~ *droch-nàdur*~*droch nàdar* ‘bad nature, bad temper’

19 – ***droch dhaoine***(e) (and the sg *droch(-)dhuine*~*droch duine*) ‘non-Christians; bad people or criminals’

17 – ***droch-bhea(i)rt***~*droch bhea(i)rt*~*droch-bheirt* ‘wickedness’

15 – ***droch rud***~*droch-rud* ‘a bad issue; crime; devil’

13 – **droch shìd(e)**~*droch-shìde* ‘bad weather’

12 – **droch fhacal**~*droch-fhacal* ‘abuse’, **droch-àite**~*droch àit* ‘a bad place; hell’

10 – *droch rùn* ‘bad intention’, *droch dìol* ‘bad treatment’

8 – *droch smuain(tean)* ‘bad thought(s)’, *droch shùil* ‘evil eye; glare’, *droch ainm* ‘bad name/reputation’, *droch fheum* ‘bad need’

7 – *droch amharas* ‘bad suspicion/doubt’, *droch bhean* ‘bad wife’, *droch chleachdadh* ‘bad habit/custom/usage’, *droch chomharra(dh)* ‘bad sign’, *droch sgeul* ‘bad story/information’

6 – *droch aimsir* ‘bad weather’, *droch bheus* ‘bad character/moral’, *droch chliù* ‘bad reputation’, *droch naidheachd* ‘bad news’, *droch thìde* ‘bad time/weather’

In the case of *dona*, I had 249 tokens originally, from which I have removed 208 examples for the following reasons: 146 show either predicative or adverbial usage – some of these stand as a postmodifier (in coordination with *math: fhathast a’ dùsgadh ’s ag ath-nuadhachadh iomadh tachartas, math is dona is meadhanach* ‘still waking and renewing many events, good and bad and moderate’; *gach cleas – math no dona* ‘every trick – bad or good’), or once as a repetition (*Tha thu dona, dona*. ‘You are bad, bad.’); in 5 cases *dona* is used as a noun (e.g. *dèanamh math no dona* ‘doing good or bad’); Table 7 lists the occurrence of *gu dona* and that of the various forms of *is dona*. The sources also contained examples like *Thig crìoch air gach nì, co dhiu ’s math no dona e, ...* ‘Everything comes to an end (lit. “an end will come to everything”), no matter if it is good or bad...’; ...*math no dona comunn ’sam bitheadh e...* ‘...may it be good or bad company...’; ... *Ma’s math no dona a ghné*. ‘...no matter if his manner is good or bad.’; furthermore, 10 occurrences of *cho dona* in expressions like *a cheart cho dona, aig/air/le/san cho dona (dheth) ’s/is, dè cho dona is...*, etc.

Table 7.

gu dona	19
cha bu dona	4
's dona	2
gum bu dona	2
nach dona	1
nach bu dhona	1

I have removed all phrases which contain intensifiers/adverbs: *càil uabhasach dona* ‘anything terribly bad’, *galar fìor dhona* ‘a really bad illness’, *tìm uamhaidh dona* ‘a dreadfully/terribly bad team’; *rud cho dona* ‘such a good thing’ (3); *gun là idir dona* ‘without a bad day at all’. Most adverbs with *dona* (*glè dhona* ‘very bad’,

uabhasach/uamhasach/fuathasach dona ‘terribly/awfully bad’, *buileach dona* ‘completely bad’, *gu math dona* ‘rather bad’, etc) occur in predicative/adverbial phrases (see Example 87).

Example 87.

- a) *Cha robh an t-acras idir cho fìor dhona nis.* ‘Now the hunger wasn’t so really bad at all.’
- b) *Cha robh cùisean idir buileach cho dona.* ‘Things weren’t so utterly bad at all.’
- c) *an aimsir dìreach rud beag ro dhona* ‘the weather just a little bit too bad’
(predicative phrase without substantive verb)

On the other hand, I have retained instances of: coordinative expressions/phrases (e.g. *ainglean math is dona* ‘good and bad angels’, *gu crìch math no dona* ‘to a good or bad end’); where the qualified noun is related to another word (*boireannach dona Crìosdaidh* ‘a bad Christian woman’)⁴⁰; listings (*daoine mosach, dona, dalma* ‘bold, bad, nasty people’ and *a’ bhean dhona shocharach gun chéill* ‘the bad silly, senseless woman’); and nicknames (see below).

The mean for *dona* is 1.7826, and the standard deviation 2.3023, which gives the limit of 4.0849 for relevantly frequent coordinates. This would mean that *duine dona* is the only combination worth examining. Since the numbers for *dona* are so low, this calculation is probably not significant enough; however, consulting Table 6, *duine* is apparently the only salient coordinate partner for both *droch*- and *dona*.

11 – *duine dona* ‘grumpy/bad man’

As there are not so many tokens with *dona*, it is worth summarising what particular examples we have. There are 9 words occurring with *dona* but not with *droch* in the sources: 3 pronominal types (*rudeigin dona* ‘something bad’ (4), *càil dona* ‘anything bad’ (2), *tè dhona* ‘bad one’ (referring to a feminine noun) (1)); 2 with religious connotations (*diabhal dona* ‘bad devil’ (1), *ainglean math is dona* ‘good and bad angels’ (1)); a few loan words (*turn dona* ‘bad turn’ (1), *tìm dona* ‘bad team’ (1); see Example 88) – both *turn dona* and *tìm dona* occur in the same source, besides a lot more occurrences of attributive *dona* in this source; note also the adverb in the latter example (*tìm uamhaidh dona* ‘a dreadfully bad team’) – adverbs tend to be used with *dona*.

⁴⁰ I have encountered a similar structure to *boireannach dona Crìosdaidh* with *droch* as well: *droch staid eagail* ‘a bad state of fear’. (Note that *staid* ‘state’ is qualified by *droch* in all 6 tokens it occurs in.) The question is what *dona* in effect qualifies here: is it a woman who is bad and Christian, or does ‘bad’ refer to the whole phrase [Christian woman]? It would be also good to know how *droch bhoireannach Crìosdaidh* would be different, which makes a good question for native speaker investigations.

Example 88.

- a) *Bha an cù agam airson bliadhnachan. Ghabh e **turn dona**.* ‘I had my dog for years. He/It took a bad turn.’
- b) *Bha na brogaich againn, bha iad cluich ann am Baile an Todhair aig football agus ’s e an team aig Alness bha nan aghaidh agus, ò, bha **tìm uamhaidh dona** aca.* ‘We had the sturdy boys, they were playing football in Balintore and Alness’ team were against them, and, oh, they had a dreadfully bad team.’

Most loan words occur with *droch*:- *droch spiorad* ‘bad spirit’ (8), *droch stamag* ‘bad/painful stomach’ (3), *droch-mhess* ‘bad mess’ (2), *droch forecast* ‘bad forecast’ (1), *droch theans* ‘bad chance’ (1)), but *turn* and *tìm* combine with *dona*. *Dona* occurs with religious words, such as *diabhal dona* ‘bad devil’ (from the same source as *turn* and *tìm dona*); some of these are also coordinatives, used with *math* as antonym: *ainglean math is dona* ‘good and bad angels’, (*guidheachan math is dona* ‘good and bad promises’, i.e. ‘oaths and maledictions’); or note the above-mentioned *boireannach dona Crìosdaidh* ‘a bad Christian woman’. It can be encountered in nicknames, such as *Uilleam Dona* ‘Wicked Willy’; and, as we have already seen, it commonly accompanies *math* in coordinative expressions: *math is dona* (3), *math no dona* (2) (e.g. *sgial math is dona* ‘good and bad information/news’, *facal math no dona* ‘good or bad word (about someone)’, (*gu*) *crìch math no dona* ‘to good or bad end’. (Coordinatives are further discussed in section 5.2.5)). For this feature of *dona* the corpus contains 1 counterexample: *deigh agus droch thide* ‘good and bad weather’. Note that all expressions of time (2) and weather (29 altogether) stand with *droch*, without any exceptions.

Two occurrences have been left – these are *an t-eun dona* ‘the ugly, worthless bird’, a satiric reference to the earl of Huntly, i.e. to a person (in *C’ás a thàinig **an t-eun dona**? Taobh Dhun-Eideann ’s mach bho Lunnainn*. ‘Where does the bad bird come from? In Edinburgh’s direction and out of London.’) and *bàta dona* (in *Cha b’ e **bàta dona** a bh’ anns an RIB...* ‘The RIB wasn’t a bad boat.’). Both examples are from Lewis, the former is from a poem published in 1970, the latter dates from 2005. In the latter source collocates with *dona* include *Duine dona*. ‘Bad man.’ (in a dialogue reflecting an opinion – further discussed below, in section 5.2.1), and *rud/rudan/rudeigin dona* ‘something bad; bad thing(s)’, conveying a general, almost pronominal sense. *Droch* appears in 4 cases in this source, referring to something specific: *’s e **droch dhuine** a th’ annad* ‘you’re a bad man’, *mas e **droch sheòladair** a th’ annad* ‘if you are a bad sailor’, *droch mhuir* ‘stormy sea’, *droch forecast* ‘bad forecast’. (Interestingly, concerning the adjective ‘good’, the same

source contains *math* in many (tangible) phrases: e.g. *bàta math* ‘a good boat’, *seinneadair math* ‘a good singer’, *forecast math* ‘good forecast’.

In earlier sources (not later than the first half of the 20th century) *dona* seems to show a special meaning, extra quality added to ‘bad’: such as in ‘silly woman’, ‘grumpy man’, ‘dirty place’ (as discussed shortly). With regard to loan words, it may be an earlier form of usage (although this explanation is not valid for *droch spiorad* ‘bad spirit’ in various meanings, which can be found in sources from all dates – which may be due to its abstract sense). Again, just as in the case of *deagh* and *math*, dialect or, rather, individual style and preference seems to play a great part in word choice.

Intensifiers are not restricted to the plain adjective *dona*, as is the case with *math* (in contrast with *deagh*, which takes only *fior*). As we have seen above, most adverbs can be found in predicative sentences; however, as the number of tokens for *dona* is rather low, it can be assumed that *dona* is broadly used with adverbs (which could be further investigated by native speakers’ judgements). Concerning the preceding adjective *droch*, *fior* ‘truly, really’ often combines with it, just as in the case of *deagh*: e.g. *fior dhroch thìde* ‘really bad weather’, *fior dhroch dhuine* ‘really bad man’, *fior dhroch grèidheadh* ‘really bad treatment’, *fior-dhroch-chliù* (spelled with hyphens) ‘really bad reputation’ etc. The only example with *dona* is *galar fìor dhona* ‘(you’re in a) really bad pain’. *Droch* also occurs with the intensifier *seann* in two tokens – both from poems: *ar seann droch Nàmh* ‘our bad old Enemy’, *an seann droch shaoghal sin* ‘that bad old world’. I have also found one token with *uabhasach* ‘terribly, awfully’. However, in this example the word combining with *droch* is an adjective itself: *uabhasach droch-nàdurach* ‘terribly/awfully bad-tempered’. This means that *droch-nàdurach* can be considered as a true compound, as the adverb *uabhasach* does not qualify *droch* on its own, giving ‘awfully bad’, it intensifies the whole adjective *droch-nàdurach* ‘bad-tempered’. The hyphenated spelling also underlines its compoundhood. (Note also that *droch nàdur* ‘bad nature’ shows the highest occurrence among collocates with *droch*.)

Droch is also broadly used with verbal nouns (see Example 82) – often intensified with *fior* (e.g. *fior dhroch thòiseachadh* ‘a really good beginning’, *fior dhroch làimhseachadh* ‘really bad handling’). There is even an example with a participle: *...ri luchd-còmhnaidh nan ionadan droch mhuinte seo*. ‘...with the dwellers of these badly educated places.’ I have not encountered any verbal expressions with *dona* in my corpus.

Example 89.

- a) *gu'm b'fheàrr le Mac Fhraing teicheadh math, na droch fhuireach.* 'that Rankin preferred a bad flight/escape to a bad stay.'
- b) *Bothan-àiridh air dhroch thughadh* 'a badly thatched mountain hut/shieling'
- c) *Bha droch lùigeachdainn aige cuideachd dhan Phlughan ...* 'He also badly longed for Plughan...' (lit. "there was bad longing at/on him")
- d) *Tha droch crith (sic!) air tighinn nam ghlùinean ...* 'My knees have started trembling badly...' (lit. "a bad trembling has come into my knees")
- e) *chaidh a dhroch leòn /air a dhroch leòn* 'badly wounded'

(Note that *leòn* in Example e is not the same as *droch leòn* 'bad wounds', which is not a verbal noun (cf *gun d'fhuair feadhainn droch leòn* 'that some received bad wounds').)

All expressions of time and weather stand with *droch* as well ('weather': 13 *side*, 6 *tìde*, 6 *aimsir*, 4 *uair* (e.g. *Is tric a rug droch uair orra tighinn dhachaidh ...* 'They often got into bad weather coming home.' (lit. "bad weather often reached them")); 'time': 2 *àm* (see Example 90).

Example 90.

- a) *Droch àm gun teagamh, agus na bu mhiosa romhainn.* 'Bad time without doubt, and even worse ahead of us.'
- b) *... mar a theirig iomadach obair eile air feadh na rìgheachd as na droch amannan sin.* '...just as a lot more other jobs dried up throughout the kingdom in those bad times /i.e. between the two World Wars/.'

Beyond general observations, there is a number of other possible factors for the choice between *dona* and *droch-*, driven by the individual words as well as, presumably, dialect and personal preference. Bearing in mind the high productivity of *droch-*, I discuss the individual words which occur in both combinations in the following section.

5.2. Case studies

5.2.1. *Duine* 'man, person' (*droch*: 19, *dona*: 11)

The only word which is common with both *droch* and *dona* is *duine*. Both of these can mean 'bad man; bad person', *droch dhuine* seems to show the meaning 'non-Christian' or 'pagan' (as opposed to *duine math* – see section 5.2.3), and *duine dona* has the special meaning 'grumpy, unsatisfied person'. Regarding *droch* in combination with *duine*, a distinction can be observed between singular and plural: *droch dhaoine* refer to non-Christians, or bad men but with a religious connotation in all but one source (which refers to pirates ('people who are out of the law')), thus it arguably may carry the same meaning

after all); whereas *droch dhuine* mainly means ‘bad man’ (whose behaviour or intentions are not acceptable). The various meanings are listed in Examples 91 and 92 below:

Example 91.

a) ‘bad man/person’:

’S e droch dhuine a th’ annad, Hector. ‘You’re a bad man, Hector.’ (in a dialogue)

- [...] *Chòrd e rium a bhith a’ marcadh na tè ud. Cha do chòrd gèam rium a-riamh cho mòr. Bha agam ri tòrr shielding a dhèanamh, fhios agad?*

- *Duine dona.*

‘- [...] I enjoyed riding that girl. I have never enjoyed a game so much. I had to make loads of shielding, you know?’

- Bad man.’

“Oh, an diol-déirce truagh!”, ars ise. “duine dona! na bithibh a’ toir feairt air, car son tha sibh a’ dol a dh’éirigh gus am bi e faisg air an latha? A’ cosg soluis!”

“Oh, the miserable wretch!”, she said. “bad man! don’t pay him any attention, why are you going to get up before it is near daytime (i.e. why are you getting up before daylight)? Wasting (the) light!”

b) ‘criminal, villain’:

Tharruing e mu ’thiomchioll sgioba de dhroch dhaoine mar bha e féin agus ghoid iad air falbh leis an t-soitheach. ‘He gathered a crew of villains as he was himself and they plundered with the vessel.’

The first two examples under Example 91a are from the same source. Compare the second and the third examples, in which *duine dona* reflects the speaker’s criticism about someone (both are dialogues). *Droch* is common in qualifying sentences with the copula (like *Chan e droch oidhche a th’ ann* ‘It wasn’t a bad night’; *’S e droch isean a tha ’n sud* ‘That’s a bad lad’, lit. “bad chick”), whereas the copula occurs only twice with *rud dona*, once *rud cho dona* (*An e rud dona a tha ann!* ‘Isn’t it a bad thing /to do/’; *uaireannan chan e rud dona a tha sin* ‘sometimes that isn’t a bad thing’; *’S mathaid nach e rud cho dona a bhiodh ann.* ‘Perhaps it wouldn’t be such a bad thing’ – all three from the same writer, from Lewis), once with *diabhal* (religious connotation; although it refers to a man!): *An duine aice, ’s e diabhal dona a bha ann airson an liquor.* ‘Her husband, he was bad with drinking.’ /lit. “a bad devil for the liqueur”/, and once in *Cha b’ e bàta dona a bh’ anns an RIB...* ‘The RIB wasn’t a bad boat.’ (again, in *Na Klondykers*). Otherwise, *dona* is common in vocatives, non-verbal statements, or criticism: *Àite dona!* ‘A bad place!’; *Bean dhona, cha n-fhiù i,* / *Cuir g’ a dùthaich i dhachaigh!* ‘A bad woman/wife, she’s not worth

it, send her home to her country (i.e. place)!'; also: *Tapadh leat, a dhuine dona!* 'Thank you, bad man/non-Christian!' in the religious poem with the title *Fàilte an diabhail do'n droch dhuine* 'The devil's welcome to the bad man/non-Christian'. (There may be a similar distinction between *droch bhoireannach* and *bean dhona*, discussed in section 5.2.6.)

Example 91b occurs in a narrative about Paul Jones, *spùinneadair-mara oillteil* 'a dreadful pirate' (lit. "sea-robber"). It refers to people outside the law; however, its meaning is arguably the same as in Example 91a. (I have not encountered this specific meaning for *duine dona*.) Example 92a evidently refers to pagans as it is explained in the text itself, the other example is not so specific but still occur in religious contexts.

Example 92.

droch dhaoine as 'non-Christians, pagans':

- a) *An nis is ann air droch dhaoine a tha mo sgeulachdan anns a' cheud àite, sgeulachdan air buitsichean, firionn agus boirionn, na truaghain sin a bha an cò-chreutairean a' creidsinn a reichd an anam ris an Diabhul ...* 'Now my stories are about pagans in the first place, stories about witches, male and female, those poor souls whose fellow-humans believed they had sold their souls to the Devil...'
- b) *Droch dhuine ...E-fhéin 's an Glaisean, tha mallachd Dhé orra.* 'A bad man (i.e. not acceptable by religion, without faith) ...He himself and the Finch, God's malediction is on them.'

Both combinations may occur in more recent texts, although usually with rather similar meanings, which may not be what we would expect (see my discussion in section 4.2 about the parallel usage of *deagh* and *math*). It is interesting though that in the only case in which *deagh* and *math* were used to the same degree, I could not determine any distinction between the usage of *deagh chuimhne* and *cuimhne mhath*, although both never occurred in the same text. There may be a stage at which, if both collocates are used frequently enough, the speakers do not distinguish between them anymore, and either prefer to use only one variation, or retain/create a subtle – probably not compulsory – difference between them.

Example 93.

duine dona 'grumpy person'

Cha'n e 'n là math nach tigeadh, ach an duine dona nach fanadh. 'It is not that the good day wouldn't come, but that the bad person wouldn't wait for it.'

This special meaning of *dona* is present in a couple of texts from around the 70s, mainly proverbs. *Droch* may have a similar meaning, attested in a text from 1983; although, the meanings ‘grumpy’ and ‘bad man’ may overlap in this example (see Example 94 below).

Example 94.

Droch dhuine a bh’ ann am Paddy Manson – fear à Liverpool a bha cho buaireant’, greannach ri cat air lìon-beag! ‘Paddy Manson was a bad person – a man from Liverpool who was as annoying, bad-tempered as a cat on a fishing line!’

As the various connotations of *droch dhuine/duine dona* are very closely related (religion regards a bad person as non-Christian, just as an unsatisfied, ever-complaining person can be annoying in other people’s eyes, and therefore considered ‘bad’), these different meanings can all overlap, and in a number of cases it is hard to distinguish between them:

Example 95.

- a) *C’ ar son a tha slighe nan droch dhaoine a’ soirbheachadh?* ‘Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?’ (Jeremiah 12:1)
- b) *Cha’n e ’n là math nach tigeadh, ach an duine dona nach fanadh.* or *Chan e an là math nach tig, ’s e an droch duine* (sic!) *nach fhuirich ris.* ‘It is not that the good day wouldn’t/doesn’t come, but/it is that the bad person wouldn’t/doesn’t wait for it.’
- c) *Eil e a’s an teine mhór gu-tà? ...còmh’ ri na daoine dona, a’ dìosgail fhiacalan...* ‘Is he in the big fire though? ...together with the bad people/sinners, grinding (lit. “creaking”) his teeth...’
- d) ***Droch dhuine*** ...*E-fhéin ’s an Glaisean, tha mallachd Dhé orra.* ‘A bad man ...He himself and the Finch, God’s malediction is on them.’ (repeated)

In Example 95a *droch dhaoine* means ‘bad/evil men’, but with religious connotation (note that it occurs in the Bible). Example b is a proverb, in which both collocates are attested. It cannot be due to grammatical reasons though, since we might expect *droch* to occur with the more uncertain construction, which is the conditional in the first sentence as opposed to the future/habitual present in the second. In this example *duine dona* (as well as *droch dhuine*?) may refer to an unsatisfied, grumpy person who is always complaining; on the other hand, it may be only the proverb that describes a ‘bad man’ as being impatient. Example c and d appear in the same text. Concerning this fact, I assume there must be a subtle difference between them, although it is not clear in either case which meaning they are supposed to convey. *Droch dhuine* here may reflect a religious connotation according to the context, as well as *daoine dona* refer to non-religious people (sinners, the damned in

hell; note the character is ‘grinding/gnashing his teeth’). (There is one more plural example with *dona* besides Example c: ***Daoine mosach, dona, dalma*** ... ‘bold, bad, nasty people’. This token can be encountered in a poem, where it stands among other adjectives, qualifying the noun.) It is also worth noting that in 5 out of the 11 tokens *duine dona* is present in either vocative or non-verbal phrases.

5.2.2 Rud ‘thing’ (*droch*: 15, *dona*: 3)

All three examples for *rud dona* ‘a bad thing’ can be encountered in recent texts, where they have a very similar meaning to *rudeigin dona* ‘something bad’, which, carrying a pronominal sense, always stands with *dona* (see discussion in section 5.1 above). *Droch rud*, on the other hand, refers to something more specific – a ‘bad issue’, a ‘crime’; or to the ‘devil’ (religious connotation!), which senses are very similar to those of *droch dhuine*. In some cases (Example 99), *droch rud* has a similar meaning as *rud dona*: ‘a bad thing’ (connected to the words *iomadh, fìor, sam bith*; but also to *idir*).

Example 96.

rud dona ‘a bad thing, something bad’

- a) ...*chan e rud dona tha sin*. ‘...that’s not a bad thing.’
- b) *Bha i daonnan sona dòigheil nuair a bha rudan dona a’ tachairt*. ‘She was always happy and contented (even) when bad things happened.’
- c) ...*An e rud dona a tha ann!* ‘Is it a bad thing!’

Example a and b are from the same source; Example c appears in the same source as Example 97a, which thus represents a clear distinction between *rud dona* as ‘something bad’ and *an droch rud* meaning ‘the devil’ (note the article; in Examples 97 a and b ‘devil’ (or ‘demon’) is referred to with two different words).

Example 97.

an droch rud ‘the evil, badness’

- a) *Thàinig beagan dhen deamhain anns na sùilean aice a-rithis*. [...] *Thàinig an droch rud na sùilean a-rithis*. ‘A bit of the devil came into her eyes again. [...] The evil came into her eyes again.’)
- b) ... *làn dhen an droch rud, ’s air a riaghladh le deamhain*. ‘...full of badness, and governed by demons.’
- c) *Mun tug e freagairt gu toil dhith, fhuair an droch-rud greim air...* ‘Before he gave an answer to her satisfaction, the devil got hold of him...’

Example 98.

droch rud ‘bad business; crime, offence’

- a) *Bha fhios agam nach bitheadh Mgr MacPhàil an sàs ann an **droch rud** sam bith!*
‘I knew that Mr MacPhàil wouldn’t get involved in any bad business!’
- b) *Bha claisean na aodann a’ dèanamh eachdraidh air **droch rudan** a rinn e na là ...* ‘Grooves on his face told us about bad things he did in his days/time...’
- c) *...bha a’ chàin a bha sin a-rèir cho dona ’s a bha an **droch rud** a rinn e.* ‘...that tax/fine, was in proportion to how bad/serious the offence/crime was that he committed.’

Example 99, *droch rud* is understood as ‘a bad thing’, but in a more specific/tangible sense, similar to *rud dona* ‘something bad, anything bad’ – if *droch rud* (for other, grammatical reasons) is meant to refer to ‘anything bad’, it tends to combine with *sam bith* (see Example 98a and 101d).

Example 99.

droch rud ‘a bad thing’

- a) *Cha b’ e **droch rud** idir a bha air a bhith anns a’ chogadh dhaibhsan.* ‘The war had not been a bad thing at all for them.’
- b) *’S iomadh **droch rud** a ràinig do dhà chluais riamh ...* ‘Many bad things /have/ reached your two ears before ...’ (i.e. ‘you have heard about a lot of bad things in your life’)
- c) *’S fìor **dhroch rud** a th’ ann a dhol a phòsadh airson airgid...* ‘It is a really bad thing to get married for money...’
- d) *Bha mi airson nach éireadh **droch-rud** sam bith dhi...* ‘I didn’t want anything bad to happen /lit. “rise”/ to her...’

In Example a) *idir* may serve as evidence for *droch rud* referring to a more specific thing than *rud dona*, since *idir* mainly accompanies *dona* in predicative or adverbial phrases (see Example 100), whereas *rud* in *rud dona* is used in a more general, pronominal sense.

Example 100.

- a) *cha deach a’ chlann-nighean a ghoirteachadh glè dhona idir* ‘the girls weren’t hurt very badly at all’
- b) *cha ’n ’eil mo shliasaid idir dona* ‘my leg/thigh is not bad (i.e. painful) at all’
- c) *nach robh naidheachd idir cho fìor dhona ...* ‘the news weren’t so really bad at all...’

While Example 99 a and b may be explained by the forces of semantics, the choice for *droch-* may be driven rather by grammar in Example 99 c and d. In Example d the usage of *droch-* may be due to the conditional/subjunctive sense of the sentence (lit. “I was for that nothing bad would rise/happen to her”) (further discussion on this grammatical factor is provided in section 5.3). While Example 99d contains uncertainty, Example 98a above, with the very similar usage of *droch rud sam bith*, is conditional in a pure grammatical/semantical sense (it refers to an imaginary situation), which results in the same grammatical pattern. (In Example 99d the precise meaning of *droch-rud* is not completely clear (it may stand for ‘a bad business/thing’ as the earlier examples in Example 98) – note the use of a hyphen, which may serve as evidence for its more integrated sense.) Finally, the use of *droch-* in Example 99c can be accounted for by its co-occurrence with *fior* (which, at the same time, makes it more specific as well).

The fact that *rud dona* can be encountered in more recent texts and that *droch rud* has more meanings (which is also true for *droch dhuine*, whereas *duine dona* may have gained mixed connotations recently), may give the impression that *dona* is spreading and may be developing new senses.

5.2.3. Àite ‘place’ (*droch*: 12, *dona*: 1)

Droch-àite (mostly written with hyphen) shows the meanings ‘bad place’, or ‘hell’ (again religious connotation!), whereas *àite dona* appears to refer to the quality of a place (in the sense of ‘ugly, dirty’). This means that *droch-* – just as we have seen with *deagh-* – tends to be related to abstractions. (In the source, from which Example 101 b and c are taken, all three senses can be encountered.)

Example 101.

- a) ...*gu ìochdar ifrinn, dha’n droch àit*... ‘...to bottom of hell, to **hell**...’
- b) *Tha droch-àite ann an Loch Aoineort, struth, ’s e ’n Struth Beag an t-ainm a th’ ac’ air, agus tha e ruith aon seachd mìle ’san uair, nuair a tha e aig spìod.*
‘There is a **bad place** in Loch Aoineort, a stream, it is called the Little Stream, and it runs seven miles an hour when it is at speed.’
- c) *Àite dona! àite salach! àite fuathasach salach! Àite grànda!* ‘**A bad place!** dirty place! terribly dirty place! An ugly place!’

As it may have become clear from certain examples above, in the case of *duine* ‘man/person’, *rud* ‘thing’ and *àite* ‘place’, *droch* tends to carry the religious meaning in sources where both combinations occur (cf *droch spiorad* ‘bad spirit’ (in various senses) – all 8 tokens with *droch*). This a) may be surprising considering that in the case of *deagh*

and *math*, the plain adjective *math* tends to carry out this function; b) may account for the uneven distribution of *droch*- and *dona* in favour of *droch*-, if we assume that the choice between the plain and the preceding adjective here is driven by the aim to create a more salient contrast between *math* and *droch*-.

Example 102.

- a) *Tha na h-Eireannaich mar mhuinntir eile, droch dhaoine 's daoine maithe 'nam measg.* 'The Irish are like other folks, bad people and good people (/non-religious and religious?) among them/mixed.' (Example 85c repeated)
- b) *Bha e fada gu leòr nan tachradh e dhuin' a dhol a dhroch-àite. Nan tachradh e a dhuine dhol a dh'àite math, dh'fhaodadh e bhith coma ged a bhiodh dà bhliadhna air. Bha àiteachan dona gu leòr ann an àiteachan.* 'It was long enough if a person happened to go to a bad place. If a person happened to go to a good place, he might not care even if he had to be there for two years. Some places were bad enough.'
- c) *'S àite math an seo nam biodh esan as an droch-àite, e fhéin 's a bhean!* 'This is a good place if he were in hell /note the definite article!/, himself and his wife!' (Example 75a repeated)

(See a different explanation for Example b in section 5.3.) Also consider the proverb *Cha d' fhuair droch-ràmhaidhe ràmh math riamh.* 'A bad rower (has) never found a good oar.'

5.2.4. Latha 'day' (droch: 3, dona: 1)

Both *droch latha* and *latha dona* can refer to the weather (beside the more abstract meaning for *droch latha* (*làithean*), which can mean 'bad day(s) /in general/'. Interestingly, *droch latha* and *latha dona* refer to the weather in one and the same source. This brings us to a grammatical reason applied in the choice between *droch latha* and *latha dona* (already seen in the case of *duine* and *rud* /and also with *deagh*/). Due to its sense of abstraction, *droch* functions in a similar way to the subjunctive in other languages, whereas *latha dona* is more specific.

Example 103.

droch latha~latha dona 'bad day' /referring to the weather/

- a) ... *cha do lig e riamh linn a dhol a mach droch-latha, feumamaid fuireach a staigh leis na h-eich; ...* '...he never let us go out on a bad day, we had to stay inside with the horses; ...'

- b) *A h-uile **droch-là** a thigeadh, bhithinn-sa ag radha gu feum gu faigh sinn obair air choireigin a staigh an diu.* ‘Every bad day that would come, I would say that we would surely find some indoors job today.’
- c) *Ach bha dùil agamsa gu robh a h-uile h-àite cho dona siod, ach an ath-àite dha’n deach mise, cha robh chridhe agam dhol a mach **latha dona**, mi fhìn no na h-eich.* ‘But I expected that all the places there were so bad, but in the next place where I went, I did not have the heart to go out on a bad day, myself or the horses.’

All three examples in Example 103 are drawn from the same source. Note that the first two examples are not only in habitual past tense, but Example b also conveys a less tangible, “ever when it should have happened” meaning. This is not valid for the third example, which refers to days that actually happened. The plural in Example 104 (without a hyphen) refers to ‘bad days’ in a more abstract sense in that it does not refer to the weather.

Example 104.

droch làithean ‘bad days’

*Ach cha do thrèig mo mhisneachd mi, no mo dhòchas, ged a tha na **droch làithean** air a thighinn, is tanaig, le teanga ealant’, a’ sàinnsearachd rium bho gach còrnair...* ‘But my courage hasn’t left me, or my hope, (lit. “didn’t leave me”) although the bad days have arrived, and ghosts, with skilled tongue, are whispering to me from each corner...’

5.2.5. Coordination

facal (*droch*: 12, *dona*: 1), *sgeul* (*droch*: 7, *dona*: 1), *crìoch* (*droch*: 1, *dona*: 1)

Another factor triggering the choice for *dona* is coordination: as I have already mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, i.e. in section 5.1, a coordination between *math* and *dona* is fairly common (and I have encountered a sole example for *deigh agus droch* in my sources related to a weather expression: *deigh agus droch thìde* ‘good and bad weather’). Beside the 12 tokens for *droch fhacal* and 7 for *droch sgeul*, there is only one example for each with *dona*, exactly in the case when it coordinates with *math*. *Droch fhacal* means ‘a bad word (=bad opinion); abuse’, and it is common in the expression *gun ghuth(-)mòr no droch(-)fhacal* ‘without a loud /voice/ or bad word’ – once it occurs also in the similar *mi-bheus no droch fhacal* ‘ill moral or bad word’.

Example 105.

- a) ... *cha b' urrainn dhòmhsa no do d' fhear eile **droch fhacal** a ràdh mun déidhinn.* '... neither me or the two other men could say a bad word about them.'
- b) *Mar sin cha robh **facal math no dona** agam r'a sheachnadh ris a' chù.*
'Therefore I didn't have a good or bad word to avoid saying to the dog.'

Droch sgeul means 'bad information' or 'bad news' (and *droch sgeulachd* the same: e.g. *Chan aithne dhomh có-às a bha an léine, ach cha robh ball dhith nach robh bàrlagach luideach, agus 'se **droch sgeulachd** a bheireadh caoiltich riaspach, fheusagach, 's am falt air a ghearradh dhiu mu bhun, air trusgan na bu dealbhaich.* 'I don't know where the shirt was from, but it didn't have a part that wasn't tattered, shabby, and bearded, untidy, scraggy figures with their hair closely cropped, would have given a bad report of more attractive outfit.').

Example 106.

- a) ... *agus an dràs d' 's a rithist thigeadh neach-eigin air tìr a bheireadh **droch sgeul** dha air mar a bha ag èirigh don Eaglais, 's mar a bha na bràithrean air am marbhadh an siod 's an seo, agus an troimh-chèile a bha feadh an t-saoghail.*
'...and now and again somebody would come to land who would give bad news to him about what was happening to the Church, and how the brothers were killed here and there, and the turmoil that was throughout the world.'
- b) ... *Ach do bhrìgh gu' bheil **sgial math is dona** ri h-aithris mu thimchioll, thainig, mar an ciadna, dearcnadh a choslais bho chànain a' bhàird d' ar n-ionnsaidh.*
'...But since there are good and bad stories /lit. "there is good and bad story"/ to be told about him, an image of this kind also reached us /lit. "came to us"/ from the poet's language.'

Similarly, from the two tokens for *crìoch*, the coordinated one contains *dona*, while the other stands with *droch*:

Example 107.

- a) ***Droch-chrìch** ort!* 'Bad end to you!', i.e. similar to 'Get lost!'
- b) *Ach chan eil dad nach tig **gu crìch math no dona** e.* 'But there is nothing that does not come to a good or a bad end.'

5.2.6. ‘Bad woman’

bean (*droch*: 9, *dona*: 2) – *boireannach* (*droch*: 2, *dona*: 1)

From the two words meaning ‘woman’, in the case of *bean* a shift in meaning can be observed between its form with *droch* and that of *dona*: *droch-bhean* is quite common in proverbs or riddles, probably with the meaning ‘bad wife’ (see Example 108a), while the two occurrences of *bean dhona* appear to be very similar to *duine dona* in that they describe the quality of the person they are referring to – the first example in Example 101b is from a waulking song, in which *bean dhona* expresses the speaker’s opinion (just as in the similar examples for *duine dona* above (in Example 91a)); the second example here occurs in a list of qualifying features (also a description). Interestingly, the example for *boireannach dona* shows religious connotation, while *droch bhoireannach* means something like *bean dhona*, with the difference that it may convey a more specific, more integrated sense – referring to something more beyond the compositional meaning ‘bad woman’, to someone who teases and plays with men.

Example 108.

a) *droch-bhean*: ‘bad wife’

... *nach robh teaghlach ann ach e fhéin, nach robh aige ach **droch-bhean** nach deanadh sian* ... ‘... that he was the only one left of the family (lit. “that there wasn’t a family but himself”), that he didn’t have but a bad wife who wouldn’t do anything ...’

*Ceannsaichidh a’ h-uile fear an **droch-bhean**, ach am fear aig am bi i./Is urrainn do h-uile fhear/neach a cheannsachadh an **droch-bhean** ach an duine aig am beil i.*
‘Every man can control the bad wife, but the man who she belongs to (i.e. her own husband).’

*Ciod iad na ceithir nithean a’s miosa anns an domhain? [...] diubhaidh nan diubhaidh **droch bhean**./...diùghaidh an t-saoghail, **droch-bhean**.* ‘What are the four worst things in the world? [...] Worst of the worst is a bad wife.’/‘...the worst [thing] in the world, a bad wife.’

b) *bean dhona*: ‘bad/silly woman/wife’

...*Bean dhona, cha n-fhiù i,* ‘A bad woman/wife, she’s not worth it,
Cuir g’ a dùthaich i dhachaigh!... send her home to her country/place!’

‘N e sin a’ chomhairle a thug a’ bhean dhona shocharach gun chéill ort? ‘Was that the advice that the silly bad senseless woman gave you?’

Example 109.

a) *droch bhoireannach*: ‘bad woman’ /someone who is teasing men/

*Chan eil annamsa ach **droch bhoireannach**, agus cha bu chòir dhut gnothach a ghabhail ri mo leithid-sa.* ‘I’m just a bad woman, and you shouldn’t do business with my kind.’ /in a dialogue/

*... Seo am fear a dh’ innseadh dhàsan mu chunnart bho **dhroch bhoireannaich**, a thubhairt, ‘ga earalachadh, gun robh salachair agus truailleadh anns na liopan dearga.* ‘This is the man who would tell him about the danger of bad women, who said, warning him, that there was dirt and perversion in the red lips.’

b) *boireannach dona*

Boireannach dona Crìosdaidh. ‘a bad Christian woman’

– religious connotation

It is worth considering for a moment the distribution of *droch*- and *dona* conveying religious connotation. *Dona* occurs together with religious words in more recent texts (which might signify a spread of its usage?), and usually refers to people or anthropomorphic figures (such as *boireannach Crìosdaidh* ‘a Christian woman’, *diabhal* ‘devil’, *ainglean* ‘angels’ (- although note coordinative *math is dona* here!), as opposed to the more abstract *droch spiorad* ‘bad spirit’ in texts from all dates. (*Diabhal dona* actually refers to a living person who drinks too much.)

5.2.7. ‘Bad illness’

tinneas (*droch*: 2, *dona*: 1), *galar* (*droch*: 2, *dona*: 1)

The sources contain two different words for ‘illness’ qualified by *droch/dona*: *tinneas* and *galar* – both with very low occurrence. Again, a kind of meaning shift can be observed in the case of *tinneas*: in both tokens *droch thinneas* refers to illnesses/diseases which are lasting/finite or fatal (this would serve as evidence for the potential emphasising feature of preceding adjectives), whereas *an tinneas dona* refers to an illness which may pass by – may be ‘bad’, but not so serious eventually. (The intensifier sense of ‘bad’ is more important here: it only expresses the speaker’s opinion about the illness.) Alternatively, the definite article supports the explanation that *dona* forms part of more specific expressions. *Galar* ‘illness, great suffering’ conveys a more obscure meaning. According to the examples, *galar dona* represents the literal sense ‘bad illness’, while in *droch ghalair* the preceding adjective triggers abstraction, transforming the meaning into ‘suffering’ which may be caused even by love:

Example 110.

a) *droch thinneas* ‘bad/serious illness’

Ann an sgoil aon bhliadhna, bha balach againn air an robh droch thinneas. Nuair a dh’fhàsadh e meadhonach, bha e a’ call a mhothachaidh. ‘One year in school we had a boy who had a (very) bad illness. When he became (lit. “would become”) poorly, he lost (lit. “was losing his”) consciousness.’

Bha fios aig an dotair gu robh droch thinneas air Peigi Anna, ach cha b’ urrainn dha sin innse do dhuine beò. Cha b’ e briseadh-cridhe a thug bàs do Pheigi Anna idir mar a bha sinn a’ cluinntinn, ... ‘The doctor knew that Peggy Anna had a serious illness, but he couldn’t tell that to anyone /lit. “to no living person”/. It wasn’t a broken heart that caused Peggy Anna’s death at all as we heard, ...’

b) *tinneas dona* ‘bad illness/disease’

Bha mi cho toilichte thuigsinn gu’n do chuir Mgr. Padruig an tinneas dona ghabh e seachad, agus nach fhada gus am bi e cho slàn agus a bha e riamh. ‘I was so happy to understand that Mr. Patrick got over the bad illness he had, and it’s not long until he is (lit. “he will be”) as healthy as he ever was.’

Example 111.

a) *droch ghala(i)r* ‘bad illness’ (in an abstract sense)

“Am faca tu riamh cho neo-shunndach ’s a bha e falbh? Bha ’n droch ghalair air a shiubhal bho chionn greise; is rinn e an gnothuich air mu dheireadh...” ‘Did you ever see how unhappily he went about? A (lit. “the”) bad illness had pursued him for some time now...; and it (has) finally beat(en) him...’

“Gu sealladh... ’S e droch ghalair a th’ ort. Có ’n té?” ‘Goodness... You’re in a bad pain. /lit. “It’s a bad illness you have.”/ Who’s the girl?’

b) *galar (fior) d(h)ona* ‘a (really) bad illness’

FIABHRAS A’ CHAOLAIN, galar fìor dhona a gheibhear fhathast anns an dùthaich so mar thoradh air uisge truaillidh. “‘FEVER OF THE ENTRAILS”, a really bad disease that can be still got in this country due to/through contaminated water.’

Note the use of *fior* before *dona* (which is unusual according to our observations so far) – this may indicate that the abstraction firmly determines a kind of meaning shift in this word (i.e. *galar*).

5.3. Summary

The distribution of *droch* and *dona* allows us to make the following observations. In general, *droch*- is much more broadly used than *dona*, which means that *droch* is highly productive – it occurs even with verbal nouns. What we really need to ask is in what cases and why *dona* will be used. In collocations with the highest occurrence *droch*- tends to relate to morals (cf *droch nàdur* ‘bad nature’, *droch-bheairt* ‘wickedness’; *droch dhuine* as ‘bad people /who are out of the law/’, *droch rud* as ‘a bad issue or crime’; also see *droch fhacal/sgeul* ‘abuse’ or ‘bad information’, respectively); it may have religious meaning (in the case of *duine, rud, àite* (or cf. *droch spiorad* ‘bad spirit’); and it relates to time and weather. It also triggers abstraction, just like *deagh*. *Dona*, incidentally, seems to spread to new meanings, making the distinction more subtle. In earlier sources (first half of the 20th century) *dona* seems to appear with a well-distinguishable, specific meaning, or in coordinative phrases. It does show religious connotation together with *boireannach, diabolhal* (and maybe *ainglean*). The reason why it has not developed such a strong, exclusive religious meaning as *math*, might be explained by the contrast which can be enhanced by using a plain adjective (*math*) and a preceding adjective (*droch*) (instead of two plain adjectives) (e.g. *droch dhaoine ’s daoine maithe ’nam measg* ‘bad and good people among them’).

Regarding its current use, *dona* has a more basic, phrasal function, occurring in pronominal phrases (*rudeigin dona* ‘something bad’, *tè dhona* ‘a bad one /feminine/’, etc) and in grammatical structures (coordinatives, listings, following adverbs, vocatives) (*droch*, on the other hand, is more common in identifying sentences with ‘s e). Without doubt, dialect, register/style and personal preferences also contribute to the choice between *droch* and *dona*, which may further complicate the pattern of their use.

Expressions to which *droch* gives a new, individual (abstract) meaning (especially in contrast with *dona*), may be regarded as compounds (e.g. *droch rud* ‘devil’, *droch àite* ‘hell’, *droch bhoireannach* ‘bad/perverted woman’; perhaps *droch-bhean* as well – note it is always written with a hyphen, which may imply initial stress – its pronunciation as well as its semantics could be investigated with the help of native speakers). Likewise, when *droch dhaoine* evidently refers to ‘pagans’ (as in Example 92a), it may be considered a compound, or perhaps also *droch dhaoine* for ‘villain’ in Example 91b as well (the first example in 92a may reflect the same concept in a metaphoric sense – its compoundhood should depend on stress – a further matter to be investigated with the help of native speakers). Also note the hyphen in *droch-latha/droch-là* (from Example 103): although in this text it evidently creates a grammatical contrast with *latha dona*, since the source it

occurs in is a transcribed narrative, the hyphen should reflect its pronunciation, which, if true, means that *droch-latha* must be regarded here as a compound.

Considering abstraction and its religious connotations, *droch* contributes mainly to semantic shift. However, in some cases it may be triggered by grammatical forces, appearing in subjunctive-like, intangible sentences, related to verbs in the conditional or future/habitual present. In Example 112, I list once more the relevant tokens (also see Example 103 for a similar distinction between *droch-latha/là* and *latha dona*):

Example 112.

- a) *Bha fhios agam nach bitheadh Mgr MacPhàil an sàs ann an **droch rud** sam bith!*
'I knew that Mgr MacPhàil wouldn't get involved in any bad business!'
- b) *Bha mi airson nach éireadh **droch-rud** sam bith dhi...* 'I didn't want anything bad to happen to her...'
- c) *'S àite math an seo nam biodh esan as an **droch-àite**, e fhéin 's a bhean!* 'This is a good place if he were in hell, himself and his wife!'
- d) *Bha e fada gu leòr nan tachradh e dhuin' a dhol a **dhroch-àite**. Nan tachradh e a dhuine dhol a dh'àite math, dh'fhaodadh e bhith coma ged a bhiodh dà bhliadhna air. Bha àiteachan dona gu leòr ann an àiteachan.* 'It was long enough if a person happened to go to a bad place. If a person happened to go to a good place, he might not care even if he had to be there for two years. Some places were bad enough.'

The first example is not a subjunctive sentence of uncertainty; however, referring to an imaginary situation, the conditional may work in the same way. (Examples c and d are from the same source. However, in Example d, the choice for *droch* is apparently triggered rather by the contrast between *droch-àite* and *àite math*, or the factor of uncertainty should result in the use of *deagh àite* as well.)

An interesting shift in meaning can be observed in the case of *droch(-)shùil* (only with *droch* – probably due to its abstract meaning). Whenever it is written with a hyphen (3 times, twice with definite article, once also with capital *D*), it refers to 'the evil eye' (a curse) – a more abstract concept; when the hyphen is not used (5 times, but one should be written with a hyphen – used humourously), it means 'a baleful look' (which may come from the other meaning but expresses an everyday concept) – the former of these is evidently a compound. (It may be worth asking native speakers whether *sùil dhona* could refer to 'bad sight' (representing a more tangible meaning).)

Example 113.

a) *an droch-shùil* ‘the evil eye’

*Mar is beò mi chan ’eil mi creidsinn ann an **droch-shùil**, taibhs, no dà shealladh ...* ‘As much as I’m alive I don’t believe in evil eye, ghosts, or second sight...’

*Chan urrainn nach eil **an Droch-shùil** aig a’ Chuan Shiar!* ‘The Atlantic must possess the Evil Eye!’ (lit. “It cannot be that there isn’t the Evil Eye at the Atlantic Ocean!”)

*“[...] Dé an **droch shùil** a thug e ort?”*, arsa fear de na croitearan le lachan gàire. ““[...] What evil eye did he give you?”, said one of the crofters with a loud laugh.’

b) *droch shùil* ‘baleful look’

*Thug a’ sealgair, anns an dol seachad, **droch shùil** air.* ‘The hunter, passing by, cast a baleful look at him/scowled at him.’

A-measg a chèile, tilgeamaid gach pòg

Air eagal gun cùinnt eud ar n-ionmhas mòr,

*’S gun cuir e **dhroch shùil** oirnn,*

A Mhairead Og.

‘Between ourselves, let’s throw away every kiss
in fear that jealousy count our great treasure,
and that it cast its baleful look on us,
Young Margaret.’

5.4. Lack of lenition after *droch-*

In contrast with *deagh-*, after *droch-* a number of words has remained unlenited in my sources. Most of these have an initial [k]: e.g. *droch cleachdadh* ‘bad habit’, *droch cainnt* ‘abuse’, *droch caithe-beatha* ‘bad lifestyle’, *droch crith* ‘bad trembling’, etc. (Most collocate types with initial *c* occur both with and without lenition; and tokens with lenited [χ] are more common.) I have also encountered an example for unlenited initial [g]: *droch grèidheadh* (2) ‘ill-treatment’ (again, *droch ghrèidheadh* also occurs). In these two cases, velar sounds dissimilate: as *droch* ends in a velar fricative, these words maintain the (velar) stop they begin with). In one loan word, initial /f/ is not lenited: *droch forecast* ‘bad forecast’.

5.5. Questions to native speakers

It needs to be checked whether plural and singular result in different meanings in the case of *droch dhuine/dhaoine* and *duine/daoine dona*. Also, why is my only example for *eun* ‘bird’ and *bàta* ‘ship, boat’ with *dona*? – It would be interesting to know how the different speakers would use these words. Might *dona* stand with names of animals, for instance?

To sum up, just as we saw in the case of *deagh-*, *droch-* tends to accompany abstract concepts, and it even shows the phenomenon of subjectivity when accompanied with *latha*. On the other hand, *droch-* is more widespread than *deagh-*, which might be due to the contrast with *math* in religious contexts.

In the next chapter we look at the Scottish Gaelic words for ‘old’.

6. *Seann*-, *aosta* and *sean* ‘old’

This chapter deals with the adjective ‘old’ in Scottish Gaelic, which has many forms, including the preceding adjective *sean(n)*- and the plain adjectives *sean* and *aosta*, both of which show predicative as well as attributive functions in the corpus.

6.1. Data

In the case of the adjective ‘old’, Scottish Gaelic distinguishes the preceding (attributive) adjective *sean(n)*-, attributive and predicative *aosta*, and *sean* in predicative, or occasionally attributive usage. Occurrences of *seann*-, *aosta* and *sean* are shown in Table 8, where the first column shows the total number of tokens produced by *AntConc*, the second only relevant tokens without words like *seanchaidh* ‘storyteller’, and the third contains examples that are relevant for the study (i.e. I have left out all predicative tokens for instance). In the case of *sean* and *aosta*, I give the numbers of predicative and attributive tokens separately.

Table 8.

	all tokens	relevant tokens	relevant examples (preceding adjective)	different types
seann	1309	1284	1284	
sheann	159	153	153	
sean(a)	1065	844	424	
shean(a)	645	543	439	
seanna	5	5	5	
sheanna	1	1	1	
			2306	479

		<i>predicative</i>	<i>attributive</i>	
sean		65	13	
shean		8	5	
		73	18	14

aost(a)	23	14	5	
aosd(a)	226	194	93	
	249	208	98	59

With regard to ‘old’, the corpus contains formally three different main types to deal with: the preceding adjective *sean(n)*-/seana-/seanna-, its form *sean* following nouns, and the plain adjective *aost(a)* (generally written as *aosd(a)* in sources published before 1999). (I use *seann*-, *sean* and *aosta* as shorthand for these formal categories respectively.) *Seann*- has given 2306 relevant tokens, which can be divided into 479 types (thus vocabulary

richness is: 20.8%). I have also found 3 tokens for *leth-sheann* ‘middle-aged’, all with *duine*.

Aosta shows predicative sense in 208 cases (12 of which are back-references⁴¹, and 3 comparatives), and I have also excluded the 6 superlative phrases to maintain consistency. I have encountered 2 examples with *coimhead* ‘look’ and 24 phrases with *fàs* ‘grow, become’, 4 nouns (e.g. *An òige leis an aosd* ‘The young with the old’; *eòlach air a’ bheag ’s air a’ mhór, air aosda ’s air òg* ‘knowing the small and the big, (the) old and (the) young’; *Thuir Aosd ’nan Làithean rium* ‘The Old of the Days told me’), and 3 occurrences of *dè cho aosda/aost* ‘how old’. From the 249 tokens 98 have proved to be attributive and thus included in the analysis. In turn, this has been made up by 59 types (60.2%). The difference of percentages might indicate that *aosta* is preferred to be used in certain collocates, as opposed to *seann-*, which is much more productive.

In the case of *sean* (apart from its appearance as a preceding adjective), 5 (twice repeated) occurrences stand in place of *sin* (see Example 114); I have counted 53 predicative examples (including *ro shean(n)* ‘too old’, *(fada) na bu sheana* ‘(by far) older’; *cho sean* ‘so old’, *sean gu leò(i)r* ‘old enough’, *leth-shean* ‘middle-aged’, and back-references (e.g. *Domhnall MacGilliosa (sean)* ‘Donald MacLeish (senior)’).

Example 114.

- a) “*Sean; sean!*” *arsa Cailean*. “*Cha bu dona ’n tòrn a rainn (sic) e.*” “‘So; so!’ said Colin. “It wasn’t a bad job he did.” (lit. “That; that!”)
- b) *Tha lùidhte gu ’n tachair sean cuideachd mu ’m fàg sinn an saoghal* ‘... that that will also happen before we leave the world’
- c) “*Tha sean fìor, tha sean fìor*” “‘That is true, that is true’”

There is 1 token with *coimhead* and 19 expressions with *fàs*. Neither have I included coordinations as I was not sure whether I should treat them as nouns or back-references – I have counted 63 coordinatives with *sean* (most of them with *òg* ‘young’, some examples with *nuadha* or *ùr* ‘new’; including *uamhasach sean no uamhasach òg* ‘terribly old or terribly young’ and *sean ma tha thu no òg* ‘if you are old or young’). (I discuss coordinatives in section 6.1.2.) Furthermore, I have not counted *o shean* (52 occurrences), *a shean* (1) and *bho shean* (11) ‘of old’. As a result, 18 attributive phrases remained, in 14

⁴¹ A back-reference gives further qualities of a noun already mentioned, normally in the same sentence. A back-reference can be interpreted as a predicative expression without the substantive verb (e.g. *bha grunnan math dhaoine, og agus sean, an sin a’ coinneachadh a’ bhàta* ‘there was a good number of people there, young and old, waiting for (lit. “meeting”) the boat’; *Bha seann duin’ ann, gu math aosda liath* ‘There was an old man, quite old (and) grey’), or it may be adverbial occasionally: *Bha Uilleam, sean, sgìth, a’ coimhead troimh ’n uinneig* ‘William, old and tired, was looking through the window’.

different types. 11 of these collocations have occurred once, 2 twice, and 1 of them three times; however, many of these are coordinatives. Excluding coordinatives, only 7 phrases remain which contain attributive *sean*, and are worthy of analysis. As all of these happen once, and most of them in poetry (*creathail shean* ‘old cradle’, *boile shean* ‘old passion’, *brataich shean* ‘old flag’ (dat.)) *sean* may be neglected as adjective which follows its noun. *Fion sean* ‘old wine’ appears in a riddle which also contain rhymes:

Ciod iad na ceithir nithean a’ s miosa anns an domhain?

Diubhaidh teine, feirn ur,

Diubhaidh dighe, fion sean,

Diubhaidh duine, mi-run,

Agus diubhaidh nan diubhaidh droch bhean.

‘What are the four worst things in the world?

the worst of fire is that of a new land,

the worst of drink, is old wine,

the worst person, ill-will,

and the worst of worst [is] a bad wife.’

There are three tokens from prose. *Beairt shàmhach shean* ‘an old quiet machine’ occurs in *An t-Aonaran* (with Lewis Gaelic), which represents a rather poetic language (see further discussion in section 6.1.1). (In this source we encounter one example of the preceding adjective in *seana mhaighstir-sgoile* ‘old school-master’, whereas the rest of the tokens are qualified with *aosda*.) One of the remaining tokens includes a contrast with *òg* ‘young’: *Dh’ fhaodadh a’ chàraid òg (no is dòcha a’ chàraid shean)* ‘Maybe the young couple (or perhaps the old couple)’; and it may share two features with the last example, *(bho) bhodach sean bochd* ‘(from) a poor old man’, namely that it originates from Skye (the utterer of the latter (the imaginary writer of the correspondence) comes from Skye; this is also true of the riddle above), and that it has possibly⁴² been written in the early part of the 20th century. Attributive, plain adjective *sean* may represent an old-fashioned use, considering that 3 of 7 examples date from the early 20th century. The date of origin of 3 is uncertain, whereas the remaining 1 token is from Lewis (1976) (just as *na linntean neo-shean* ‘the recent (lit. “not old”) centuries’ from 1971, and *searbhanta leth-shean* ‘a middle-aged servant’ from 2001).⁴³ Regarding *(bho) bhodach sean bochd*, its source

⁴² The book in which it was published contains texts written between 1903 and 1970.

⁴³ Preference of the plain adjective *aosta* in Lewis is also common, as discussed later, in section 6.1.1 (see also 6.2 and 6.3.1).

contains 4 tokens of coordinative *sean* as well. The sources of both latter examples show plenty of occurrences of preceding *seann*-.

Among my examples with preceding *seann*-, I have included 32 names or nicknames (e.g. *sean Chatriona*, *seann Johan*, *seann MhacGilliosa*, *seann Ghuaderini*, *seana Mhàiri Logan*; *Seann Choinneach* (where *seann* is part of the name!), *seann Ruairidh Dhomhnaill Chaoil*, *seann Fhear Ghrianail* ‘old Man of Grianail’, *seann Rìgh Cuibhle* ‘old King Wheel’; *Sean Cheatharnaich (Braighe) Lochabair (Iain Odhar)*); also with titles: *seann Mhgr. Curdie* ‘old Mr Curdie’, *seann Dotair Ros* ‘old Dr Ross’; and one Biblical name: *seann Mhaois* ‘old Moses’), 23 placenames (*seann Rhudha Stòrr* [sic!], *seann Dùn-Àluinn*, *seann Albainn* ‘old Scotland’)), 20 nationalities or origins (e.g. *seann Eiphitich* ‘old Egyptians’, *seann Lochlannaich* ‘old Scandinavians/Norsemen’, *sean Ghearmailteach* ‘an old German’, *seann Sgitheanaich* ‘old people from Skye’, *seann Hiortaich* ‘old people from St. Kilda’, *seann Ghàidheil* ‘old Gaels’) and 80 languages (e.g. *seann Ghreugais* ‘ancient Greek’, *Seann Innis-Tilis* ‘Old Icelandic’, *sheann-Ghaeilge/Sean-Ghàidhlig* ‘Old Irish’, *seann Chuimris* ‘Old Welsh’); which add up 155 proper names in 2306 tokens (6.7%). Among attributive *aosta*, I have counted 1 name (*Aonghas aosda* ‘old Angus’), and 3 placenames (*na Cuimrigh aosd* ‘of old Wales’, *Nis aosda* ‘old Ness’, *Ayr aosda* ‘old Ayr’); i.e. 4 out of 98 tokens (4.1%). The plain adjective *sean* qualifies 1 word of nationality (*gach Gearmailteach sean is òg* ‘every German, old and young’), although this one could be counted as a predicative back-reference. (Although I have not found other proper nouns with the plain adjective *sean*, it has to be noted that there are very few tokens for this form to make proper statistics.)

I have also included coordinatives, and counted with both nouns, separately (e.g. *seann fhear agus bean* ‘old man and woman’, *seann bhàrdachd agus/is sgeulachdan* ‘old poetry and stories’; *bràithrean ’s peathraichean aosda* ‘old brothers and sisters’, *iomad òran aosda ’s rann* ‘many old songs and rhymes’); just as coordinatives of the adjectives (e.g. *duine aosd no òg* ‘old or young person’, *an fheadhainn thinn is aosda* ‘the old and sick ones’) and listings (e.g. *eaglais mhór, aosda* ‘an old, big church’). I have counted the genitive phrase *’na shloinn seanachaidh aosda* ‘in his old storyteller family’, lit. ‘family of storytellers’, with the base word in accordance with similar *seann shliochd rìoghail/bhàrdail* ‘an old royal/bardic lineage’.

I have counted *seann ana-miannan* (pl) (1) together with *seann-mhiann* (1) ‘old desire(s)’, *comharran* (pl) (1) with *comharradh* (1) ‘sign(s)’, *cleachdadh* (12) with *cleachdan* (pl) (3) and *cleachdainn* (6) ‘custom(s)’ (as in Example 115), *tugha* (1) with

tughadh (1) ‘thatch’, and *sgeulachd/sgialachd* (21) with *sgeula/sgiala* (3) ‘story’ (but not with *sgeul* (11) ‘story’).⁴⁴

Example 115.

- a) *a’ gléidheadh nan seann bheusan is nan seann chleachdan* ‘preserving the old virtues and old customs/habits’
- b) ... *nach eil e idir freagarrach no buannachdail a bhith deanamh tàir air na seann nithean ’s air na seann bheachdan, ’s air na seann chleachdannan* ... ‘it isn’t at all appropriate or profitable to scorn the old things or the old ideas/views, or the old habits ...’
- c) ... *bha e ainmeil leis an eòlas a bha aige air sgeulachdan agus seann chleachdainnean an t-sluaigh*. ‘... he was famous for the knowledge he had about the stories and old habits of the folk/community.’

On the other hand, I have not counted *gnáth* ‘convention, custom, practice’ together with *gnàths* ‘custom, fashion; nature’. *Aosta* is intensified with *ro* in two cases, which I have included in the statistics: *mnathan ro aosda* ‘too/very old women’, (*do*) *bhliadhnachan ro-aosda* ‘(your) too old years’ (i.e. ‘considerably old age’).

I have not counted attributive comparatives (e.g. *gheibh mi lorg air duine nas aosda na sibhse* ‘I’ll find someone older than yourself’) and superlatives (e.g. *an seorsa creag as aosda anns na h-eileanan Breatunnach* ‘one of the oldest kinds of rock in the British isles’), nor expressions with *cho sean* (15), *cho aosda/aosta* (common with *ri/s*) (24; including *cho faillineach aosd* ‘so fallible old’ (physically), *cho seasrach aosda* ‘so steady old’, *cha mhòr cho aosda* ‘almost as old’, *leth cho aosta* ‘half as old’), *sean gu leò(i)r* (2), *aosd(a)/aost gu leò(i)r* (10), as these may be regarded as predicative back-references – the two examples of *sean gu leò(i)r* are evidently predicative:

Example 116.

- a) *no ni sam bith eile bhiodh sean gu leòir* ‘or anything else that would be old enough’
- b) *An fheadhainn againn tha sean gu leòr* ‘Those of us who are old enough’

Neither have I included *leth(-)sheann duine* (3) ‘a middle-aged man’ and *searbhanta leth-shean* ‘a middle-aged servant’ and the expression (*anns na*) *linntean neo-shean* (with prefixed *sean*) ‘(in the) recent centuries’. I have counted *seann* in *a sheann (seann) chiontan* ‘his (her) old sins’ and *aosd* in *fear/an fheadhainn aosd-aosd* ‘a really old person/the really old ones’ only once.

⁴⁴ Occurrences are shown in brackets.

Seann- qualifies a number of compound words and names. In the statistics I counted some of them together with their base-words (i.e. generic), while others separately. Compounds which identify a certain type of their generics have been counted together with their generics (e.g. a particular type of tree, kind of dog, a folksong with a specific theme or an object of a specific material, etc) as well as placenames or institutes qualified by *seann*:

Example 117.

a) Types:

sean bhean-ualasal ‘old noble-woman’ (1/73 – 1.4%)

seann-òran seilge ‘traditional hunting song’ (2/23 – 8.7%)

sheann ghàrradh-cloiche ‘old stone-garden’ (1/2)

(species) *seann chraoibh sheilich* ‘old willow tree’ (6), *s. chraoibh dharaich* ‘old oak tree’ (2), *s. chraoibh ghiubhais* ‘old fir tree’ (1), *s. chraoibh leamhain* ‘old elm tree’ (1) (10 compounds out of 16 tokens for *craobh* – 62.5%)

seann chu chaorach ‘old sheepdog’ (1/4)

(material) *seann chòta-clò* ‘old tweed coat’ (1/5), *seann seacaidean clò* ‘old tweed jackets’ (1/6)

seann luibhean talmhainn ‘old continental plants’ (3/4)

b) Placenames/institutes:

seann qualifies the name: e.g. *na seann Choille Albannaich* ‘of the old Scottish Forest’, *seann eaglais Hogh/Seann Eaglais Hogh Mòir* ‘the old church of (Big) Hogh’, *an t-seann Chill* ‘the old Kirk’ /*seann Chill Chatain* ‘old Kilchattan’

seann makes part of the name: *Seana Chreig* ‘Old Cliff’

I have also counted *seann sia sgillinn* ‘old sixpence’ (1) as *seann sgillinn* ‘old penny’ (3), treating *sia sgillinn* ‘sixpence’ as a compound.

In other compound expressions I have counted the words in two groups: one for simple words and one for compounds (i.e. I counted the compound expressions as one, but separately from the single words they are based on). These contain professions, expressions which identify a less compositional type of the generic, where the specifier precedes the generic (proper compound), or where *seann* qualifies a fixed expression.

Example 118.

a) Professions:

bean ‘woman; wife’ (73) – *seana mhnàth-altruim* ‘old nurse’, *seann bhean-fhighe* ‘old weaveress’, *seann bhean-ghlùin* ‘old midwife’ (3)

fear ‘man’ (11) – *seann fhear-eòlais* ‘old scientist/scholar’ (1)
maighstir ‘master’ (2) – *seana mhaighstir-sgoile* ‘old schoolmaster’ (1)

b) Other improper compounds:

bodach ‘old man; fellow’ (32) – *a shean bhodaich-truisg* ‘old cod-man (voc.)’ (1)
àite ‘place’ (2) – *sheann aitean-adhlaic* ‘old resting places’, *seann ait’-analach* ‘old cemetery’ (2)
taigh ‘house’ (34) – *seann taighean-dubha* ‘old black-houses’, *seann taigh-solais* ‘old lighthouse’, *seann taigh-sgoile* ‘old schoolhouse’, *seann taigh cìobair* ‘old “keeper’s” (i.e. shepherd’s) house’, *seann tigh-chearc* ‘old hen-house’, *seann tigh-còmhnuidh* ‘old dwelling’, *seann tigh-stad* ‘old inn’, *seann tighean-aoraidh* ‘old chapels’ (8)
muc ‘pig’ (1) – *shean mhuc-bhiorach* ‘old bottlenosed dolphin’ (1)
dòigh ‘way’ (25) – *sean dòigh-sgrìobhaidh* ‘old writing style’, *sheann dòigh-beatha* ‘old lifestyle’ (2)
sean mhodhanna ‘old ethics’ (1) *seann mhodh labhairt* ‘old manner of speech’ (1)
comharradh (1) / *comharran* (1) ‘mark, sign’ – *seann chomharradh-crìche* (4) / *s. chomharran-crìche* (12) ‘old boundary mark’

c) Proper compound:

gnàth ‘custom, practice’ (1) – *seann gnàth-fhiosachadh* ‘old common knowledge’ (1)

d) Fixed expression:

seann linntean ‘old centuries’ (10) – *Seann Linn na Cloiche/Linn Cloiche* ‘Early Stone Age’ (5)

I have also counted as one the following compounds: *seann charbad-ghiùlain* ‘old transport carriage’ and *seann charbad-cruidh* ‘old cattle-carriage’ as *carbad* ‘carriage’ (2), *rùm-cadail* ‘bedroom’ and *rum-sgoile* ‘classroom’ as *rùm* ‘room’ (2), *luchd-àiteachaidh* ‘local people’, *sheann luchd-eòlais* ‘scholars’ as *luchd-* ‘people’ (2) (constructional idioms), *sean Cheann-cinnidh* ‘(clan’s) chief’ and *seann cheann-teagaisg* ‘headteacher’ as *ceann-* ‘head, leader’ (constructional idioms) (2). (The corpus includes examples with and without a hyphen in both types of compound expressions.)

I did not experience the same problem with the plain adjectives: *sean* does not qualify any compounds in the corpus, while each generic occurs only once with *aosta*, and never outside the compound (often in poetic word combinations such as *a chian chùrs’ aost* ‘its old distant course’ (poetry), *a’ chall-airm aost* ‘the old army defeat’, or in AN compounds:

Oisean nam mìn-chiabhan aosda ‘old tender locks’ (poetry), (*gach seòrsa de*) *àrd-chlachaireachd aosda* ‘(every sort of) old chief masonry/stone construction’).

6.1.1. Statistics

Occurrences of attributive *seann*-, *aosta* and *sean* are shown in Table 9.

Table 9.

***seann*:**

number of types	occurrence
1x	288
2x	79
3x	21
4x	19
5x	14
6x	6
7x	4
8x	5
9x	7
10x	2
11x	3
12x	2
13x	2
14x	1
15x	2
16x	1
17x	1
18x	2
21x	2
23x	3
24x	3
25x	1
28x	1
31x	1
32x	1
34x	2
35x	1
73x	1
149x	1
204x	1
283x	1
305x	1

***aosta*:**

number of types	occurrence
1x	45
2x	6
3x	3
4x	2
5x	2
10x	1

***sean*:**

number of types	occurrence
1x	11
2x	2
3x	1

The average for *seann* is 5.1232, and the standard deviation 22.7067, which result in the number 27.8299 as the threshold over which examples are worth being studied:

- 305 – *seanair* ‘grandfather’
- 283 – *seann duine* ‘old man/person’
- 204 – *seanmhair* ‘grandmother’
- 149 – *sean-fhacal* ‘proverb, saying’
- 73 – *seana bhean* ‘old woman/wife’
- 35 – *seann boireannach* ‘old woman’
- 34 – *seann taigh(ean)* ‘old hous(es)’, *seann aois* ‘old age’
- 32 – *seann tìm* ‘old time’
- 31 – *seann bodach* ‘old man’
- 28 – *seann charaid* ‘old friend’ (including 2 examples of *seann bhan-charaid~bhanacharaid* ‘old female friend’)

The average for *aosta* is 1.5932 with a standard deviation of 1.4743, thus relevant examples are above the occurrence 3.0675:

- 10 – *duine aosda* ‘old man’
- 5 – *feadhainn aosda* ‘old ones’, *mnathan aosda* ‘old women/wives’
- 4 – *boireannach aosta* ‘old woman’, *cànain aosta* ‘old languages’
- (3 – *òran aosda* ‘old song’, *làithean aosta* ‘old days’, *craobh aosda* ‘old tree’)

(There is not sufficient examples for *sean* to carry out statistics on it.)

The most relevant collocates are associated with people in both variations (*duine*, *bean*, *boireannach*), which might indicate the compoundhood of those with preceding *seann*-. *Seanair* ‘grandfather’ and *seanmhair* ‘grandmother’ are obvious compounds (called historical compounds in the literature; see section 3.5.2 about Irish compounds), also attested in the corpus as *sean-athair/sean(n)-mhàthair* (close compounds). They stand with preceding *seann*- even in the phrasal sense ‘old father/mother’, although written without hyphen. Apart from human examples *seann*- forms part of the compounds *seanfhaical* ‘proverb, saying’ and *seann aois* ‘old age’ (*seana fhacal* can occasionally mean ‘old word’ in the literal sense), and the time expression *seann tìm* ‘old time’ (mainly in the form *anns an t-seann tìm*, just like *aimsir* in *anns an t-seann aimsir* ‘in the old time(s)’). *Seann-taigh* usually refers to traditional houses in the Western Isles as opposed to *taigh aosta* ‘an old house’ (as it is evident in examples like *seann taighean-dubha* ‘old black-houses’, *seanna thigh dhubh* ‘an old blackhouse’, *seann tigh Tirisdeach* ‘an old Tiree house’, *seann taighean tughaidh* ‘old thatched houses’). The quality of traditionality can also be observed in *seann òran* ‘folksong’ and *seann sgeulachd* ‘old story’. The most frequent tokens for

aosta include the pronominal expression *feadhainn* ‘ones’, and *cànan aosta* ‘old language’, both of which, however, occur frequently with *seann-* as well.

Seann-, with its great number of tokens, is highly productive, appearing with all sorts of words, while *aosta* (appearing much less frequently) does not occur with any noun in significant numbers, which cannot be found also with *seann-*. The few verbal nouns in the corpus are all qualified with *seann-*, and the only loan word with *aosta* is *baidsealair* ‘bachelor’ (which itself has a much more common synonym (*fleasgach*), which usually stands with *seann-*), whereas *seann-* qualifies a great number of loan words (see Example 119).

Example 119.

- a) *seann auntie* ‘old auntie’
- b) *seann-bhasagails/sean bhaisagal* ‘old bicycle’
- c) *seann teipichean* ‘old tapes’
- d) *seann sporangia* ‘ancient sporangia (sponges)’ (biological category)
- e) *seann phick-up* ‘old pick-up’
- f) *seann bitch* ‘old bitch’
- g) *seann fhactaraidh* ‘old factory’
- h) *seann mhicroscope* ‘old microscope’
- i) *seann Statistical Account (of Scotland)* (also in Gaelic as *Sean Chunntas Staitistigeil*) ‘old Statistical Account’
- j) *seann Science notebooks* ‘old Science notebooks’

Just as we have seen with other preceding adjectives, verbal nouns are much rarer. All of these are qualified by *seann-* (e.g. *gach sean sgrìobhadh, is sean ràdh* ‘all old writing and old saying’; *seann iasgach* ‘old fishing/way of fishing’). *Seann-* also makes part of compound adjectives like *sean(n)-fhasanta* ‘old-fashioned’ (14), *sean-ghnàthach* ‘of old customs, conventional’ (1), *sean-fhaclach* (1) (among a list of adjectives in a poem: *Duine beag baganta, [...] Sean-fhaclach, geur-fhaclach, / Iomraideach, éibhinn; ...* ‘A small stylish man [...] old-worded, sharp-worded, well-known, funny; ...’), and *seann-aimsireil* ‘of old times’ (4), all of which have nominal counterparts (*seann fhasan* ‘old fashion/style’ (3), *sean ghnàthan* (1)/*seann ghnàths(an)* ‘old custom(s)’ (3), *sean-fhacal/seanfhaical* ‘proverb, saying’ (149), *seann aimsir* ‘old time’ (18)). All of these appear to be simple adjectival phrases, even *sean fhacal* ‘old word’ in this case (note that a hyphen is normally present in the adjectives but missing in the nouns) (cf section 2.2 about ‘parasynthetic compounds’).

Aosta is the typical qualifier of pronominal words like *cuid* ‘some’ and *dithis* ‘two persons’; however, *tè* ‘one (female)’ and *feadhainn* ‘ones’ can be encountered with *seann-* in a number of tokens (discussed below in section 6.2). *Aosta* appears to be more common in sources from the early 20th century, and from Lewis in later sources. It tends to refer simply to age in most examples; however, its factuality is not so obvious in every case. In 4 sources (*Deireadh an Fhoghair* by Tormod Caimbeul, and three novels by Iain Mac a’ Ghobhainn – both authors are from Lewis) *aosta* tends to be used in a poetic way (see examples below), while *seann-* is sometimes attached to words referring to concrete nouns, objects, like *sean bhòrd* ‘old table’ or *sean bhrògan* ‘old shoes’.) In other sources where *aosta* can be found in a more figurative sense, *seann-* mainly refers to people or true compounds, or other more conventional connotations (representing old types of things, such as *seann taigh* ‘old (traditional) house’, *seann thobhta* ‘old ruin’, *seann tughadh* ‘old thatching’, *sean airgead* ‘old money’). Also *sean chainnt*, *sean chàinain* ‘old speech, old languages’ appears in a poem. In these sources *aosta* may refer to age in a figurative, partitive sense⁴⁵ (*cnàmhan aosda* ‘old bones’), or to buildings or institutes that have been existed for a while (*cladh aosda Chille Chòmhghain* ‘the old graveyard of Kilchoan’, *‘na shloinn seanchaidh aosda* ‘in his old storyteller family’). *Deireadh an Fhoghair* abounds in poetic references to natural constructions: *fuam aosd na mara* ‘the old sound of the sea’, *na creagan aosd ud* ‘those old rocks’, *leacan aosd a’ chladaich* ‘the old stones of the shore’, as well as with figurative references to age: *shùilean aosd(a)* ‘old eyes’, *ceann aosd (a sheanmhair)* ‘old head (of his grandmother)’. Iain Mac a’ Ghobhainn’s novels also contain abstract or conceptual uses of *aosta*: ...*na h-uillt a’ ruith chun a’ chuain ’s ag innse sgialachdan aosda do’n oidhche* ‘the streams running to the sea and telling **old stories** to the night’; *eòlas aosd nam boireannach* ‘the **old knowledge** of (the) women’; *a’ bhréig aosd* ‘the old lie’; just like some poems from the first half of the 20th century: *do bhliadhnachan ro-aosda* ‘your too old years’ (referring to age); *oighreachd aosd a shinnsear* ‘his ancestor’s/forefather’s old heritage’; *làithean aosda/aosd(a)* ‘past days’. In all cases *aosta* either refers to age, or something that has existed for a long while – additionally, it may be connected with wisdom.

Almost all adverbs qualifying *aosta/aosda* (*buileach* ‘completely’, *anabarrach* ‘exceptionally/extraordinarily’, *uabhasach* ‘awfully, terribly’, *(gu) math* ‘quite’, *rudeigin* ‘somewhat’, *car* ‘a bit’; *aosda tuilleadh* ‘extra old’) can be found in predicative/adverbial sense – just as *ro(-)aosd(a)* ‘too old’ (24 altogether, including *ro(-)aosd tuilleadh* ‘really too old, far too old’, *beagan ro aosda* ‘a bit too old’ and *fada ro aosd* ‘far too old’ for

⁴⁵ i.e. the age of a body part referring to the age of the person

instance). 2 tokens of *ro(-)aosda* may be understood as attributive: *de shlàinte air mnathan ro aosda* ‘of health on too old women’; *gun do bhliadhnachan ro-aosda/ A chrathadh dhìot gu h-ealamh* ‘shaking your too old years off you quickly’. However, the fact that both occur in poems, confirms that *ro* ‘too’ should normally be considered similar to *cho* ‘so’: as a predicative back-reference. *Fìor*, just as we have seen in the case of other preceding adjectives), tends to accompany *seann-* (apart from the example *fìor àite aosda* ‘a really old place’).

Example 120.

- a) *na fìor shean Ghàidheil* ‘the really old (i.e. ancient/early) Gaels’
’na fhìor sheann(-)duine (liath) ‘in his really old (grey) man’ (i.e. as a really old (grey-haired) man)
fìor sheann mhnathan ‘really old women’
air an/an fhìor sheann dòigh (Ghàidhealaich) ‘in the/a really old (Gael) way’
fìor sheann leigheas ‘really old cure/remedy’
fìor sheann luinneag an orain aca ‘the real/really old melody of their song’
- b) *anns an fhìor-sheann aimsir* ‘in (the) prehistoric time(s)’
fhìor-sheann Talaimh/na fhìor-sheann Talmhainn ‘(of the) prehistoric Earth’
de fhìor-sheann lus talmhainn ‘of a prehistoric continental plant’
fhìor-sheann-Ch[r]uimreach ‘Proto Welsh’ (i.e. Brythonic)

Written with a hyphen, it exhibits a special meaning ‘ancient’ or ‘prehistoric’ (see Example 120b). The rest of the adverbs can be encountered in predicative sentences (*uamhasach sean*, *uabhasach fhéin (sean)* ‘terribly old’, *gu math sean* ‘quite old’, *ro shean* ‘too old’); *cho* is connected to an adjective in *cho seann fhasanta* ‘so old-fashioned’.

We can encounter various combinations of *seann* with other preceding adjectives: in the case of *mo dheagh shean charaid* ‘my good old friend’ this may indicate the compoundhood of *sean charaid* ‘old friend’, similar to *deagh sheanmhair* ‘good grandmother’; on the other hand, in *ann an deagh sheann aois* ‘in good old age’, *deagh* functions as an intensifier. *Corra* combines with *seann* in *corra sheann dàn* ‘an occasional old poem’ and *corra shean crabhcan* ‘an occasional old hook’. *Seann-* itself may function as an intensifier, as I have already mentioned about *droch-* (in section 5.1): *seann droch shaoghal* ‘bad old world’, *seann droch Nàmh* ‘bad old Enemy’. This function is also present in *seachd seann sgith* ‘sick and tired’. *Aosta* may show a similar negative connotation as *seann* when combined with *dorch*: *fàileadh dorch aosd* ‘old dark smell’. The two adjectives can also combine with each other, as in *seann-daoine aosda* ‘old old

people’ and *an t-seann mhnaoi aosd* ‘the old old woman (dat.)’. Furthermore, *seann* shows a special meaning in *Seann Linn na Cloiche/Seann Linn Cloiche* (meaning ‘Early Stone Age’, which sense of *seann-* is intensified in the compound *fior-shean* ‘ancient, prehistoric’), and it has even a more abstract meaning in *seann uisg* ‘stagnant water’ (with a similar negative connotation as *aosd* shows in *fàileadh dorch aosd*). *Bha fàileadh bho chòt’ an dàrna fear mar seann uisg*. ‘The smell of (lit. “from”) the second man’s coat was like stagnant water.’

6.1.2. Coordination

As may be expected, coordinatives of *seann-*, *aosta* and *sean* are common with words such as *òg*, *ùr*, *nuadh* (see examples below).

Example 121.

- a) *nithean nuadha agus sean* ‘old and new things/matters’
- b) *sunnd sean is òg* ‘old and young joy’
- c) *càirdean sean is òg* ‘old and young relatives(/friends)’
- d) *gach cleachdadh ùr is sean* ‘every old and new custom’
- e) *iomadh rud ùr is aosda* ‘many old and new things’
- f) *seiceidean ùra is seann bhrògan* ‘new jackets and old shoes’
- g) *an t-seann té ’s an té ùr* ‘the old female and the young female’
- h) *seann-bhoireannach agus caileag òg* ‘old woman and young girl’
- i) *Seann Ian agus Ian Óg* ‘Old Ian and Young Ian’ (i.e. senior and junior)
- j) *Seann Isbeil agus na brogachanan òga* ‘Old Isabel and the sturdy little boys’

This contrast is often observable in the context (in the last three examples youth is only implied):

Example 122.

- a) *Geug ùr air craoibh aosd*. ‘A new branch on an old tree.’
- b) *bean òg aig seann duine* ‘the old man’s young wife’
- c) *a’ chàraid òg (no is dòcha a’ chàraid shean)* ‘the young couple (or perhaps the old couple)’
- d) *seann nithean an éideadh nuadh* ‘old things in new clothes’
- e) *bualadh [...] air seann teudan ann an dòigh ùr* ‘striking/plucking [...] at old strings in a new way’
- f) *(Dà rud nach còir a bhith falamh:) goile an t-seann duine agus làmh an leanaibh bhig* ‘(Two things that shouldn’t be empty:) the stomach of an (lit. “the”) old man and the hand of a (lit. “the”) small child’

- g) (*chum Annag*) *an t-seann làimh mhìn 'n a làmhan beaga fhéin* ‘Annag held the dainty old hand in her own small hands’
- h) (*Sgreadail*) *mhnathan aosd’ agus ghruagach* ‘(Screaming of) old women/wives and maids’

In one example prefixed adjectives are coordinated in a similar manner (which might indicate that *sean chailleach* ‘old hag’ should be treated as a compound): *geàrr no sean chailleach* “short and old lady”, i.e. ‘young and old woman’. Beside coordinating opposite adjectives, the most frequent adjectives accompanying *seann-* and *aosta* are *còir* ‘kind’ and *liath* ‘grey’. While *còir* is frequent with words connotating people, *liath* usually accompanies *seann-*:

Example 123.

- a) *seann bhrògan rocach liath* ‘grey, wrinkled old shoes’
- b) *seann duine mòr, liath* ‘grey, big old man’
- c) *’na fhior sheann duine liath* “in his really old, grey man”
- d) *na seann sùilean liathghorm* ‘in her old greyish-blue eyes’
- e) *cuid aosda, liath dhiubh* ‘some grey, old ones of them’

The last example proves that the qualifier of *cuid* ‘some’ should be the plain adjective. *Còir* ‘kind’ tends to accompany *seann-*. Naturally, adjectives which refer to old age, weakness and illness are also frequently present in the context of *seann* and *aosta*. *Bochd* ‘sick; poor’ is also common with *seann-* (*a’ bheairt aosd is bochd* ‘the old and poor instrument’ is the only token with *aosta*, although there is one with the plain adjective *sean* as well: *bho bhodach sean bochd* ‘from a sick old man’).

Example 124.

- a) *seann bhean chòir* ‘a kind old woman’, *seann bhoireannach còir* ‘a kind old woman’
- b) *seann chailleach bheag bhochd* ‘a small poorly old woman’, *an seann duine bochd!* ‘the poor old man!’

The preceding adjective *seann-* may be single or repeated in coordinations:

Example 125.

single:

- a) *seann bodach is boireannach* ‘an old man and woman’
- b) *seann eòlas is ealain* ‘old knowledge and arts’
- c) *seann bhàrdachd agus/is sgeulachdan* ‘old poetry and stories’

d) *seann phort no taladh* ‘an old tune or lullaby’

repeated:

e) *sean eachdraidh agus beul-aithris na dùthcha* ‘the country’s old history and oral tradition’ (**not repeated**) – *sean eachdraidh agus seann bheul aithris* ‘old history and old oral tradition’ (**repeated**)

f) *air na seann nithean, air na seann bheachdan, ’s air na seann chleachdanan* ‘on the old things, on the old views, and on the old customs’

g) *na seann rudan agus na seann dòighean* ‘the old things and the old ways’

h) *sean dàn no sean sgeul* ‘an old poem or old story’

i) *seann phaipearan agus seann leabhraichean* ‘old papers and old books’

j) *seann daoine ’s seann mhnathan* ‘old men and old women’

k) *seann mhaighdean, seann fhleasgach agus seann bhantrach* ‘an old-maid, an old bachelor and an old widow’

Words referring to old customs or manners (like Example f) are coordinated as full phrases in the corpus, i.e. they do not tend to drop *seann-* before the second noun (cf *mu sheann nosan no seann chleachdaidhean* ‘about old traditions or old practices’ and *nan seann bheusan is nan seann chleachdan* ‘of the old morals and of the old customs’).

6.2. *Seann-* or *aosta*?

The three most common nouns both with *seann-* and *aosta* are *duine* ‘person/man’, *bean* ‘woman/wife’ and *boireannach* ‘woman’. All of these show similar patterns. The distinction is not very clear in either case, since both adjectives are present in most sources, with subtle differences in meaning. The collocate with *seann-* seems to be a neutral compound expression (e.g. *’S ann thachair sean bhean thruagh orm ...* ‘That was when I came across a wretched old woman’), whereas *aosta* may be used in cases where the quality of being old is important from the speaker’s point of view (see my discussion about the emphatic role of *math* if *deagh-* makes a compound with the same noun; section 4.2.3). Interestingly, in the case of *duine*, *seann-* is more frequent in plural, whereas *aosta* mostly qualifies plural *mnathan* ‘women/wives’, whereas only 10 plural examples can be encountered with *seann-* out of 73 tokens for *bean* ‘woman/wife’. (Naturally, the intensifier *ro* occurs together with *aosda* in *mnathan ro aosda* ‘too/very old women’, whereas *fior* accompanies *seann-*, even in plural: *fior sheann mhnathan* ‘really old women/wives’. In certain cases *seann bhean* ‘old woman’ may refer to a particular person (... *nach ann a chaidh Coinneach a shealltainn air seann bhean a bha air an leabaidh*. ‘... wasn’t that that Kenneth went to see an old woman who was on the bed.’), as opposed to

statements like *Sgreadail mhnathan aosd' agus ghruagach* 'Screaming of old women/wives and maids'. One of the sources from Uist contains many examples with *seann-* for all *duine*, *bean* and *boireannach* – which seem to underlie my assumption that *seann-* is the preferred form in this dialect. There are also many tokens from the oral tradition of Easter Ross for *seann boireannach* 'old woman' and *seann bodach* 'old man' (and a few for *seann duine* 'old man/person'). *Boireannach aosta* 'old woman' can be encountered once in the notes; however, the informants always use *seann boireannach* (lenited in one or two cases). Attributive *sean* appears in a poem, coordinated with *òg*: *mnathan òg' is sean* 'young and old women/wives'.

Combinations of the two adjectives occur twice – one with *daoine*, the other with *mnaoi* (dat. sg of *bean*): *seann-daoine aosda chaithte shàraich* 'weary worn aged old people'; *air an t-seann mhnaoi aosd* 'on the aged old-woman'. The redundant use of *aosta* may indicate that *seann daoine* 'old people' and *seann mhnaoi* 'old woman/hag (dat.)' are treated as compounds, although both tokens occur in poetry, thus it may only serve as a device for emphasis.

Another fact that could confirm the less emphatic, more trivial sense of *seann-* (included in the meaning of a compound) is that two other human denotations, *bodach* 'old man' and *cailleach* 'old woman, hag', which inherently contain the meaning of old age (at least synchronically), are considerably frequent with *seann-* themselves (*seann bodach* 31, *seann chailleach* 23). On the other hand, they show hardly any examples with plain adjectives (exceptions are *bodach* with *sean* (*bho bhodach sean bochd* 'from a sick old man'), and *cailleach* with *aosda* in a poem (*d' chaillich aosda chrùbte* 'your bent old hag (dat.)'), both appearing together with other adjectives in descriptions.

There are three further cases encountered with both types of adjectives which could be of interest, the first of these is a time expression, the other two are the pronominal expressions *tè* 'one (fem.)' and *feadhainn* 'ones'. As mentioned above, *seann-* is the adjective used with words referring to time (like *tìm/aimsir* and *uair*). In the case of *làithean* 'days', most tokens (24) follow this rule and have a very similar meaning. Nevertheless, 3 tokens stand with *aosda* (all three in poetry). These may refer to a person's age, and/or are connected with *cuimhne* 'memory'.

Tè and *feadhainn*, usually exhibiting a pronominal sense, would be expected with *aosta*, which, however, is not attested in many cases. In the corpus, I have encountered only 1 *té aosd* beside 9 tokens for *seann té* (although 3 times in the same poem and further 2 in 2 other poems from the same source). *Seann té* appears to be related to the more informal language of the storytelling register (3 tokens appearing in narratives, autobiographies).

Another possible explanation for the choice for *seann-* is related to dialects, as the source of poetry containing 5 tokens of *seann tè* originates from South Uist. Uist dialect(s) seem to show a preference to use the preceding adjective *seann-* over the plain adjective *aosta*. Most examples of *seann tè* meaning *cailleach* ‘old woman/female’, come from South Uist (the one from Lewis is encountered in an autobiography), whereas the only example of *té aosd* is from Lewis.

Similarly, in the case of *feadhainn* (18 with *seann-*, 5 with *aosta*), most tokens mean ‘people’. However, there are some among those with *seann-*, which only function as a back-reference to something (like *taighean-dubha* ‘black-houses’, *brògan* ‘shoes’), i.e. it represents a rather pronominal sense (as opposed to *seann té*, which happened to serve as a reference to an inanimate feminine noun in only one example). *Seann-* very often occurs in general statements (‘the old ones/old people’). These statements mostly refer to old customs or lifestyle, which represents a very similar aspect to compounds like *seann òran* ‘folksong’, *seann sgeulachd* ‘traditional story’, *sean-fhacal* ‘proverb’, etc (being associated with traditions), or are related to old times (the ‘old ones’ may have been young then; cf *sean shaighdear* ‘veteran’ below). Neither do the examples with *aosta* show a pronominal sense, all referring to people. However, they appear to have a more qualifying function (as opposed to its more lexicalised usage in ‘old ones’), or may refer to a particular situation, rather than a general statement. *Feadhainn aosd(a)*, is more of an adjectival phrase (where the quality of age is more important and highlighted). Again, there is only a coordinative example with the plain adjective *aosta* from South Uist, whereas the rest are from Lewis. *Seann-* is more evenly distributed among the sources. A good example for the usage of *aosta* here is from Lewis: *feadhainn aosd-aosd* (pl) and *fear aosd-aosd* (sg) occur in the same dialogue. Both *feadhainn* and *fear* refer to people; however, their old age is even more emphasised by the repetition of the adjective.

6.3. Compounds and fixed expressions

In this section I discuss possible examples for compounds and other fixed expressions containing *seann-*. In many cases these nouns cannot be found with *aosta*, or only in a restrictive number, despite expectations (in that *aosta* is used when the collocate with *seann-* exhibits a special meaning). Nor are there any counterparts with *aosta* for the historic compounds *seanair* ‘grandfather’ and *seanmhair* ‘grandmother’ (as already discussed in section 6.1.1). They can also be encountered in the extended forms *sinn/sinseanair* or *si/sin/sin(n)/sean(n)-seanair* ‘great-grandfather’, *sinn/sin(n)-seanmhair* or *sinn-seana-mhàthair* ‘great-grandmother’, or *sean-sean-sean-seanair* ‘great-great-great-

grandfather’ and *sinn-seann-sheanmhair* ‘great-great-grandmother’. An alternative for *sinn-seanair* is qualified by the intensifier *dubh* (lit. “black”): *dubh-sheanair* (2) ‘great-grandfather’.

The words for ‘old-maid’ and ‘bachelor’ follows the same pattern in Gaelic: *seann mhaighdean/sean-mhaighdean/seana(-)mhaighdean* (6) or *sean(n) nighean* (7) for ‘old-maid’ (lit. “old maid” or “old girl”) and *seana-ghille/seann ghille* (5) (lit. “old boy”) for ‘bachelor’. The corpus suggest that *sean(n) nighean* is preferred in Lewis, and *seann mhaighdean* in other dialects. There are two synonyms for *seann ghille*, namely *fleasgach* and the loan word *baidsealair*, often qualified by the adjective ‘old’ in the corpus themselves: *seann fhleasgach*, *fleasgach aosta* and *baidsealair aost* (the latter is the only loan word with *aosta*, it occurs only once in the corpus – in a present-day source from Lewis, among a couple of examples for the use of *dona* and *math*). With the words *fleasgach* and *baidsealair*, *seann-* (and *aosta*) may function only as a confirmation – a kind of redundancy, cf the example *seann mhaighdean, seann fhleasgach agus seann bhantrach* ‘an old maid, old bachelor and old widow’, where it could be argued whether *seann* is an important qualifier of *fleasgach* ‘bachelor’ and *bantrach* ‘widow’, which examples may inherently (though not necessarily) involve the quality of oldness, or they only follow a similar pattern to *seann mhaighdean* ‘old maid’ (which would be *seann sheann mhaighdean* if consistency were retained in meaning).

6.3.1. Traditionality

Seann sgeul (11)/ *seann sgeulachd* (21)/ *seann sgeula* (3) and *seann eachdraidh* (15) share the meaning ‘old/traditional story’; however, both have a more individual sense in some cases: *seann sgeul/sgeulachd* may refer to a story which is known by everyone in a community, similar to folktales or legends, while *seann eachdraidh* may be associated with the history of something or somebody in 4 or 5 tokens. In the 3 plural examples, *sean(n) eachdraidhean* refer to ‘old stories’ literally, just as *sgialachdan aosda*. This only example with the plain adjective appears in an abstract context from Lewis, in a source in which the use of similar poetic expressions with *aosta* is not unusual at all (see discussion in section 6.1.1).

A very similar case to *seann sgeulachd* is *seann òran* (‘folksong/traditional song’) (23) in that both refer to traditional mental products (just like *sean-fhacal* ‘proverb’ and *seann eòlas* ‘lore’ below), written with a hyphen in academic titles: *Seann-òrain Innse-Gall* for ‘Hebridean Folksongs’, and *Seann-òran Seilge* ‘traditional hunting song’ in the *Folksongs and Folklore of South Uist*). Another similarity, beside the sense of traditionality, is the use

of the plain adjective. *Òran aosda* (3) may exhibit a more literal meaning, ‘old song’ (once *òran Gàidhlig aosda* ‘old Gaelic song’, in a poem); however, again it appears in a poetic context from the same Lewis source as referred to in the previous section (in which plain adjectives are typical), and in early poems (from South Uist).

Other possible compounds referring to the common heritage of a community include *sean-fhacal*, *seann taigh* and *seann eòlas*. Most tokens of *sean(-)fhacal* have the meaning ‘proverb, saying’, even when written in two words (*seana fhacal/sean(n) fhacal*) (according to Kenneth MacLeod (in one of the sources) *gnàthfhacal*, also written as *gnàth-fhacal* or *gnàth-fhocal*, has the same meaning). Only in one token is it to be understood in the literal sense ‘old word’ (see Example 106). The corpus does not contain any examples with the plain adjective (**facal aosta/sean*), moreover, there is one token further qualified by the preceding adjective, meaning ‘old proverb’: *an t-seana t-seanfhacail* [sic].

Example 126.

... *tha cuid mar sin de 'n bheachd gu bheil a' facal "draoidh" air a thoirt bho "dru", seann fhacal airson darach*, ... ‘... some then are of the opinion that the word “draoidh” (= ‘druid’) is taken from “dru”, an old word for *darach* (= ‘oak’), ...’

In the case of *eòlas* ‘knowledge’, both *seann eòlas* (9) and *eòlas aosd* (*nam boireannach*) (2; repetition) ‘old knowledge (of (the) women)’ have a meaning related to a common, general knowledge, or lore, although *aosd* appears in a more poetic usage from Lewis (see similar examples above – as well as in section 6.1.1), whereas the one token for *seann-* from Lewis refers to a more tangible meaning (Example 127a) ‘old knowledge and arts’), or it appears in the expression *a shean(n) eòla(i)s* ‘that he had known long ago’ (Example 127b)). *Seann eòlas* may be associated with a traditional sense of knowledge, general wisdom, whereas *eòlas aosd* may be related to a less specific and more abstract, less acquirable knowledge.

Example 127.

- a) *Cha robh càil de'n t-seann eòlas is ealain a dh' àlaich a measg ar sìnnsirean a-nuas troimh na linntean*, ... ‘There isn’t anything of the old knowledge and art that bred down among our forefathers through the centuries, ...’
- b) *Thainig an Caiptean dhachaidh gu clachan a sheann eòlais*. ‘The Captain came home to the village that he had known long ago (lit. “the village of his old knowledge”).’

Seann taighean (34) refers to ‘traditional houses’ or ‘black-houses’ (as I have already mentioned in section 6.1.1) (see Example 128a below). Alternatively, in some poems, it

may mean a house where somebody used to live (see Example 128b). The only token with plain adjective *an tigh aosda ud* (from Lewis again) may literally mean ‘(that) old house’ (where the quality of oldness is important). However, since it occurs in a context in which the same house has already been referred to as *seana thigh*, it might serve as a variational device to avoid repetition.

Example 128.

a) *Cha charaicheadh i às an t-seann thaigh airson a dhol a thaigh-geal.* ‘She wouldn’t move from the old house to go to a white-house.’

b) *a shean taigh chliùitich a’ bhàrd* ‘oh famed old house of the poet’

*Leag iad seann tigh Anna Shiosail,
'S reic Iain Friseal an t-each spàgach.*

‘They knocked down/demolished Ann Chisholm’s old house,
And Ian Fraser sold the waddling horse.’

6.3.2. Reference to the past

In two expressions *seann-* refers to earlier time, having the sense ‘former’: *seann saighdear* ‘veteran’ (6) and probably also *sean(n) leannan* ‘former lover/sweetheart’ (5). *Sean(n) leannan* occurs in early 20th century texts from Mull and Jura. Regarding *seann s(h)aighdear*, it would be worth checking whether *seann-* may simply refer to age, giving the literal meaning ‘old soldier’, or, rather that would be expressed by the plain adjective as in *saighdear aosta*. Similarly, I have not found any plain counterparts for *seann leannan* (although there are no tokens from Lewis for either of these expressions).

6.3.3. Fixed expression and exocentric compound

Seana(-)mhaide (8), although not a compound, in 7 out of 8 examples refers to a proverb (where it has the literal meaning ‘old stick’): *An car a bha san t-seana mhaide ’s duilich a thoirt às.* ‘The twist in the old stick is difficult to take out.’ (i.e. it is difficult to change ingrained traits, attitudes) (p. 158 in *Saoghal Bana-mhairiche*, ed. by Seòsamh Watson). However, there are no tokens with a plain adjective. Finally, ‘seann triubhas’ (literally meaning “old trews”) is the name of a traditional Highland dance, and it refers to the title of the tune it is danced to (exocentric compound, cf section 2.8 on the classification of compounds).

6.4. Lenition after *seann-*

Most dental consonants remain unlenited after the dental ending of *seann-* – lenited examples are from Lewis in the first place. In *saoghal* (14) ‘world’, *slighe* (1) ‘way’ and in the phrase *an t-seana t-seanfhaicail* (1) ‘the old proverb’, /s/ may change to /t/ in dative and

genitive cases at least after the definite article and *seann-* – most of these examples are from Skye, one is from Lewis, found in autobiographies or narratives (storytelling register). Thomas Moffat Murchison refers to it as intrusive /t/ in the preface to *Sgrìobhaidhean Choinnich MhicLeòid* (one of the sources) (examples are shown in Example 129b below). Most stops are unlenited in the source from Easter Ross (*Saoghal Bana-mhairiche*). *Seann far-ainm* ‘old nickname/by-name’ (where *seann* qualifies a compound) and *seann fear* ‘old man’ (from Easter Ross) are examples for unlenited /f/ (*an t-sean(n) fheadhainn* ‘the old ones’ is always lenited, which resistance to change may imply that it is a fixed expression). Unlenited /m/ occurs only in the name *sean Màiri Anna Dhòmhmallach* (there is another example for an unlenited name in Example 129d). (In coordinatives only the initial of the first base noun is lenited: e.g. *seann dhaoine agus boireannaich* ‘old men and women’, *seann fhear agus bean* ‘an old man and woman’.)

There is no obvious reason why there are both lenited and unlenited tokens in most sources, often even in the same words; i.e. there seems to be no consistency in the application of lenition. In certain cases it appears to depend on number (*seann duine* ‘an old person/man’ vs *seann dhaoine* ‘old men/people’), or on case (nominative: *seann thaigh-seinnse* ‘an old tavern’ – genitive: *air beulaibh an t-seann taighe* ‘in front of the old house’, *dorus an t-seann taighe* ‘the door of the old house’; nominative: *na seann shaighdearan* ‘the veterans’ – dative: *o na seann saighdearan* ‘from the veterans’). Neither of these explanations, however, is sufficiently supported in all – or any – sources. /s/ may remain unlenited in a loan word, and lenited in other cases (cf *na seann Science notebooks* ‘the old Science notebooks’, *seann seacaid* ‘old jacket’ – *anns an t-seann Sheòmar-Leughaidh* ‘in the old Reading Room’ from the same source) (/s/ tends to be unlenited in loan words, such as *seann-sead* ‘old shed’, *seann-seileir* ‘old cellar’ or *seann seacaid* ‘old jacket’ in several sources). *Seanair* and *seanmhair* in most cases stay unlenited after additional prefixes of *seann/sinn* etc (i.e. in words like ‘great-grandfather’ or ‘great-great-great-grandfather’ – cf *shean-shean-shean-seanair*). There is a sole lenited token *shean-shean-sheanair* out of 26 examples.

Example 129.

a) unlenited dentals:

/d/ *sean(n) dòigh*, *sean(n) dachaidh*, *seann dannsa*, *seann dealbhan*, *seann diabhal*, *seann dùthaich*, *seann dreach thabhartach*, *seann Dotair Ros*, *seann dongarees*, *seann droch Nàmh/air an seann droch shaoghal sin*

/t/ *sean Talmhainn, seann taidhrean càr, seann tobhta, seann togalaichean, seann tughadh, seann teaghlach, Seann Tiomnadh, seann teudan, seann teipichean cèire, seann-triubhas, seann trainnse*

/s/ *seann saoghal, seann-seanair, seann seanchaidhean, seann seòladair, seann sìogaidh, seann sùilean, seann sligean tomhais, seann sluagh, seann sia sgillinn, seann Seumas;*

b) /s/ > [t] (intrusive /t/):

(s)an t-seann t-saogha(i)l, às an t-seann t-slighe

c) lenited dentals:

/d/ > [ɣ] *seann dhuine/dhaoine, seann dhachaigh*

/t/ > [h] *seann thaigh, seann thobhta, seann thogalach, seann thrainnsichean*

d) unlenited stops:

/p/ *seann pioctairean*

/b/ *seann beul-aithris, seann bitch, seann bòtan, seann boireannach, seann bodach*

/c/ *seann ciopair, seann cruibhean, sean Caimbeul*

/g/ *seann gobhar*

From Example 129d *seann beul-aithris* ‘old oral tradition’ (compound) and *sean Caimbeul* (name) are not from Easter Ross, the geographic origin of *(na) seann cruibhean* ‘(the) old horseshoes’ is uncertain, all the other unlenited stops are from Easter Ross (at least 34 tokens, most of which are unlenited /b/), just as unlenited /f/ in *seann fear* ‘old man’. ‘Intrusive /t/’ can be considered as *homorganic defricativisation* – see Irish examples in section 3.5.3.2.

6.5. Questions to native speakers

Native speakers could help identify the main differences in the meaning of *seann*- and *aosta* (especially in the case of *duine* ‘man/person’, *bean* ‘woman/wife’ and *boireannach* ‘woman’ – where both are used in significant numbers), for instance, what role abstractness plays (consider figurative examples with *aosta* from Lewis. It should also be checked what the difference is between predicative/attributive *aosta* and *sean*.

Non-compositional meanings could be studied, such as ‘former’ (in *seann saighdear* ‘veteran’ (lit. “old soldier”), *seann leannan* ‘old sweetheart’, *seann Gháidhlig/Sean-Gháidhlig* ‘old Gaelic/Irish’, etc; or in old types of things like *seann téipichean céire* ‘old wax tapes’, *seann teine Modern Mistress* ‘old fireplace Modern Mistress’, *seann stóbh Aga* ‘old stove Aga’, etc.), existing for a long time (like *seann charaid* ‘old friend’ as opposed to *caraid aosta* referring to age?), or the sense of traditionality in *seann òran* ‘folksong’,

seann sgeulachdan ‘old stories’, and the like. The difference between *seann taigh* and *taigh aosta* (‘traditional’ vs ‘old house’) could also be investigated, as well as when *seann-chànan* is used in place of *cànan aosta* ‘old language’.

In the case of *seann-* and *aosta* questions of dialectology have appeared to show a clearer pattern than in the other adjectives I have examined. Namely, I have found less *aosta* in sources from the Uists or Skye, etc, whereas it has been more often used in Lewis. In Skye *sean* as a plain adjective has appeared to be more common (at least in earlier sources) than in other dialects. These suggestions could also be checked by native speakers’ judgements.

6.6. Summary

This chapter has revealed that preceding adjective *seann-* is highly productive. It occurs in fixed expressions, it may convey traditionality, or refer to former types and roles. The most frequent combinations with both *seann-* and *aosta* denotated people. The corpus did not show many tokens for *sean* as an attributive plain adjective, the few exceptions were mainly found in poetry.

The next chapter deals with Scottish Gaelic words that may function as intensifiers in certain constructions; these are discussed in the following order: *fìor* ‘really, truly’, *làr* ‘fully, absolutely’, *sàr* ‘extremely’, and *sìor* ‘constantly, continually’.

7. Intensifiers

7.1. FÌOR

Fìor can be used as an adverb meaning ‘really, truly’. As an adjective it exhibits two basic senses: it either refers to purity (‘true’) or authenticity (‘real’). It shows an intensifier (adverbial) meaning (‘really, truly’) qualifying adjectives, certain nouns and verbs.

Table 10.

Tokens	1202
Relevant	783
Other	
plain adjective	42
predicative	207
adverb (gu fìor)	24
with copula	133

The number of tokens for *fìor* was calculated at 1202. From these, 783 proved to be relevant. Among the rest, I have counted 42 phrases in which *fìor* happens to be a plain adjective (like ‘*S i uaisle cridhe blàth an uaisle fhìor!*’ ‘True nobility is the nobility of a warm heart!’; *an fhìonan fhìor* ‘the true vines (dat.)’ (at least three times); *Có as urrainn dearbhadh fìor thoirt duinn?* ‘Who can give real proof/evidence to us?’). These examples also include the compound⁴⁶ *creideamh-fìor* ‘true religion/belief’ (as well as the expression *an aon nì fìor* ‘the one true thing’ and *rath fìor* ‘real success/prosperity’, the latter two of which show very similar characteristics to a back-referential predicative phrase (consider expression *Tha aon nì fìor co-dhiù*. ‘One thing is true anyway.’ with the predicative usage of *fìor*). I have 24 examples for the adverbial expression *gu fìor* ‘truly’ (including *gu fìrinneach is fìor* ‘truly and honestly’ and *gu fìor fìrinneach* ‘ ’), 133 phrases with different forms of the copula (i.e. *(i)s f(h)ìor*, *am fìor e*, *gur(a) fìor*, *chan fhìor*, *nach f(h)ìor*, *mas f(h)ìor*, *mas eadh is fìor*, *mas a b’ fhìor*, *nam b’ fhìor*, *mar b’ fhìor*), and 207 predicative expressions (including *(dè/cheart) cho fìor is* ‘how true/just as true/so true’ (3), *(dè) cho fìor ri* ‘(what is) so true as’ (3), and the comparatives *nas fìor* ‘truer’ and *na b’ fhìora* ‘truer (in past)’, once each). (*Cho fìor ri* occurs once as adverbial: *Bruidhinn e cho fìor ri parrot*. ‘He spoke as truly as a parrot.’)

⁴⁶ In this chapter I call every hyphenated phrase a compound, out of convenience.

7.1.1. Statistics

Turning to the relevant tokens, *fìor* is found mostly with nouns (445/783, i.e. 57%), although it also frequently accompanies plain adjectives (274/783, i.e. 35%) (or adverbs: such as *beagan* ‘a little bit’, or *math* ‘well’, *teann* ‘tightly’ in the examples below).

Example 130.

- a) *gus o cheann fìor bheagan ùine* ‘until really short (lit. “little”) time ago’, i.e. ‘until very recently’
- b) ... *nach robh agam ach fìor bheagan dhen Bheurla*. ‘... I didn’t speak/have but a really little/tiny bit of English.’
- c) *fìor bheag de bhiadh/thoradh* ‘a really little bit of food/really little effect’, *fìor bheag fhoghlum* ‘really little education’
- d) *Chord an dithis agaibh rium fìor mhath*. ‘I liked both of you really much (lit. “really well”).’
- e) ... *a tha ceangailte fìortheann ri chèile*. ‘... which are bound/tied together really tightly.’

The nouns include 31 compounds (i.e. words with a hyphen), 1 prefixed noun (*‘na fhìor mhi-thlachd* ‘in his real/deep unhappiness’), and 1 (biblical) name: *fìor Thòmas Teagmhach* ‘a real Doubting Thomas’, as well as two abstract nouns, which are reiterative compounds⁴⁷ themselves: ... *agus broinn na dachaigh aige na fìor mò-rà agus muic-maic* (*Fìor* triggers/causes lenition in all cases. The only exception is *fìor mò-rà*, which is a noun with no tangible meaning.) I have added participles to the adjectives (as *fìor thoilichte* ‘really happy’, *fìor ghointe* ‘really hurt’) and I have counted prefixed adjectives among them (*fìor cho-lionta* ‘really completed’, *fìor neo-àbhaisteach* ‘really/very unusual’, *fìor neo-eisimileach* ‘really independent’).

To a smaller degree *fìor* occurs together with other preceding adjectives (56/783, i.e. 7%): 23 with *droch-*, 18 with *seann-*, 11 with *corra-* (once a repetition), and only 4 with *deagh-*; and in 8 cases (1% of the occurrences) it intensifies verbal nouns (4 *a’ fìor-bhrìdeadh* ‘true-breeding’ (technical expression), 2 *a’ fìor(-)c(h)òrdadh* ‘really enjoying’, and 2 *a’ fìor lùigeachdainn* ‘really wishing’). In 4 cases out of the 18 tokens with *seann-*, *fìor* intensifies the preceding adjective itself, *fìor-sheann* meaning ‘prehistoric, ancient’ (the hyphen indicates this usage, as already mentioned in section 6.1.1 on *seann*): e.g. *air an fhìor-sheann Talaimh* ‘on the prehistoric Earth’, *fìor-sheann-Chruimreach* ‘Proto-Welsh’, *anns an fhìor-sheann aimsir* ‘in the prehistoric time’, *de fhìor-sheann lus*

⁴⁷ *reiterative compounds/doublets*: repetitive words with some vocalic alteration (see the end of section 3.5.1.1. on Irish doublets)

talmhainn ‘of a prehistoric continental plant’. There is one example, in which it intensifies the ordinal number ‘first’: *b’fhlòr cheud ainm dith* ‘it was its very first name’ (although this may refer to ‘its real first name’).

Words more frequently occurring after *fìor* in the corpus are as follows:

67 *glan* ‘pure’ (47 written as one word, 19 with hyphen, 1 written as two words)

28 *uisge* ‘water’ (all with hyphen)

24 *math* ‘good’ (4 with hyphen)

22 *Gàidheal* ‘Gael, Highlander’ (2 with hyphen)

18 *cnòthach* ‘nuciferous’ (all with hyphen; all from the same source)

13 *duine* ‘man, person’ (all without hyphen)

12 *aithreachas* ‘regret’ (2 with hyphen)

11 *fuil* ‘blood’ (6 with hyphen)

9 *beag* ‘small’ (all without hyphen); *beagan* ‘a little bit’ (1 with hyphen)

It is no surprise that among the most common occurrences of *fìor* we encounter nouns and adjectives (and adverbs), as these are the commonest word classes occurring with *fìor*, as we have already seen. They show a wide semantic range within the main meanings of ‘true’, ‘real’, or ‘really/truly’ (intensifier meaning), which I summarise and explain in the next section. Some of these are associated with religion (see *fìorghlan* ‘immaculate’ or *fìor(-)fhuil* ‘noble blood’ (of Christ)), others connote the quality of being true, “Christian” in the eye of religion (consider *fìor dhuine* ‘a true man/person’ or *fìor Ghàidheal* ‘a true Gael/Highlander’), or simply serve as an innovative scholarly word, as in the case of *fìor-chnòthach* ‘eukaryotic’ (organisms with *real* nucleus), of which all 18 tokens come from the Gaelic Biology book translated by Ruairidh MacThòmais (in the corpus).

Loan words qualified by *fìor* are *looker*, *Nazi*, *Moderate*, and *Hitlerites*. In none of these cases can *fìor* be considered as an intensifier, having the meaning ‘true’, displaying the typical characteristics of a group or a kind of person. (We can also encounter *fìor* together with *péin* ‘pain’ (1), as an intensifier, as well as *spiorad* ‘spirit’, in the sense ‘true, pure’ (5; eg *fìor spiorad Chrìosda* ‘the true spirit of Christ’).

7.1.2. Meanings

With adjectives (including preceding adjectives), *fìor* functions as a normal adverb, casting an intensifying meaning on the adjective, see Example 131. The same can be observed in the case of the ordinal number *a’ chiad* ‘first’ in *b’fhlòr cheud ainm dith* ‘it was her very first name’.

Example 131.

fior inntineach ‘really interesting’, *fior neònach* ‘really strange’

fior mhath ‘really good’, *fior olc* ‘really evil’

fior dhorch ‘really dark’, *fior dhubh* ‘really black’

fior-ghlic ‘really wise’

Each of these examples show a high degree of the quality described by the adjective, and it is also worth noticing that most of them occur without hyphen in all, or (in the case of *math*) in most cases. Regarding the last example, *fior-ghlic* ‘really wise’, which is written with hyphen in all 6 cases in the corpus, I am not sure whether it does not convey the value of purity, so frequently a connotation of *fior* as an adjective, which we will see shortly with respect to the nouns.

Nouns accompanied by *fior* can be connected with a great variety of semantic categories, such as

- feelings or mental entity: *faireachdainn* ‘feeling’, *spèis* ‘affection’, *gràdh* ‘love’, *aobhar* ‘reason’; *bròn* ‘sadness’, *gruaim* ‘gloom’, *aithreachas* ‘regret’ (often with religious connotation!); *brìgh* ‘sense’, etc.
- senses: *blas* ‘taste’ (compare the adjectives *blasda* ‘tasty’; *blàth* ‘warm’) and beauty: *bòidhchead* ‘beauty’ (adjectives: *bòidheach* ‘beautiful’; *àlainn* ‘beautiful’, *eireachdail* ‘comely, elegant, handsome, stately’), other physical abilities (mainly adjectives: *làidir* ‘strong’, *luath* ‘quick’; but see the noun *luathas* ‘quickness’);
- Christianity: *fior Chorp is fìor Fhuil Chrìost* ‘the noble Body and noble Blood of Christ’; *fior ghràs (Dhé)* ‘(God’s) true grace’; *mar is motha leanas sinn fìor spiorad Chrìosda* ‘the more we follow the true spirit of Christ’; *fior-dhiadhachd* ‘true religion’
- moral quality of a person: *gaisgeach* ‘hero’ (4), *laoch agus gaisgeach* ‘warrior and hero’ (1); *Gàidheal* ‘Highlander, Gael’; *gille* ‘boy, fellow’, *balach* ‘boy’, *duine* ‘man, person’, *fear* ‘man’ (see section on **context** below)
- other positive moral quality (often religious): *nàdur* ‘nature, temper’, *misneachd* ‘courage, spirit’, *moladh* ‘praise’
- position/extremity: *fior thoiseach* ‘(the) very beginning’ (8), *fior mhullach* ‘(the) very top’ (7), *fior mheadhon* ‘(the) very centre’ (3), *fior cheann* ‘(the) very end/head/top’ (2), *fior dheireadh* ‘(the) very end’ (1), *fior oisinn deas an t-saoghail* ‘the most Southern corner of the world’ (1), *fior bhonn-stèidh na beatha* ‘the very

base/foundation of life’, *fior-bhàrr* ‘(the) very top’ (2) (in *air fior-bhàrr a comais/mo chomais* ‘at her/my very best’ (lit. “at the very top of her/my ability”))

Some of these categories can be encountered among the adjectives accompanying *fior*, which is not surprising, as in these cases the role of *fior* is intensifying the meaning, although with nouns it usually shows some further connotations. *Fior* is frequently connected with positive values: *fosgladh fior-shìobhaltais agus na fior-dhaonnachd* ‘opening of true service and (the) true humanity’, or convey the meaning of ‘purity’, positive moral quality, often with the connotation of Christianity (cf Example 132) (as an intensifier it may accompany negative values, see later in this section). Alternatively, *fior* is used to introduce honest, genuine feelings: *fior aithreachas* ‘true regret’, *fear le ad chruaidh air a cheann agus fior ghruaim air aghaidh* ‘a man with a hard hat on his head and a real/deep frown on his face’. Another example for purity, simplicity: *fior-ealain sìmplidh a’ bhàird* ‘the simple true art of the poet’.

Example 132.

- a) *So fior theagasg na cosamhlachd* ‘Here is the true teaching/message of the parable’
- b) *So agaibh a rithisd fior dhòigh Dhé ri peacaich a’ tilleadh d’a ionnsuidh.* ‘Here you have God’s true way again with sinners returning to him.’

In other expressions, mostly with abstract nouns, *fior* exhibits a rather figurative function. Its intensifier function is the most salient here, increasing the degree of the state to which the expression refers (see those under the label ‘position/extremity’).

The roles of *fior* “qualifying” nouns can be practically divided into three groups, two with adjectival functions: conveying the qualities of authenticity and purity (i.e. ‘real’ and ‘true’), the third one (i.e. ‘intensifier’) being of real importance to us, exposing an intensifying impact on the noun. The three groups are highlighted below:

1) ‘REAL’

- biological category: *fior fhungaich* ‘true fungi’, *fior(-)choin* ‘pure-bred dogs’, *fior-chnòthach* ‘eukaryote’
- authentic: *fior Ghàidheal* ‘a true/real Highlander’, *fior Lochlainneach* ‘a real Norseman’, *fior Leòdach* ‘a real MacLeod’, *fior threun Leòdhasach* ‘a real Lewis champion’, *fior mhuinntir Bhràcadail* ‘the real folk of Bracadale’; *fior Hitlerites* ‘real Hitlerites’, *fior Mhoderate* ‘a true Moderate’, *am fior phairiseach* ‘the true Pharisee’ – representing the essential or defining values of a certain group

- actual: *Cha robh dòigh a b' fheàrr air fìor shuidheachadh an t-sluaigh fhaicinn* 'There wasn't a better way to see the actual situation of the community/people'
 - conveying positive connotations: of professions: doing a good, reliable job (eg *fìor shealgair* 'real hunters'); with other bases: the right one, highly appropriate (eg *fìor thaghadh an t-suinn* 'a true sample of the champion/ a real champion', *fìor-eisimpleir* 'a really good example' (which shows the phenomenon in question correctly)); *fìor-fhàilte* 'a true welcome': i.e. warm-hearted, the way as it should be
- 2) **'TRUE'** - quality, purity, morality, connected with Christianity: as described above (eg ... *nach buin am peacadh do fhìor nàdur an duine; gur nì e a thàinig a steach air muin fhìor nàdur, cleas puinsean no galair air duine fallain*. '... that sin does not belong to the true nature of (the) man; it is a thing that comes (in) on top of good nature, as venom or ailment on a healthy man.' (in religious context))
- Christianity: *fìor Chorp* is *fìor Fhuil Chrìost* 'the true/noble Body and true/noble Blood of Christ'; *fìor ghràs (Dhé)* '(God's) true grace'; *na fìor chreidich* 'the true believers'
 - moral quality of a person: *gaisgeach* 'a real hero; *fìor Ghàidheal* 'a true Highlander'; *fìor ghille* 'a true fellow', *fìor dhuine* 'a true man'
 - other positive moral quality: *fìor nàdur* 'true nature', *fìor mhisneachd* 'true spirit/real courage'
- 3) **INTENSIFIER:** In the intensifier function *fìor* intensifies the meaning of the noun (often a feeling), in which it is similar to adjectives: *fìor thaing* 'true/many thanks' (also with adjective: *fìor thaingeil* 'really/truly thankful'), *fìor phéin* 'real pain'; it may emphasise negative qualities in somebody (*fìor amadan* 'a real fool') or negative relationships with someone (*fìor nàmhaid* 'a real enemy') (but see also in the adjectival phrase *cho fìor mhaol* 'so really naive/green'); or the extremes of time or place as in the last group above, labelled as 'position/extremity' /for its extreme quality/. Together with *fìor-othaisg* ('a true yearling sheep/a really young sheep') (4 times, from the same source), which has a compound quality, its qualifier referring to the inner semantic structure of *othaisg* 'yearling sheep' (highlighting and intensifying the 'age' component from its meaning), I have found 29 similar tokens. Such intensifier meaning may also be recognised in phrases like *fìor dhearbhadh* 'real/true evidence', *fìor-fhàilte* 'a true welcome', or *fìor-eisimpleir* 'a real example', etc.

Intensifying negative meanings, *fìor* indicates a real high degree of the adjective (e.g. *fìor dhorcha* 'really dark', *fìor olc* 'really bad/evil') or noun (often in fixed structures) (e.g. *fìor*

phéin ‘real pain’, *fior ghruaim* ‘real gloom’, *fior bhròn* ‘real sadness’, *fior dhragh* ‘real worry’, *fior èiginn* ‘real danger’; (relationships) *fior amadan* ‘real fool/blithering idiot’, *fior nàmhaid* ‘real enemy’. (Note also neutral qualities such as *fior neònach* ‘really strange’ and *fior chabhaig* ‘real hurry’.)

Other structures applying *fior* as an intensifier (fixed expressions, collocations frequently involve intensification):

- *is* structure: *b’ fhìor thoigh le* (7) ‘really liked’ + *is fìor chaomh le* (1) ‘really like (sg)’; *b’ fhìor aithne do* (1) ‘really knew/knew well (sy)’
- *ann* + POSSESSIVE PRONOUN structure: *’nam fìor chabhaig/’na fhìor chabhaig* ‘in my/his real hurry’ (also *b’e sud fìor chabhag gu céilidh* ‘there was real haste to the ceilidh’; *Theagamh gun robh fìor chabhag air Móràg* ‘Perhaps Morag was in real hurry’)
- *fìor* + NOUN + *aig*: *fìor fhios aig* ‘really knew/knew well (sg)’, *fìor(-)chuimhne aig* (2) ‘truly remembered’, i.e. ‘remembered well’; *Bha fìor bheachd aig na maoir có na ceannardan a bha orra* ‘The officers had a real/good idea about who were the leaders above them’ (also ... *gu robh e de’n fhìor bheachd gu robh ...* ‘...that he really thought that...’, lit. ‘he was of real opinion that’)
- *fìor* + NOUN + *air*: *fìor fheum air* ‘really need(s) (sg)’, *fìor eagal air* (2) ‘really scared’ (cf. also *le fìor eagal (ar bàis)* ‘with real fright (of our death)’), *fìor(-)shannt air* (3) ‘real desire for’, i.e. ‘really desire to’
- *fìor* + NOUN + *a thoirt*: *fìor aire a thoirt* ‘pay real attention’, *fìor thaing a thoirt* ‘giving true/many thanks’
- *fìor* + NOUN + *a chur*: *fìor ruaig a chur air* ‘put (sy) to “real” flight’, i.e. ‘scare (sy) off’; ... *a chur fìor-fhàilte air ...* ‘to truly welcome (sy)’; *’S chuir sin fìor-iongnadh air mo sheanair.* ‘And that really surprised my grandfather.’

Further collocations include *fìor dhragh’ a dhèanamh do...* ‘make (sy) really worry’, *air fìor èiginn* ‘in real danger’, or *fìor ghoirt* ‘really painful’ (eg *Tuigidh sinn ann cho fìor ghoirt ’s a bha an sgaradh.* ‘There we’ll understand how painful the separation was.’).

Context:

The context of *fìor* + noun constructions appear to confirm *fìor*’s connotation of good quality – especially with respect to people. They commonly occur together with the adjective *uasal* ‘noble’: *fìor fhuil uasal* (2) ‘true noble blood’, *f. dhuin’(-)uasal* (4) ‘gentleman’ (lit. “noble man”), *f. bhàrdachd uasal* ‘true noble poetry’. Besides *duin(e)(-)uasal*, which is a compound meaning ‘gentleman’, *fìor dhuine* ‘true man’ and *fìor ghille*

‘true boy/guy/fellow’ (i.e. ‘honest, kind’) also tend to be further qualified by adjectives like *math* ‘good’, *còir* ‘kind’, and *gasda* ‘nice’. Examples with *math*: *fior dhuine ma(i)th* (2) ‘a really true man’ (or ‘a good, kind man’?), *fior aite math* ‘a really good place’, *fior latha math* ‘a really good day’, *fior cheilidh mhath* ‘a really good ceilidh/ a good real ceilidh’. Examples with *gasda*: *fior dhaoine gasda* ‘really nice men’ (or ‘nice, honest/reliable men’?), *fior dhuine gasda* ‘a really nice man’ (or ‘a nice, reliable man’?). There are 3 tokens for *fior ghille* in the corpus, all of which occur with further adjectives expressing a good character: *fior ghille coir* ‘a really kind fellow’ (or ‘a kind, honest fellow’?), *fior ghille gasda* ‘a really nice fellow’ (or ‘a nice, reliable fellow’?); ‘*S e fìor ghille tapaidh, eireachdail a bh’ ann* ‘He was a really handsome, brainy fellow’ (or ‘a kind, handsome, brainy fellow’?).

Verbal expressions with *fior* mimic their counterparts in other grammatical groups. Verbal nouns occurring with *fior* are as follows: *brideadh* ‘breeding’ (4), *còrdadh* ‘enjoying’ (2), *lùigeachdainn* ‘desiring/wishing’ (2). *Fìor-bhrìdeadh* is a technical phrase used in a Gaelic Biology book, referring to a true breeding lineage just like its nominal counterparts. The other two express feelings, thus *fior* here functions as an intensifier as with adjectives.

Regarding intensifying function, *fior* often occurs together with *cho*, which further increases the degree of intensification. There are 65 tokens containing *cho fìor* in the corpus, in 7 of which *fior* is either hyphenated or (in 3 of the 4 *cho fìor(-)ghlan* ‘so immaculate’) is written as one word with the adjective, just as *cho fìor-bheag* ‘so really small’ (1), both of which collocations are rather common as we have seen in section 7.1.1. on the statistics of *fior*. In these cases the conventionalised intensifications may be rendered compound expressions with the primary stress on *fior*. Otherwise it would be unexplainable to apply a hyphen with this double intensifier structure.

Example 133.

- a) *Cha robh iongnadh ged a dh’fhàs e cho fìor ghorm...* ‘It was no wonder that it grew so really/very green...’
- b) *Chaidh m’ùine ghoirid aig an tigh seachad cho fìor luath.* ‘My short time at the house passed by so really fast.’
- c) *Gach glaic agus blianag cho fìor-ghlan fo dhriùchd* ‘Every valley and field/plain so really clear under (the) dew’
- d) *Cha robh e idir cho fìor-chinnteach.* ‘It wasn’t at all so really certain.’

7.1.3. Orthography

Regarding orthography, 153 tokens are hyphenated out of the 780 relevant examples (i.e. approximately 20% of the tokens are hyphenated), from all grammatical categories (*fior* may stand with adjectives, nouns, verbal nouns in these ‘compounds’). There are even 7 examples for hyphenation between *fior* and preceding adjectives – 5 of which are *fior-sheann* ‘prehistoric’, nevertheless in all cases *fior* intensifies the preceding adjective (*fior-chorra-fhacal* ‘a really rare word’, *fior-dhroch-chliù* ‘a really bad reputation’ and *fior-sheann-Chruimreach* ‘Proto-Welsh’, lit. “really old Welsh”) separately, rather than referring to the whole preceding noun + noun construction (as in *fior sheann-duine* ‘a true old man’).

No surprise that compound meanings like *fior-sheann* appear to show a tendency to be written with hyphen (‘ancient or prehistoric’ is semantically richer than the compositional, intensified meaning of ‘really old’). Another obvious compound is *fior-uisge*, which refers to freshwater as opposed to saltwater (i.e. to a type of water, which, semantically, is not “truer” or more real than saltwater). Hyphenated expressions are common among those related to Christianity: *fior-ghlan* (or even *fiorghlan*) ‘truly pure, immaculate’, *fior-fhuil* ‘true/noble blood’ (of a clan), *fior-dhiadhachd* ‘true religion’.

It can connect to intensifier expressions in which *fior* gives an extra positive connotation to the intensifier meaning: *fior-fhàilte* ‘a true (warm-hearted) welcome’, *fior-eisimpleir* ‘a real (good) example’; the intensifier function relates to a component of the expression’s inner semantic structure as already discussed above in the case of *fior-othaisg* ‘a real yearling sheep’ (age). Similarly, only one of the ‘positional’ or ‘extremity’ phrases is hyphenated, and this one refers to an abstract context: *air fior-bhàrr a/mo c(h)omais* ‘to her/my very best’/to do my very best (lit. “at the top of her/my ability”). Ruairidh MacThòmais (from Lewis) tend to write his innovative biological terms with a hyphen: eg *fior-chnòthach* ‘eukaryotic’, *fior-bhrìdeadh* ‘true-breeding’; see also *fior-sheann-Chruimreach* ‘Proto-Welsh’ from the same source.

Pronunciation (stress) must be an essential key in interpreting a phrase as a compound, as well as convention of use. An example for the first of these may be the following quotation: *’S chuir sin fior-iongnadh air mo sheanair*. “And it put real surprise on my grandfather.” (i.e. it staggered him). The tendency to follow the stress pattern of an utterance in orthography (i.e. expressions with initial stress tend to be written with a hyphen and those with double stress without) would explain why there seems to be no general pattern for all hyphenated tokens: it may occur in almost any phrases with *fior* normally written in two words. With respect to convention, the phrases *fior-fhàilte* ‘a true

welcome’ and *fior-eisimpleir* ‘a real/right example’ could be more frequently used than *fior thaghadh* ‘a real/true sample’ (not proved by the corpus, where all these word combinations appear once), which, if true, might serve as an explanation for their preferred hyphenated usage: common combinations of words may begin to be understood as collocations, then, by turn, compounds. (Note, however, that *fior-ìongnadh* ‘a real surprise’ and *fior-othaisg* ‘a true yearling sheep/ a really young sheep’ are from the same source, without any non-hyphenated tokens.)

There is one source in the corpus in which two different word classes, albeit based on the same root, are handled differently in relation to hyphenation: the one with the participle is a complex, adverbial compound (similar to *green-eyed*, see section 2.2), and thus is hyphenated, whereas the noun of the same root (which is incidentally a compound as well) appears without a hyphen: *fior-uidheamaichte* ‘well-qualified/specified’ vs *fior uidheam-smachd* ‘an actual/specific regulator’ (technical language).

The following phrases are written in one word: *fiorghlan* (47, out of 67) ‘immaculate’, *fiorghlaineachd* (1) ‘absolute purity’, (... *na tha ceangailte*) *fiortheann (ri chèile)* (1) ‘(... which were tied together) really tightly’, *fioruisg* (3, out of 28) ‘freshwater’, *fiorsgeulachd* (1) ‘non-fiction’, *fiorchreideach* (1, out of 2) ‘true believer’, *mialchoin fhìorchoin* (1, out of 2) ‘pure-bred greyhounds’, *fiorchàilean (na renaissance)* (1). (Regarding *fiorghlan*, only one of the 67 tokens is written in two words: ... *a bhi rannsachadh an robh e fior ghlan*, ... ‘... to be examining if it was really pure ...’ (i.e. the gold in coins) – this could be due to emphasis on *fior*, not referring to the integrated concept of being immaculate but to the intensification of being pure of any other metal.)

7.1.4. Questions to native speakers

In the interviews it would be useful to check the suggested connotations of purity and authenticity. It would be also good to know if there is any negative connotation in adjectives (similar to nouns like *fior amadan* ‘a real fool’, and *fior nàmhaid* ‘real enemy’). As regard to verbs, it remains a question whether *fior* intensifies root verbs (e.g. *fior chòrd* ‘really enjoyed’), and whether it expresses honest, genuine feelings in verbal nouns.

Another question is whether hyphenation is related to stress, to the frequency of use, and/or to meaning (compositionality)? Does the hyphen in *fior-ghlic* refer to the connotation of purity? Additionally, is there a complex structure behind the spelling of *fior-othaisg* ‘a real yearling’, and extra connotation in the cases of *fior-fhàilte* ‘a true (warm-hearted) welcome’, and *fior-eisimpleir* ‘a real (appropriate) example’, as suggested? Similarly, does meaning influence forms such as *fiorghlan~fior-ghlan~fior ghlan*? It is

also an interesting question, what influences the use of hyphen in common expressions qualified by *cho: fìor ghlan* ‘really clean, pure’ – *cho fìor-ghlan* ‘so really pure’, *fìor bheag* ‘really small’ – *cho fìor-bheag* ‘so really small’. Are these further cases of stress?

7.2. LÀN

The principal role of *làn* is predicative – adverbial as well as adjectival (‘full (of)’), in which sense it may be associated with a genitive construction (‘full of X’). It may function as a noun in the same sense (‘a fill (of)’ – this quantity noun is rather productive in Gaelic. It also has an adjectival usage (‘full, complete’; i.e. ‘full X’) and in some cases it may function as an intensifying adverb before adjectives (‘fully, completely, absolutely’; i.e. fully X). As an adjective it may show a special meaning (‘fully-edged’ or ‘veritable’). The intensifier *làn* mainly occurs with adjectives, or in abstract nominal structures.

Table 11.

Tokens	1383
Relevant	467
Other	
plain adjective	52
predicative or adverbial	705 (665+40)
adverb (gu làn)	5
noun	154

Regarding *làn*, the corpus contains 467 relevant examples out of 1383 tokens, as Table 11 shows. Other examples include 666 predicative cases, 154 tokens of *làn* as a noun, 51 tokens as a plain adjective and 45 examples for adverbial usage (including 4 *gu làn* and 1 *ge làn* ‘fully’). There are 2 examples with the intensifier *ro* (i.e. *ro làn* ‘too full’), a number of tokens for (*a cheart*) *cho làn (ri)* ‘just as full (as)’ and one for *cho ioma-mhodhach làn* ‘so full in many ways’. In 39 cases the different forms of *loma-làn* are used (it has a stronger, intensified meaning, something like ‘absolutely full’): 31 *loma(-)làn* (3 without hyphen), 5 *luma(-)làn* (only 1 with hyphen), 3 *lom-làn*. All but 4 tokens (*loma(-)làn*) are predicative/adverbial. There are also 5 examples for *leth(each)-làn* ‘half-way full’ among the predicative tokens (4 *letheach-làn*, 1 *leth-làn*). With regard to context, *làn* sometimes occurs together with *a’ cur thairis* ‘overflowing’. Predicative *làn* often takes *de/dhe/do/dha* or less frequently *le* in its prepositional phrase.

Among the 154 tokens of *làn* as a noun, 72 mean ‘(high) tide’ (including 1 *làn-mara*, 36 *muir-làn* (3 times without a hyphen), 2 *làn reothairt* and 1 *muir làn reothairt* ‘spring-tide’; or even the ‘long’ (phrasal) compound *làn-fo-thuinn* in a poem, lit. “tide under waves”). In

further 8 cases *làn* conveys quantity (eg *le botul 'na dhòrn/ Fhuair sinn làn ann an glainidh* “with a bottle in his hand we got fill in a glass”, i.e. ‘we filled a glass’). 75 quantity nouns serve as base for a genitive phrase, thus often take a prepositional phrase with *de/do* or simple genitive case (even the ‘long’ *làn-na-dùirne* ‘fistful’, lit. “fill of the fist”).

7.2.1. Statistics

Among the relevant tokens of *làn* I have counted 324 with nouns (69.4%), 72 with adjectives and 33 with participles (22.5%), and 38 verbal structures (36 with verbal nouns and 2 with root verbs: *làn-choisinn* ‘fully earned’ (i.e. deserved), *làn fhoillsich* ‘fully revealed’) (8.1%). The nouns include 2 prefixed (*làn cho-aonta* ‘full consensus’, *làn chomh-fhaireachdainn* ‘full compassion/sympathy’), 9 compound nouns and a proper name (of a geographical area: *làn-Ghàidhealtachd* “pan-Gaeldom” (i.e. ‘(the) whole Gaeldom’).

Combinations with the highest occurrences are as follows:

31 *làn(-)chinnteach* (15 with hyphen) ‘fully/absolutely certain’

28 – 27 *làn(-)chreidsinn* (15 with hyphen) + **1** *làn creidsinn* ‘fully believing’

20 – 12 *làn dhùil* (4 with hyphen) + **8** *làn(-)dùil* (2 with hyphen) ‘full expectation’

15 – 11 *làn(-)spàin(e)* (4 with hyphen) + **2** *làn spàineadh* + **1** *làn spàinne* + **1** *làn spàin-adhairc* ‘spoonful’/‘fill of a hornspoon’

14 – 13 *làn(-)thid(e)* (2 with hyphen) + **1** *làn tìde* ‘high time’; ‘full time’

11 *làn(-)riaraichte* (7 with hyphen) ‘fully satisfied’

10 *làn(-)fhios* (5 with hyphen) ‘full knowledge’

9 *làn(-)ghaisgeach* (2 with hyphen) ‘a fully-fledged/veritable hero’; *làn-laghadh* ‘plenary indulgence’

8 *làn(-)chòir* (4 with hyphen) ‘full right’

7 *làn neart* ‘full strength’; **5** *làn(-)thoilichte* (2 with hyphen) + **2** *làn-toilichte* ‘absolutely happy’

6 *làn(-)bheachd* (1 with hyphen) ‘full opinion’

From the list above it is clear that *làn* is common with all sorts of abstract nouns, adjectives, and even the verbal noun *creidsinn* ‘believing’. It is attested among fixed phrases such as *fios/dùil/còir a bhith aig* ‘to know (sg)/intend (to do sg)/have right (to do sg)’, with feelings, states of mind and convictions (*toilichte* ‘happy’, *riaraichte* ‘satisfied’; *cinnteach* ‘certain’, *creidsinn* ‘believing’; etc). It is a common device to express quantity (*làn-spàine* ‘a spoonful’), and it may well refer to power and strength (*neart* ‘energy,

strength’). Further similar examples are to be encountered in the corpus, such as *làn-chinnt* ‘full/entire certainty’; *làn chreideas* ‘full credit/trust’, *làn chreidimh* ‘full/entire belief/faith’; *làn riarachadh* (2) ‘full satisfaction’; *làn thoileach* ‘fully/entirely willing’, *làn thoil (agus chridhe)* (2) ‘full/whole will(ingness) (and heart)’, *làn thoil-inntinn* ‘full enjoyment/pleasure’.

7.2.2. Grammatical structure

The most tangible and literal form of *làn*, referring to quantity, may occur together with the prepositions *de/do*, *le*, or, alternatively, it may take the genitive.

Example 134.

basgaidean sràbhadh làn bìdh ‘straw baskets full of food’

Tha ’n tigh-osda lan de shealgairean agus iasgairean ’s an t-samhradh ‘The hotel is full of hunters and fishermen in the summer’

... *’S thig an Geamhradh làn le tuil.* ‘... And the Winter came full with torrent[s].’

This structure of *làn* is encountered in three occasions:

- a) in predicative or adverbial usage (see example above)
- b) where *làn* functions as a noun, in the sense ‘a great amount’
- c) *làn* followed by a noun indicating a full quantity (‘a whole ...’) of something – further evidence for the close connection between *làn* and the following noun in the genitive is that a number of tokens can be encountered with hyphen: eg *làn-spàine* ‘spoonful’, *làn-làimhe* ‘handful’, *làn-beòil* ‘mouthful’; *làn-sgeilid de uisge/làn-sgeilid uisge*... ‘a saucepanful of water’ (even the exocentric *làn-sùla* ‘eyeful’, lit. ‘full of eye’ (in a poem)):

Làn-sùla thu air thùs nan gruagach,

Reul-iùil fear-stiùradh a’ chuain thu;

Cuspair nam bàrd a ni duan thu,

Do mhaise toirt buaidhean-beòil dhaibh.

‘You are eyeful at the forefront of (the) young women,
you are a guiding star of the ocean’s steersmen;
you are the subject of the poets who make (i.e. write) an ode,
your beauty bringing them oral victories.’

In two cases the compound consists of a longer structure: *long mhór fo a làn-cuid-sheòl* ‘big ship under full sail’; *làn-dì-bheatha* ‘full welcome’ – the former is evidently a genitive

structure; however, the origin of the latter is not clear, according to Dwelly's dictionary *dì-* originates from *deagh-* leaving us with the meaning "completely good life".

More on quantity: predicative/adverbial and nominal usage:

A further 83 tokens show the same structure as above; however, they cannot be considered as compounds by any means. The structure is more complex, containing a definite article or possessive pronoun, as in Example 135.

Example 135.

- a) *làn a' bhotail* 'bottleful, fill of the bottle'
làn a chròig de shiùcar 'a full hand (of his) of sugar'
làn na cuaiche seo den bhùrn ... 'this whole bowl of (the) water/this bowl full of water'
le làn a bhonaid de chlachan 'with his cap full of stones/with a full cap of stones'
A' giùlan làn a' phoca dhiubh 'Carrying a pocketful ("a fill of the pocket") of them'
làn na pìoba [smochd] 'one fill of the pipe [of smoke]'
làn na spàin(e) 'a spoonful' ("one fill of the spoon")
làn a dhùirn/mo dhùirn, etc 'a handful (of his/mine, etc)'
làn am beòil/mo bheòil, etc 'a mouthful (of theirs/mine, etc)'
... a' cur làn a dhroma dheth de chaochladh pòr ... 'loading its back with a variety of crops (of the soil)' (lit. "putting a backful of a variety of crops off")

With *làn* reference is often made to body parts, and in certain cases this may express a more abstract meaning:

- b) *'S tha làn a chinn aige den chàin* ... 'And he has a full head (of his) of the language'/ *... aig an robh làn a chinn a Ghàidhlig ...* 'who had a full head (of his) of Gaelic'/ *le làn an cinn de Ghàidhlig* 'with a full head of Gaelic/with their head full of Gaelic'
... a' gealltainn dhut làn do bhroinn. 'promising you a full stomach/belly (of yours)'/ *'S math is fhiach thu làn do bhroinn*. 'You're well worth/deserve your full stomach/belly (i.e. the fill of your stomach/belly).'

Furthermore, *làn* may be used in a broader or more poetic sense:

- c) *làn an saoghal a dh' uisge* 'a whole world of rain'
... ghlan mi làn a saoghal a soithichean. "I cleaned a whole world of her dishes"

... *a' gabhail aon làn a shùl de ghleann a ghràidh* ... “taking one eyeful (of his) of the valley of his love”, i.e. ‘(he) taking one glimpse/glance of his beloved valley’

Frequently the same expressions exist with *làn* as a noun in a compound and in a grammatical phrase, as in Example 136:

Example 136.

a) COMPOUND

làn-dùirn ‘a fistful’

làn-beòil ‘a mouthful’

làn-spàine ‘a spoonful’

GRAMMATICAL PHRASE

làn a dhùirn “a fill of his fist”

làn a bheòil “a fill of his mouth”

làn na spàine “a fill of the spoon”

The difference here is apparently that the grammatical phrases do not simply refer to quantity but emphasise the contribution of the particular person who does the action (by the possessive pronoun); the definite article appears in relation with objects (*botal* ‘bottle’, *poca* ‘pocket/sack’, *pioba* ‘pipe’, *spàine* ‘spoon’, etc.), the reason for its use is less obvious than that of the possessive pronoun, it seems to alternate freely between the fixed expression and the compound. In poetic language we have even encountered the variation *làn-sùla* ‘eyeful’, vs *làn a shùl* “the fill of his eyes”. It is worth noticing that, while there is a hyphen in the former structures, it is absent in the latter. This even applies to longer structures such as *làn-cuid-sheòl* and *làn-dì-bheatha*:

b) COMPOUND

long mhór fo a làn-cuid-sheòl

‘a big ship under (its) full sail’

làn-dì-bheatha ‘full welcome’

GRAMMATICAL PHRASE

Bha làn a chuid sheòl aige fèin ...

‘He was spoiling for an argument’/ ‘He was champing at the bit’

làn dìth a bheatha ‘full welcome (to him)’

In the first pair of examples the different structure actually changes the meaning; however, the second is exactly the same as we have observed above. The only problem that arises here is that the meaning of *dìth* is not clear. Dwelly relates this expression to *deagh-bheatha-te* “‘good life’-ed”; however, *deagh a bheatha* *‘‘good his life’’ would not make any sense, since *deagh* cannot be separated from its noun (it should be *a dheagh bheatha* ‘his good life’ in this case). (Another analysis originates it from *Dia do bheatha* ‘God of your life’, which gives a better explanation for the role of the possessive pronoun.) The use (presence and lack) of hyphenation indicates that the latter structure is a grammatical phrase, whereas the former may be considered as an exocentric compound.

Just as in compounds, predicative/adverbial *làn* often refers to feelings, qualities and conditions (as shown in Example 137).

Example 137.

FEELINGS

- a) with various words meaning ‘happiness’ and ‘cheerfulness’:

làn de gach toileachas ‘full of all contentment’, *toil-inntinn* ‘pleasure’, *cridhealas* ‘cheerfulness, heartiness’, *sùnn* ‘cheerfulness, joy’, *làn sonais is aobhneis* ‘full of felicity and bliss’, *mire* ‘of mirth’, *sogain* ‘of joy/delight’

- b) just as with ‘grief’ and ‘sorrow’:

làn mulaid ‘full of sorrow’/ *cho làn de mhulad* ‘so full of grief’, *truais* ‘of pity’, *de ghruaim* ‘of gloom’

- c) with other emotions and feelings:

làn dòchais agus gràidh ‘full of hope and love’, *làn gràidh agus aithreachais* ‘full of love and regret’, *làn de theagamh* ‘full of doubt’, *làn imcheist* ‘full of anxiety’, *làn pròis is uaill* ‘full of pride and vanity’, *làn farmaid* ‘full of envy/jealousy’, *loma-làn eagail* ‘completely full of fear’, *loma-làn feirg agus taosgach de theine lasrach* ‘completely full of anger and brimming with blazing fire’, *le sùilean làn iongnaidh* ‘with eyes full of wonder’/ *Bha aodann làn iongnaidh* ‘His face was full of wonder/surprise’

These expressions are often accompanied by *cridhe*:

- d) *O chridhe làn gaoil* ‘Oh heart full of love’

le cridhe làn taingealachd ‘with a heart full of thankfulness’

bha an cridheachan làn de bhuadhachas ‘their hearts were full/filled with gratitude’

... aig an robh an cridhe làn sainnt agus gaol an airgid ... ‘whose heart was filled with greediness and love for money’

I have also encountered one token with *inntinn*: *Bha m’ inntinn làn suigeirt ...* ‘My mind was filled with cheerfulness.’ As a result, *làn* serves perfectly to describe personality.

PERSONALITY/QUALITY

Bha cridhe Mhr Màrtainn làn caoimhneis ... ‘Master Martin’s heart was filled with kindness ...’

fear làn roimh-bhreith ‘a man full of prejudgement’

... agus an guth aige làn de fhanaid, ... ‘and his voice full of mockery’

There are also examples describing physical conditions:

CONDITIONS/STATES

mo cheann làn cadail ‘my head full of sleep’ (i.e. drowsy)

ann an guth làn cumhachd ‘in a voice full power/in a powerful voice’

làn lùiths ‘full of energy’

A chionn tha mo leasraidh làn ghalar ... ‘Since my loins are full of pains ...’

... an diugh bha mo shaoghal làn de bhlàths. ‘... today my world was full of warmth.’

SENSE and COMMUNICATION

làn de thuigs’ ’s de chiall ‘full of understanding and of sense’

cho làn dhe na smaointean ‘so full of the thoughts’ OR *làn smaointean aig/air/mu dheidhinn* ‘full of thoughts of/on/about’

... tha an gille làn dìomhaireachd gliocais os cionn a leithid ’sam bith ... ‘the boy is full of the mystery/wonder of wisdom above the rest/everyone else’

... ’s a thill dhachaigh làn de aithne is glòir ... ‘and who came home full of recognition and glory’

Bha e cho làn de chainnt ... ‘He was so full of speech’ (i.e. spoke a lot)

Bha e làn ghearanan. ‘He was full of complaints.’

làn leisgeulan (airson dragh a chur orm) ‘full of apologies (for bothering me)’

In the last cluster we see more examples for the connection with mental qualities of *làn*, as well as its dynamic nature in relation with words of communication, as the last three examples convey immersion in various forms of communication.

In the case of feelings, etc. the intensifying effect naturally remains, although we are not dealing with compounds anymore. More abstract examples are as follows:

Example 138.

- a) *Dhasan tha an t-àite làn/ liuthad smuain ag éirigh suas.* ‘For him the place is full of so many thoughts arising.’
- b) *... ma bha duine riamh làn de Ghàidhlig agus làn de dh’fhòghlam na Gàidhlig, b’ e an duine sin Dòmhnall MacFhionghain.* ‘... if someone was ever full of Gaelic and full of education of (the) Gaelic, that man was Donald Mackinnon.’ (i.e. knew a great deal about Gaelic)
- c) *Mo chluasan làn le mór uamhas nan gunnathan.* ‘My ears full with the great horror of the guns.’

- d) *Bha Ùistean dol dachaigh aon oidhche, làn liquor.* ‘Hugh was going home one night, full of liquor.’
- e) *làn dhen an droch rud/làn dhen an t-sàtan* ‘full of the evil/satan’

Another fixed expression can be encountered in relation to *gaoth* ‘wind’. It can be used either in a literal or an abstract sense, as Example 139 demonstrates.

Example 139.

- a) ... *dh’ fhosgail am paraisiut mar sheòl mòr làn gaoithe os mo chionn.* ‘... the parachute opened above me like a large sail full of wind.’
- b) ... *bha a’ bhàrdachd aige mar e fhèin: làn gaoith.* ‘... his poetry was like himself: full of wind.’

Note also the following example containing genitive construction with the possessive pronoun, highlighted above: *Fhuair an long làn a cròic giobuill de ghaoith fhallain* ... ‘The ship got a bellyful of fresh north wind in its sail/sails’. Similar to *làn-beòil* for ‘mouthful’, Gaelic uses the construction *làn gum beul* to express ‘full up’: e.g. *bha iad làn gum beul le gràn brèagha glan cruaidh* ‘they were full up with lovely pure hard grain’ (i.e. the chest, in this case).

Letheach-làn ‘half-way full’ and *loma-làn* ‘absolutely full’ follow the same pattern as predicative *làn* in general (i.e. they can take the genitive or the preposition *de*). I have counted 3 quantity nouns (meaning ‘the whole’) among the 31 tokens of *loma(-)làn* (sic), one of which, in a poem, refers to the whole predicate (verbal phrase), intensifying the verbal noun (unless it can be interpreted as an adverb: ‘fully wrestling’), as Example 140 shows.

Example 140.

- a) *Ghabh Sine loma-làn na gloidhe* ‘Jean took a full glass/ a glass full to the brim (lit. “a complete fill of the glass”)’
- b) ... *a ghiùlain loma-làn dhen a h-uile seòrsa a chuireadh bean-taighe feum air.* ‘... that delivered a full lot of everything/all sorts of things that a housewife would need.’
- c) ... *le loma-làn an t-saic de na h-uile seòrsa bìdh.* ‘... with the whole sack completely full (lit. “with the complete fill of the sack”) of all sorts of food.’
- d) ... *No cheart cho dòcha loma làn/ A’ gleac ri fhaileas anns an Spàinnt* ... ‘or just as likely/may as well be completely full of wrestling with his phantom in Spain’

7.2.3. Meanings

If we consider the number of predicative tokens, it is not surprising that *làn* shows a tendency to express amount also in its compounds. On the other hand, before an adjective even *làn* functions as an intensifier, as adverbs before adjectives normally do. Thus, with an adjective it conveys the meaning ‘fully, [to a very high degree]’ (see Example 141).

Example 141.

- a) *làn fhileanta* ‘fully fluent’, *làn-Chriosdaidh* ‘fully Christian’ (dedicated to)
- b) (participles:) *làn(-)riaraichte* ‘fully satisfied’ (often), *làn(-)thoilichte* ‘entirely happy’ (often), (*gu*) *làn-shònraichte* ‘most of all’ (lit. “fully especially”), *làn armaichte* ‘fully armed’, *làn fhosgailte* ‘fully open’, *làn-dhearbhte* ‘fully convinced’

This intensifier meaning, though abstract, is probably even more obvious in words like *làn-marbh* ‘fully dead/stone dead’, or *mu’s d’thainig iad gu làn sholus na firinn* ‘before they reached (lit. “came to”) the full light of truth’ (i.e. a high/absolute degree of truth, full spiritual consciousness). Usually, the more abstract a reference is, the more it can be intensified, and, accordingly, *làn* commonly occurs together with feelings or states of mind: *làn shona* ‘fully/entirely happy’, *làn mhuinghinneach* ‘fully/absolutely confident’, etc. It may even combine with the intensifier *cho* as in *cho làn shoilleir* ‘so entirely clear/evident’ and *cho làn-marbh* ‘so entirely dead’. I have encountered one token with the reverse order of these two intensifiers in *làn cho milis ri ...* ‘entirely so sweet as ...’.

The verbal use also shows the intensifier meaning ‘fully, absolutely’ and is frequently encountered with mental activity or abstract concepts:

Example 142.

- a) ... *bho ’n dìoghaltas a làn-choisinn i* ‘... from the punishment that she fully earned, i.e. deserved’
- b) *làn(-)chreidsinn* ‘fully believing’ /similar in meaning to the adjectival *làn(-)chinnteach* ‘absolutely sure’!/, *làn(-)dearbhadh* ‘deep conviction’, *làn thuigsinn* ‘fully understanding’

Even in the case of *làn-fhosgladh* ‘fully/entirely opening’ and *làn fhoillsich* ‘fully revealed’ (in *Làn fhoillsich mi mo pheacadh dhuit* ‘I fully disclosed/revealed my sin to you’) the verbs exhibit a religious process rather than a physical action. Nevertheless, *làn* can appear together with verbs indicating a change in state, as we can see in the examples *làn-chrìochnachadh ionnsachadh* ‘fully finishing to learn’, i.e. ‘starting to fully understand, to be aware (of sg)’ and *Tha m’ aigne air làn-fhosgladh* ‘My spirit/soul has

fully/entirely opened’. The former shows a remarkable similarity to positional intensification as we have attested it with *fìor* above (section 7.1.2) in implying that somebody is at the very end of a process.

With other verbs – associated with communication – *làn* conveys the meaning ‘constantly’, or ‘immersed’ (e.g. *làn bruidhinn* ‘full of speaking’, *làn troid* ‘full of quarrelling, intensely quarrelling’). On the other hand, if this suggestion is correct, then in the verbal phrases above *làn* functions as a predicative adverb (consider the examples below).

Example 143.

- a) *Thigeadh, is dh’fhuiricheadh, is dh’fhalbhadh iadsan, làn bruidhinn is làn diubh fhéin.* ‘They would come and stay and leave, full of talking and full of themselves.’
- b) *Aig an ìre sin bha Tormod MacRaghnaill am baillidh làn troid.* ‘At that stage Norman MacRanald, the bailiff, was full of reproof.’

As we can see above, these are genitive constructions in effect, consisting of *làn* and a verbal noun.

Accompanying nouns, *làn* has a much more literal meaning, which could be translated mainly as ‘full’, or ‘all, the whole’ (usually with more tangible objects, geographical places, etc; I have grouped the first two examples in Example 144 a and b in accordance with this classification). There is a third type, which denotes quantity, and shows a similar structure to the predicative usage. Here *làn* can be interpreted as a noun meaning [a certain amount] (‘complement, fill’ according to Colin Mark’s *Gaelic–English Dictionary*) and the noun it is connected to is in the genitive (see below for examples).

Example 144.**a) ‘FULL’**

physical	mental	other abstract
<i>làn neart</i> ‘full strength’	<i>(le) làn aonta/cho-aonta</i> ‘(with) full agreement/consensus’	<i>thug làn bhuaidh air</i> “took full victory on (sy/sg)”, i.e. ‘completely defeated (sy/sg)’
<i>aig a làn àirde</i> ‘at his full height’	<i>làn-bhrìgh</i> ‘full sense’	<i>làn chomas</i> ‘full ability, capability; full potential’
<i>làn bhlàs</i> ‘full taste’ (sense)	<i>làn(-)mhathanas (/làn mhaitheanas)</i> ‘full forgiveness’	<i>làn(-)shaorsa</i> ‘full/entire freedom’
	<i>le làn-onairean cogaidh</i> ‘with full military honours’	
	<i>làn mhuighìn</i> ‘full faith’ (feeling)	

b) ‘ALL THE ...’/‘THE WHOLE ...’

’n an làn thrusgan ‘in their full gear/kit’

làn armachd ‘full armour’

làn-chruth na craoibhe ‘full shape of the tree’

’na làn-oighreachd dhuinn “in its full inheritance for us”, i.e. ‘fully inherited to
us’

Tha Rùnaire na Stàite a’ cur a làn-thaice ... ‘The State Secretary gives (lit. “is
putting”) his whole support ...’

an làn-torradh de mheasan abaich ‘the full growth of ripe fruits’

làn inbhe oifigeil ‘full official status’

Nithear so le làn bhraith-lìn a dhùbhlachadh air a leud ... ‘This is done by
thickening the whole sheet in its width ...’

roinn ’na “làn-Ghàidhealtachd” ‘area of the “pan-Gaeldom” (i.e. ‘the whole
Gaeldom’)’

c) QUANTITY (with *de/dhe/do* OR genitive)

làn-beòil ‘a mouthful (of)’, *làn dùirn* ‘a fistful (of)’, *làn-làimhe* ‘a handful (of)’

làn bòla ‘a bowlful (of)’, *làn cupa/copain* ‘a cupful (of)’, *làn(-)spàin(e)* ‘a spoonful (of)’ (*làn spàin mhòr* ‘tablespoon’, *làn-spáine bhig* ‘teaspoon’, *làn spáin-adhairc* ‘horn spoon’, etc), *làn truinnseir beag* ‘a small plateful (of)’
làn poca ‘a pocketful (of)’, *làn meurain* ‘a thimbleful (of)’
làn carbaid ‘a “carriageful” (of)’ (i.e. ‘a carriage full (of)’), *làn saoghail de ghuin mhallachte* ‘a “worldful” of damnable pang’ (i.e. ‘a whole world of damnable pangs’), *làn taighe chaorach geala* ‘a “houseful” of white sheep’ (i.e. ‘a whole house of white sheep’)

Fixed expressions:

Connected to a noun connotating feelings or mental activity, *làn* may be interpreted as an intensifier, emphasising the degree of the mental entity described. With such nouns *làn* (just as other intensifiers) tends to form various conventionalised structures:

Example 145.

a) *ann an* + POSS. PRONOUN structure:

bha e ann a làn bheachd ‘he was in his full opinion’, i.e. ‘he was fully convinced’, *an làn bheachd* ‘in full opinion’, i.e. ‘fully convinced’ (also: *de’n làn(-)bheachd* ‘of the full opinion’; *gun làn bheachd aige* ‘without having a full (i.e. definite) opinion’); (*Bha na cailleachan a nis*) ‘*na làn uidheam*’ (‘The old women were now) “in their full equipment”’, i.e. ‘fully-equipped’ (also *fo làn uidheam* ‘under fullequipment’, i.e. ‘fully-equipped’)

with profession: *nar làn dhannsairean* ‘in our fully-fledged dancers’

with state/condition:

- **motion:** *’nan làn chabhaig* ‘in their full hurry’, *’nan làn-shiubhal* ‘in their full travel’, *ann an làn-ghluasad* ‘in full movement’, i.e. ‘fully moved’, *ann an làn ruit* ‘in full dash/rush’ (also *le làn ruit* ‘with full rush’)
- **emotion:** *ann an làn thoil-inntinn* ‘full enjoyment/pleasure’ (also *le (mo) làn thoil (agus chridhe)* ‘with (my) full/whole will(ingness) (and heart)’); *ann an làn feirg* ‘in full anger’, i.e. ‘full of anger’
- **physical:** *ann an làn neart/’na làn neart* ‘in (his/its) full strength’; *an/’na làn mhaise/’na làn maise* ‘in (its) full beauty’ (also *aig a làn mhaise* ‘at its full beauty’)

b) + *aig* structure:

bha làn(-)d(h)ùil aige gu ‘he fully expected that’ or *bha làn(-)dhùil/làn dùil aige* ‘he fully intended to’, etc (18 tokens; most of them without hyphen), (once also: *bha iad a nis an làn dùil gun* ... ‘now they fully expected that ...’)

Tha làn fhios aca gu bheil ... “They were in full knowledge that ...”; ... *aig am bheil làn-fhios* gu’m ... “... who were in full/complete knowledge that ...”, etc (9 tokens; 4 with hyphen), (once: *gheibh esan làn fhios air* ... ‘he gains/will gain full knowledge of ...’)

... *air a robh làn fheum aige* ‘... which he absolutely (i.e. badly) needed’ (1)

Bha làn smachd aige air an luchd-èisdeachd. ‘He had full control/power over the audience.’; *Chan eil an còmhnaidh làn smachd aig an dàrna aileal air an fhear eile,* ... ‘The second allele is not always completely dominant (lit. “does not always have full domination”) over the other one.’ (technical language)

Tha làn mhaitheanas agad bhuamsa ‘I fully forgive you’ (lit. “you have full forgiveness from me”)

... *far an robh làn-chinnt aig daoine nach robh teine* ... ‘... where people had full certainty (i.e. were absolutely certain) that there wasn’t fire ...’

Tha làn chead aig mo charaid a bheachd a thoirt air rud ’sam bith a chual e... ‘My friend has full permission to give his opinion on something he heard ...’ (2) (or with genitive case: ... *gun d’ fhuair e làn chead athar a chum a thogail mar a dhuine-cloinne fhéin.* ‘... that he got full permission of his father to bring him up as his own son.’)

Oir tha làn chòir aig luchd na Gàidhlig air seilbh a bhi aca ‘Because Gaelic people have (the) full right to possess what they have’; *Nach robh làn chòir aige air dèanamh mar a rinn athraichean?* ‘Hasn’t he got full right to do as his fathers/ancestors did?’; etc; *a làn chòir air a’ chrùn* ‘his full right for the crown’ (8 tokens; 3 with hyphen)

Below I give further examples for structures with *làn*:

Example 146.

a) *air a làn-ghleus* ‘fully locked’ (gun) (lit. “in its full lock”)

b) ... *nam biodh e air làn dòchas a chur anns an dithis* ... ‘... he wouldn’t have put full/absolute hope in the two ...’

c) *air mo/ar/an làn-dòigh* ‘in my/our/their full spirits’, i.e. ‘absolutely happy/pleased’

- d) (*a' pòsadh*) *le a làn deòin* '(getting married) with her full/absolute willingness'
- e) *le a bhi a' cur làn ùidh* 'in which placing full interest'
- f) *làn dearbhadh a thoirt* 'giving full evidence/proof'
- g) *thug e dha làn ùghdarras* 'he gave him full power/fully authorised him'
- h) ... *a' dèanamh làn aideachaidh gu bheil* ... 'fully confessing that' (lit. "making full confession")
- i) *a' dèanamh làn-oidhirp* 'making full/all attempt'
- j) ... *ged a dheanadh an t-ùghdair, a làn-dhìcheall air a bhith cur sìos gach nì* ...
'although the author would make his full effort/all his effort to put down everything ...'

Note that in all 5 tokens of the expression *air làn-dòigh* 'absolutely/completely pleased' the intensified phrase stands with a hyphen, which indicates the compoundhood of *làn-dòigh*.

Further examples for the role of the intensifier *làn* in phrases expressing emotions or other mental activities/entities include:

Example 147.

- a) *làn thuigse (is cìnnt)* 'full understanding (and certainty)'
- b) *làn-aighear/(le) lànaighear* '(with) full delight/joy'
- c) *làn-dùrachd (ar cridhe)* "(the) absolute wish (of our heart)", i.e. 'all we wish',
(*na làn rùn*)/ *làn(-)rùn* '(in his) full intention'
- d) ... *anns am bi làn-earbs' aige* '... in whom he has every/complete/absolute faith/confidence'; *làn earbsa a chur annad-sa* 'putting/placing absolute trust in you/fully depending on you'; *le làn earbsa* 'with full/absolute confidence'
- e) *làn(-)spèis* 'full affection/respect'; ... *gum faod mi làn ghaol a thoirt dhut* ... 'that I may show absolute love towards you'
- f) *làn-thròcair* 'full mercy'

There are a number of phrases which can be called compounds as *làn* contributes to their meanings in a less unpredictable (i.e. not fully compositional) way, which is, however, often not confirmed by hyphenation. Expressions are listed in Example 148:

Example 148.

- a) *làn slige* 'full shell'
- b) *làn chomataidhean* 'main committees' (vs *fo-chomataidhean* 'sub-committees')
- c) *làn(-)àm/làn(-)thide* 'high time'

- d) *Bha an làn-ám aige bhith air ais* ‘It was high time for him to be back’; *Tha an làn-ám agad an doctair fhaicinn*. ‘It is high time for you to see the doctor.’
- e) *Tha làn-thid’ agad boireannach fhaighinn* ‘It’s high time you got a woman’; *nach eil làn thide agad bruidhinn a-mach* ‘isn’t it high time for you to speak up?’
- f) *làn-duine/-dhaoine* “fully-fledged”, i.e. ‘grown-up man/men’ (e.g. *Ciod nach dean làn-duine?* ‘What does not make a full man?’)
- g) *làn bhoireannach (bòidheach)* ‘a (beautiful) full woman’ (i.e. grown-up/fully-fledged)
- h) *làn oilean* ‘full-breed’

All 5 tokens of *làn(-)àm* in the corpus have the meaning ‘high time’, and all but one is accompanied by the definite article as in the example above. *Làn(-)thide*, on the other hand never ... the definite article, still only 1 of the 14 tokens means ‘full time’ in place of ‘high time’: *Cha robh e gu mòran buannachd ach do fhear a bha ’na dhùil làn thide choimlìonadh ann*. ‘It wasn’t much use but for someone who intended to fulfil full time there.’

Another fixed expression is *fo làn èideadh* ‘in full garment’ (lit. “under full garment”). The preposition *fo* ‘under’ often accompanies *làn*, as it can be observed in *fo làn uidheam* “under full equipment”, i.e. ‘fully-equipped’, and *fo làn-sheòl* ‘under full sail’ as well. As *làn-ghòraiche* ‘complete silliness/absurdity’ is deadjectival (i.e. derived from the adjective *gòrach* ‘foolish/silly’), it conveys the same meaning ‘fully’ as the adjective. In effect, we can encounter all sorts of examples for the intensifier meaning of *làn*, referring to an absolute degree (such as *aig làn ìre* ‘at full level’, *aig a làn airde* ‘at his full height’; *thug [...] làn bhuaidh air* ‘gained full victory over’; *làn fhàilte* ‘a full welcome’ or *làn dì-do-bheatha/làn-dì-bheatha/làn di-beatha* ‘a full welcome’). *Làn ghrian samhraidh* ‘full sun of summer/full summer sun’ is a creative usage of *làn*, similar to *làn bhoireannach* “a full woman” (i.e. “fully-fledged”, grown-up woman), as the sun cannot be literally full.

There is one more sense in which *làn* can be used. This may be the most abstract and most pragmatic usage of all (in that it reflects the speaker’s opinion, subjective, and thus flexible and arbitrary), which explains why I have not found many examples for it.⁴⁸ In these cases *làn* appears to confirm a previously stated or suggested claim, in the sense ‘actual, real, veritable’. Its vague, pragmatic usage is even more accented in the following dialogue:

⁴⁸ A number of studies suggest that the objective meaning referring to the physical world or senses is the principal and probably first usage of words.

“...Chan e fear stuic a th’ ann.” [...]

“‘He’s not a stockman.”

“Làn fhear stuic...”.

“A fully-fledged stockman...”.

Here *làn* could even be translated as ‘fully, definitely’. A similar use of *làn* can be attested in the phrase *làn charaid* (‘a real friend’ in the sense of ‘good’, ‘a friend in all respects’), and maybe also in *làn-chridhe (laoich)* ‘a genuine/veritable heart (of a hero)’: ... *Cuiream mo bhròn a thaobh,/ ’S air sgàth balachain ar fàrdachd/ A dhearbhadh an làn-chridhe laoiach*, ... ‘... Let me put my sadness aside, and for the sake of the little boys of our home who tested their genuine hero heart, ...’.

7.2.4. Orthography

Hyphenation, just as in the case of *fior*, does not appear to show any specific patterns: fixed expressions (like *làn(-)àm* ‘high time’, *làn(-)àite* ‘the whole place/everywhere’, *làn(-)bheachd* ‘full opinion’, *làn(-)chinnteach* ‘completely/absolutely certain’, etc.) mostly occur/are encountered both with and without a hyphen. In intensifier meaning *làn* is often followed by a hyphen (the rate being the highest in the case of adjectives following *làn*: here, 54 out of 86 tokens are hyphenated (63%) (64 out of 106, including participles (60%)), which, however, still does not indicate a significant difference in the numbers of hyphenated and non-hyphenated examples). With verbs the rate is similarly 53% (20/38 tokens), while hyphenation does not tend to occur with nouns (108/324 tokens, i.e. 33.3%). (In the case of *fios* and *fiosrach*, for instance, the noun stands with a hyphen in approximately half of the tokens, while almost in all occurrences of the adjective (although there are only 4 tokens for *làn(-)fhiosrach* in the corpus: 4/9 *làn-fhios* ‘full knowledge’ vs 3/4 *làn-fhiosrach* ‘of full knowledge’).)

Hyphens appear in other abstract/figurative expressions (eg *làn-bhiadh* ‘full/nutritious food’, *làn-bhrìgh* ‘full sense’, etc), or expressions of quantity (see examples of *làn-spàine* ‘a spoonful’, *làn-beòil* ‘a mouthful’, etc. above). Nevertheless, in general certain expressions seem to be fixed, and thus written with a hyphen (eg *làn-aighear* ‘full delight’, *làn-dòigh* ‘full spirit’, *làn(-)armachd* ‘full armour’ (2 out of 3 are hyphenated), *làn-mór* ‘high tide’ (only 2 tokens)), while others are not (eg *làn dhuil* ‘full expectation’, *làn bheachd* ‘full opinion’, *làn chòir* ‘full right’, *làn mhathanas* ‘full forgiveness’, *làn thide* ‘high time’, etc are only occasionally hyphenated). Among verbal nouns *creidsinn* ‘believing’ (16/29), *dearbhadh* ‘proving, convincing’ (2), *fosgladh* ‘opening’ (1), *crìochnachadh* ‘ending, finishing’ (1), etc occur with hyphen. Long structures with hyphen (i.e. phrasal compounds) are: *làn-fo-thuinn* ‘tide under waves’, and *làn-na-dùirne* ‘fistful’ (‘fill of the fist’), *làn-dì-bheatha* ‘full welcome’. *Làn-ghòraiche* ‘complete

sillyness/absurdity’, mentioned above, incorporates an adjectival meaning into a noun, which renders it a parasyntetic compound, thus the hyphen.

7.2.5. Lenition

In genitive phrases, naturally, lenition does not occur⁴⁹ except in plural (cf *làn dhaoine* ‘full of people’, *làn dhathan* ‘full of colours’, *làn dhealbhannan* ‘full of pictures’, *làn dhearcan* ‘full of berries/currants’). Bearing this in mind, there are principally two factors that prevents *làn* from causing lenition. These are as follows: firstly, *làn* does not lenite in phrases of quantity (*làn bocsa de fhiodh* ‘a full box of wood’, *làn gogain de uisge* ‘a full gurgling of water’, *làn preis de shàl* ‘a full/whole pot of salt’, *bho làn peile gheibh sinn poca no dhà* ‘from a bucket/pail-ful we take a bag or two’, etc) due to their genitive quality; secondly, as *làn* ends in /n/, dental consonants following it tend to remain unlenited. In effect this clearly shows only in words beginning with /d/ with respect to *làn* in the corpus: in the case of words beginning with /t/ or /s/, incidentally both criteria apply (eg *làn soithich de smeuran* ‘a full dish of brambles’, *làn taighe chaorach geala* ‘a whole house of white sheep’). None of the 3 words beginning in the consonant cluster /sl-/ are lenited in the corpus (one of them – *làn slige* ‘full shell’ – being idiomatic in the sense that its reference cannot be clearly derived from its compositional meaning, i.e. not perfectly unambiguous). However, all three words coming from the same author (Mull, early 20th century), I do not find it worthwhile to further discuss the question.

Examples of quantity (genitive structure) can be found almost with every lenitable phoneme. Similar, abstract structures also occur, see *làn feirg* ‘full of anger, filled with anger’, with the genitive of *fearg* ‘anger’.

The potential influence of certain dialects has not proved to contribute in the variation of lenition. I cannot provide an explanation for uncertain lenition of words beginning in /m/. At first sight there seems to be a distinction between the 2 tokens of unlenited *làn maise* ‘full beauty’ and the 5 occurrences of lenited *làn mhaise*, as all lenited forms appear in the prose of the early 20th century, while the two unlenited tokens are both encountered in poetry (we also encounter *làn-marbh* ‘completely dead/stone dead’ in a poem). On the other hand, *làn mathanas* ‘full forgiveness’ and *làn(-)mhathanas* occur in one and the same source (*làn mathanas nam peacannan* ‘the full/complete forgiveness of (the) sins’, *air làn*

⁴⁹ This can be well observed in pairs of predicative and compound structures, e.g.

- *abharsac mhór làn biadh air a shlios* ‘a large haversack full of food on its slope’; *bha na cladaichean loma-làn bìdh* ‘the shores were completely full of food’ vs *làn-bhiadh* ‘full/nutritious food’
- *tha i làn brìgh agus teagaisg* ‘it is full of meaning and moral’ (i.e. the parable) vs *làn(-)bhrìgh* ‘full sense’

mhathanas am pheacannan ‘on/at full/complete forgiveness of my sins’) (it could also be a typing error, as the unlenited form occurs only once). Alternatively, it seems more affected by pronunciation, i.e. how much stress is placed on the intensifier and the intensified word (stress pattern of compounds is discussed in section 3.5.2) (e.g. *Tha làn mhaitheanas agad bhuamsa* ‘I fully forgive you’, lit. ‘You’ve got full/complete forgiveness from me’). There is another possible explanation, which we saw in the case of *lánmhara~lánmara* ‘tide’ in Irish (see section 3.5.3.1), namely the shift /mh/ > /m/ in nasal environment.

7.2.6. Questions to native speakers

It is still doubtful whether *làn* qualifies abstract rather than physical action in the case of verbs.

7.3. SÀR

Table 12.

Tokens	122
Relevant	93
Other	
predicative or adverbial	2 (1 each)
noun	27

The 122 tokens of *sàr* involve 93 relevant cases. Almost all of the remainder are nouns, referring to a highly ranked person or chief, which meaning is very close to the meaning of the intensifier itself (see section 7.3.2 below). I have found one only example of predicative usage among other adjectives/a list of adjectives: ... *mìorbhaileach, barraichte, sàr* ... ‘marvellous, outstanding, noble’, and one adverbial, in a riddle: *Cha shiubhail e ’s an adhar,/ Cha shiubhail e air lar;/ Ach siubhlaidh e sar,/ Eadar lar agus adhar*. ‘It doesn’t travel in the air, it doesn’t travel on the ground; but it travels nobly/elegantly, between earth and sky.’

7.3.1. Statistics

Most tokens of *sàr* (84) stand with a noun (including 7 compounds, and 1 name: *sàr Mhac Shir Eachuinn* ‘noble Sir MacEachen’. (Note that in *mun t-/an sàr MacAsgaill* ‘(about) the chief MacAskill’ (from the same source) *sàr* is a noun, therefore the name remains unlenited.) There are 6 examples with adjectives (e.g. *sàr-mhaiseach* ‘most lovely/graceful’, *sàr-chruaidh* ‘extremely hard’, *sàr-iomraideach* ‘most well-known’) and 2 for participles (*sàr thoilichte* ‘extremely happy’ and *sàr-shnaidhte*, the latter being a

complex compound (similar to *green-eyed*; see section 2.2), where the qualifier *sàr* is an adverbial modifier of the base: *O aodainn sàr-shnaidhte* ‘Oh **nobly carved** face’). In the corpus *sàr* can be encountered twice with the verbal noun *tarraing* ‘drawing’ (once with a hyphen – *sàr-tharraing as* ‘keep teasing’ –, once without – *sàr tharraing* ‘busy drawing’).

The word, with which it occurs together most, is *obair* ‘work’ (once even in the compound *obair-ghrèis* ‘embroidery’), and it is also common with reference to people, as it is shown below:

8 – *obair* ‘work’ (+ 1 *obair-ghrèis* ‘embroidery/needlework’)

7 – *bàrd* ‘poet/bard’

5 – *duine* ‘man’ (+ 4 *duin*’(-)*usal* ‘gentleman’); *fear* ‘man’ (+ 1 *fear-ealain* ‘artist’)

3 – *gille* ‘boy; fellow’; *companach* ‘companion’; *laoch* ‘hero, warrior’

It is worth noting that *bàrd* is close behind, and as it is usually connected with the arts (see *sàr-obair nam fir-ealain* ‘main work of the artists’, *sàr obair Heinrich Wagner* ‘Heinrich Wagner’s main work’, or *sàr obair-ghrèis* ‘excellent embroidery/needlework’ itself), it is not impossible at all that the famous book edited by John MacKenzie with the title *Sàr-Obair nam Bàrd Gaelach – The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry and Lives of the Highland Bards* (1841), has influenced its use. The phrase *Sàr-obair nam bàrd* ‘Main work of the poets’ itself is used for an anthology elsewhere. Beside *sàr*(-)*lao(i)ch*, I have encountered 1 example for *sàr-ghaisgich*, and 1 for *sàr-churaidh*, all meaning ‘great/outstanding hero’.

7.3.2. Meanings

Sàr qualifying nouns conveys the sense of being noble like a hero or an artist. It is commonly encountered with words denoting human beings or professions, in which case it may be translated as ‘excellent’, ‘outstanding’ or ‘leading’ (in a similar sense as *àrd-ollamh* (lit. ‘high doctor’) is used for ‘professor’) (see Example 149).

Example 149.

- a) *Sàr-Ghàidheil* ‘a great/leading Gael’, *sàr-chlachair* ‘an excellent stonemason’, *sàr-iasgair* ‘an excellent fisherman’, *an Sàr-dhruidh deireannach* ‘the last leading/high druid’
- b) *sàr-dhuine agus deagh fhear-teagaisg* ‘an excellent/great man and a good teacher’, *sàr-fhear gasda* ‘a fine, noble man’, *sàr ghillean Leòdhais* ‘great lads of Lewis’, *sàr ghille sunntach* ‘a light-hearted great fellow’
- c) *sàr-churaidh/sàr-ghaisgeach/sàr*(-)*laoch* ‘a great hero/warrior’
- d) *a sàr-mhac òg* ‘her young outstanding son’ (i.e. Christ)

Also consider the following, more abstract examples: ... *'S fear dha' m b' aithne le sàr anail/ Gabhail rann na Féinne*. '... And who can with **excellent breath**, sing the rhyme of the Fenians.' (i.e. he has a strong, beautiful voice); *'S tha 'n creutair gun tùr/ A' deanamh sàr uaill às a nàir!* 'And the senseless creature makes (lit. is making) **noble pride** out of his shame!'.

The connotation of nobility is well expressed through its common occurrence together with words like *usal* 'noble' (or note the example with *gasda* 'fine' above): e.g. *sàr bhàird usal* 'an excellent/outstanding noble bard'; *An sàr dhuin' usal stuama, stòlda* 'The solemn, modest noble excellent man' – also encountered in compounds: *sàr dhuin'-usal* (3) 'an exceptional gentleman', *sàr bhean-usal* (1) 'an exceptional lady'. (In the expression *sàr-eucoraich gun ghràs* 'biggest malefactors/sinners without grace', *sàr* is applied to intensify a negative moral quality in a deadjectival noun – see below.)

In the case of words denoting non-animate entities, *sàr* likewise shows the sense of excellence, exceptionality, **high quality**, especially in relation with creative activity or showing **prestigious** social status: *sàr-obair* 'an excellent/outstanding work', *sàr obair-ghréis* 'excellent embroidery/needlework', *sàr-dhràma* 'an excellent/outstanding drama', *sàr thea* 'excellent tea'; *sàr chlogaid is lùireach* 'excellent/noble helmet and coat', *sàr ghnìomhan* 'excellent/outstanding/great things/deeds'. (*Sàr* is often related to **the arts**: *sàr-fhear-ealain* 'leading artists', *sàr luchd-ciùil* 'outstanding musicians', *sàr-bhàrd* 'an excellent/outstanding/leading bard/poet', *sàr obair-ghréis* 'excellent needlework', *sàr-dhràma* 'an outstanding/excellent drama'.) An alternative meaning of *sàr* is '**main**' (in the sense 'the best') (e.g. *sàr-chompanach* 'main companion', see Example 150 a below). It is an interesting question whether the compound *sàr-fhacal* convey the sense '**habitual**' or has the same connotation of nobility as *sàr-bhriathran* 'noble words' (Example 150 b): *Nach mairg, [...] a theireadh a shàr-fhacal* 'Isn't it pity, to use his **habitual/noble** phrase'.

Example 150.

- a) *Ach an tràth so bha mo shàr-chompanach ri dol air an turas còmhla rium, mo bhràthair gaolach òg*. 'But this time **my main/best companion** was to go with me, my young loving brother.' – *a shàr-chompanach* 'his main companion' (both with possessive pronoun and hyphen!)
- b) *Bu tric b'e do shòlas san òg-mhadainn shamhraidh
bhith 'deilbh air na beanntan seo àilleachd do smuain,
bhith snìomh nan sàr-bhriathran 's a' càradh do ranntachd,
's a' coilionadh ealaidheachd ghreannmhor do dhuain.*

‘It was often your solace in the summer daybreak
 designing the beauty of your thought on these mountains,
 spinning your **noble words** and putting your verse together,
 and completing the witty artistry of your ode.’

With abstract nouns (sometimes from an adjective, like *gasdachd* ‘splendidness’ from *gasda* ‘splendid’), *sàr* can function as an **intensifier**: (*air a*) *sàr dhòigh* ‘in an (her) excellent form/extremely happy’; *ann an sàr òrdugh* ‘in an excellent order’; *sàr-urram* ‘great honour’; *sàr mhisneach* ‘exceptional courage’; *sàr-ghasdachd, tlachd is beus* ‘great splendidness, relish and demeanour’. Even *sàr leuman* ‘mad dash(es)/(skip(s))’ could be interpreted as an intensifier if referring to the intensity of the action. With regard to people, it may function as an intensifier in the case of deadjectival nouns: ... *ged a bha mòran de na sàr-ionmhainn air bu mhotha mo dheagh thoil air dol thairis bho slighe nan uile bheò*. ‘... although many of **the most beloved**, who I was fond of the most, have disappeared from the path of all the living (i.e. left the world of the living).’; *sàr-eucoraich gun ghràs* ‘the biggest malefactors/sinners without grace’. *Sàr* conveys intensifier meaning in, *sàrchleas* ‘a great trick’ and *sàr bhunait* ‘a sure foundation’:

Feuch suidhichidh mise mar stéidh ann an Sion clach, clach dhearbhta, clach-chinn na h-oisinn; sàr bhunait, esan a chreideas cha chuirear gu h-amhluadh e ‘Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, **a sure foundation**: he that believeth shall not make haste.’ (Isaiah 28:16)

In the case of adjectives (or participles) *sàr* shows the expected intensifier meaning, frequently coloured by the connotation ‘noble’ again:

Example 151.

- a) *O aodainn shàr-shnaidhte* ‘Oh nobly carved face’
- b) *sàr-chlis* ‘extremely/exceptionally clever/swift’
- c) *sàr-ghlan* ‘exceptionally pure/clear’
- d) *sàr-mhaiseach* (2) ‘exceptionally pretty/handsome’
- e) *sàr-iomraideach* ‘exceptionally famous/renowned/well-known’: *a’ Bhìobuille, mar leabhar shàr-iomraideach san t-saoghal* ‘of the Bible, as the most well-known book of the world’
- f) *sàr-chruaidh* ‘exceptionally hard’, *sàr thoilichte* ‘exceptionally happy’

Here, again, all except *cruaidh* (*an neach mu choinneamh roghainn sàr-chruaidh* ‘the man before an exceptionally hard choice’) display positive qualities/emotion. *Sàr-chruaidh* and *sàr thoilichte* express deep feelings.

With the verbal noun *tharraing*, similar to the function of *làn*, *sàr* gives the meaning ‘intensively, fully immersed’ to the predicate, in which case the intensity of the action is enhanced, but it might also be associated with an upward direction, either literally (in movement or physical position) or metaphorically (cf “winding someone up”, i.e. ‘teasing’):

Example 152.

- a) ... *Leinibh bheaga dannsa,/ Luchd na mara a’ sàr tharraing/ Canabhas ri cranntaibh*, ... ‘Little children dancing, seamen being busy drawing canvas (up) to masts’
- b) *Cha robh Mac Iain Bhig ach a sàr-tharruing as Eachann*, ... ‘Mac Iain Bhig (Little Ian’s son) did nothing but kept teasing Hector ...’

To the contrary, with the nominally used *éisdeachd*, *sàr* has the meaning ‘noble’ again (not intensifier), in which case it functions similarly to preceding adjectives: ... ‘*S bheir cuachag na h-innis/ Sàr éisdeachd do iomairt mo rùin*. ‘... And the conch of the island will give excellent/noble audience to the play of my love.’

7.3.3. Orthography

Adjectives and participles are all hyphenated with only one exception (*sàr thoilichte* ‘extremely happy’), which may be due to their **intensifying function** (it would be worth investigating if the lack of hyphenation is related to equal stress). The same applies to abstract nouns (*sàr-urram* ‘great honour’, *sàr-ghasdachd* ‘great splendidity’ (from the adjective *gasda* ‘splendid’)), deadjectival nouns (*sàr-ionmhainn* ‘most beloved’; *sàr-eucoraich* ‘biggest sinners’). The hyphenation of the two tokens of the verbal noun *sàr(-)tharraing* ‘busy drawing/teasing’ is ambiguous, just as that of nouns are: I have encountered 40 nominal examples with hyphen (once even a compound: *sàr-fhear-ealain* ‘leading artist’), and 43 non-hyphenated tokens. (The noun *sàr éisdeachd* ‘excellent/noble audience’ is written without a hyphen.)

Beside intensifiers, **mental products** like *sàr-bhriathran* ‘noble words’, *sàr-fhacal* ‘noble or habitual word’?, or *sàrchleas* ‘great/biggest trick/act’ tend to be regarded as one orthographical unit, similarly, **professions** are frequently hyphenated: *sàr-iasgair* (2) ‘an excellent/outstanding fisherman’, *sàr-chlachair* (1) ‘an excellent/outstanding stonemason’, *sàr-mharaiche* (*cuain*) ‘an excellent/outstanding seaman’ (BUT: *sàr mharaichean* ‘excellent seamen’); *sàr(-)bhà(i)rd* (2 of 5 tokens are non-hyphenated), *sàr-fhilidh* (1) ‘an excellent/leading poet’. *Sàr(-)dhuin(e)* ‘a great/excellent man’ is ambiguous, with 2 hyphenated and 3 non-hyphenated tokens; on the other hand, all 5 tokens for *sàr-fhear*

(including *sàr-fhear-ealain* ‘an outstanding/leading artist’) occur with a hyphen. This may be due to its compound status – referring to a social rank, i.e. ‘nobleman’. *Sàr-mhac* ‘exceptional son’ may be hyphenated for the same reason. *Sàr-chompanach*, meaning ‘main company’, has 2 hyphenated tokens, while the plural *sàr chompanaich* (from the same source) carries no hyphen, referring to quality (‘excellent companions’) rather than selecting one person from a group; however, neither the 3 tokens for *sàr ghille* ‘an exceptional guy/fellow’, nor *sàr mhaighdean* ‘an exceptional maid’ are written with a hyphen (see examples below). It may refer to the moral qualities of the person, although it has to be noted that all 3 examples of *sàr ghille* occur in the same source. On the other hand, the two other tokens from this source are both hyphenated, being associated with artistic features: *sàr-bhàrd* ‘an exceptional/leading poet’ and *sàr-fhear-ealain* ‘an outstanding/leading artist’. Another possible example for the reference to moral quality rather than actual social rank may be *sàr fhineachan* ‘noble clans’, again, without a hyphen.

Example 153.

gach sàr ghille sunntach ‘every light-hearted great boy/fellow’, *sàr ghillean calma*
‘great valiant fellows’, *sàr ghillean Leòdhais* ‘great boys/fellows of Lewis’
sàr mhaighdean mhaiseach, mhòr ‘a big, graceful noble maid’

Words meaning ‘hero’ may often carry a hyphen after *sàr*: *gaisgeach* (1), *laoch* (1 with, 2 without), *curaidh* (1). **Compounds** always occur without a hyphen: *sàr dhuin’-uasal* ‘an exceptional gentleman’, *sàr bhean-uasal* ‘an exceptional lady’, *sàr luchd-ciùil* ‘excellent/outstanding musicians’, *sàr obair-ghréis* ‘excellent needlework’.

While objects are usually non-hyphenated: *sàr chlogaid* ‘an excellent helmet’, *sàr thea* ‘excellent tea’ (neither are abstract *sàr bhunait* ‘an excellent/sure foundation’ and figurative *sàr anail* ‘great/exceptional breath’), *obair* is ambiguous with 4 hyphenated and 4 non-hyphenated tokens. One abstract word is written as one with its intensifier *sàr*–: *sàrchleas* ‘biggest act/trick’ – it originates from the 19th – early 20th century (when hyphenation was not wide-spread in the case of *sàr* (see next paragraph)) – thus it should be regarded as a compound due to its conventionalised status.

Although a firm observation cannot be made about different dialects, it might be suggested that the use of hyphenation has spread since the 1970s. Before that it appears to have been typical only in certain cases (e.g. *sàr-bhàrd* ‘excellent/outstanding/leading bard’, *sàr-obair* ‘excellent/outstanding work’, *sàr-fhear* ‘excellent/great man’, etc). In other phrases, however, despite my claim about intensifiers tending to have hyphens, there

are plenty of examples among abstract nouns for the opposite: *ann an sàr òrdugh* ‘in excellent/outstanding order’, *sàr uaill* ‘great/outstanding pride’, *sàr mhisneach* ‘great/exceptional courage’, *sàr bheart* ‘excellent equipment’, *sàr chothrom* ‘an excellent opportunity’, *sàr dhòigh* ‘excellent mood’, *a’ toirt sàr chunntas* ‘giving an excellent account’ (they have become more common in later sources).

7.3.4. Questions to native speakers

A number of interesting questions have emerged in the case of the intensifier *sàr* as well. Would native speakers confirm its meaning in *sàr-chompanach* (as ‘main company’), *sàr-fhacal* ‘habitual or noble? word’, *sàr leuman* ‘mad dashes’; or the intensifier function in *sàr-ionmhainn* ‘most beloved’, *sàr-eucoraich* ‘biggest sinners’, *sàrchleas* ‘biggest trick’, etc?

What could *sàr* mean when accompanying a verbal noun? Is it an intensifier or may it refer to upward direction (as in the case of *tarraing* ‘drawing’)? *Sàr-chruaidh* ‘extremely hard’ was the only negative adjective with *sàr* in the corpus. I wonder if *sàr* usually accompanies negative adjectives at all?

The connotations of *sàr* as an adjective could be tested as well: namely, its relationship with the arts (and maybe other professions) – and whether and how it influences hyphenation, as well as the connotation of nobility, high quality and social status. As regard to orthography, it should be checked if there is any relation between equal stress and the lack of hyphen (which may be related to dialect and/or age as well), and if meaning has any impact on hyphenation (as I suggested in the case of making distinction between the senses ‘leading, main’ (high social rank or the best among others; e.g. *sàr-obair* ‘main opus’, *sàr-fhear* ‘nobleman’, *sàr-chompanach* ‘best companion, main company’) and a distinctive quality (e.g. *sàr obair* ‘an excellent/exceptional work’, *sàr chompanaich* ‘excellent companions’). (It is also worth testing if *sàrchleas* ‘biggest trick’, etc is written as one word, conveying a superlative feature.)

7.4. SÌOR

Table 13.

Tokens	303
Relevant	274
Other	
plain adjective	8
predicative or adverbial	3 (1+2)
adverb (gu sìor)	17

A large number (274) of the 303 tokens for *sìor* has proved to be relevant: approximately 90% of all, which is much higher than any of the examined intensifier words above. There are 19 adverbial but only 1 predicative example of *sìor*: '*S ann aca bhios an lùchairt/ Bhios cùbhraidh, maireann, sìor, ...* 'And there they will have the palace, will be redolent, everlasting, eternal, ...' (a poetic work, from the 19th or early 20th century). In 8 cases it functions as a normal, plain adjective, in phrases like *sòlas sìor* 'eternal solace', '*an cadal sìor* 'in their eternal sleep', etc. In *Thig an claidheamh sìor-mar-ur* 'The sword will come back again', it probably stands for *sìar* 'behind'⁵⁰ (lit. meaning "behind/back as new").

7.4.1. Statistics

Sìor principally intensifies actions, thus most tokens are encountered with verbal expressions. 231 of those in the corpus are verbal nouns, while 2 are root verbs (85.0%): *sìor mhealaidh (sibh)* '(you) will always enjoy', *sìor iarraibh (i)* 'keep asking (for it)' (2nd pl., imperative). 37 of the tokens (13.5%) stand with nouns (including 3 hyphenated examples: *sìor thaigh-foghair* 'eternal autumn home', *sìor thaigh-geamhraidh* 'eternal winter home'; and the verbal *sìor iar-iargain* 'eternal back-lamenting'). However, there are only 4 adjectives intensified by *sìor* (*sìor-bhinn* 'ever sweet' (2) and *sìor-mhaireannach* 'everlasting' (2)), all 4 from early sources.

It is no surprise that the more frequent combinations are all verbal, except for *sìor-uisge* 'neverending/eternal rain', which, still, refer to an impersonal happening/action, i.e. 'raining', in addition, the frequent hyphenation (which is not usual for other words with *sìor*) indicates the conventionalised, fixed status of this phrase. The occurrences for more frequent combinations are listed below:

39 – *sìor(-)dhol* (13 with hyphen) 'constantly going'

17 – *sìor(-)chur* (5 with hyphen) 'constantly putting'

⁵⁰ Information gathered from source.

- 16 – *sìor(-)fhàs* (1 with hyphen) ‘constantly growing/getting’
- 8 – *sìor(-)chaoineadh* (2 without hyphen) ‘constantly wailing/weeping’;
sìor(-)mheudachadh (2 with hyphen, once written as *sìor-mhiadachadh*)
‘constantly increasing’
- 7 – *sìor(-)thighinn* (2 with hyphen) ‘constantly coming’
- 6 – *sìor(-)choimhead* (2 without hyphen) ‘constantly watching’
- 5 – *sìor(-)iarraidh* (2 with hyphen) ‘constantly/always wanting’ + 1 *sìor iarraibh* ‘keep asking (imp.)’; *sìor(-)thoirt* (1 with hyphen) ‘constantly taking/bringing’
- 4 – *sìor thogail* (all without hyphen) ‘constantly lifting’; *sìor-uisg(e)* (all with hyphen) ‘eternal rain’

As we can see, *sìor* is commonly used with verbs of motion (*dol* ‘going’, *tighinn* ‘coming’) and change of place/position or state (e.g. amount) (*fàs* ‘growing’, *togail* ‘lifting’, *cur* ‘putting’, *toirt* ‘taking/bringing’, *meudachadh* ‘increasing’). According to the list above, it is also reasonably frequent with *caoineadh* ‘mourning, weeping’, *coimhead* ‘watching’ and *iarraidh* ‘wanting, longing’.

7.4.2. Meanings

Sìor inherently carries the meaning of continuity and durability. The verbal forms evidently gain an intensifier function by this. Here *sìor* can be translated as ‘without stopping, constantly’, or ‘forever’. It is not an intensifier in the sense as *fìor* or *sàr* are, as it emphasises the length of an action. It still cannot be regarded as a mere aspect modifier, as continuous aspect reflects a state that exists at the moment or an action that is in process, whereas *sìor* refers to something happening or somebody doing something “all the time”, conveying the speaker’s opinion, and as such it can be interpreted as a device for expressing an emphasised/intensified meaning. Consider the English sentences below:

- a) He (usually) complains.
- b) He’s complaining (just now).
- c) He complains all the time.
- d) He’s complaining all the time.

Example b is a statement about the present situation, whereas example d is a prolonged state. Examples c and d are the same in meaning, the difference between them is not in the

aspect (as between a and b), but in the intention of the speaker: indeed, example d produces a stronger statement than example c.⁵¹

A wide range of meanings are intensified by *sìor*. It can refer to movement; change of state (e.g. *sìor-fhàs* ‘constantly growing’); feelings (e.g. *sìor mhiannachadh* ‘constantly longing’) or communication (*sìor luaidh air* ‘constantly referring to it’), often with negative connotation: *sìor-ghearan* ‘constantly complaining’, *sìor(-)chaoineadh* ‘constantly mourning/weeping’, *sìor chrònán* ‘constantly buzzing/murmuring’, *sìor-ghlaodhaich* ‘constantly crying/shouting’, *sìor-chogadh ri ’m nàdur fein* ‘constantly fighting with my own nature’, *sìor phianadh* ‘constantly torturing’ (or consider references to water: *sìor-uisge* ‘eternal rain’, *sìor dhòrtadh* ‘constantly pouring’, *sìor(-)shileadh* ‘constantly dripping/raining’, *sìor-onfhadh* ‘constant raging, fury’ (of the sea)). It can be connected with sounds (especially in relation with water: *sìor-cheòl* ‘constant music’ (of the sea), *sìor-ghuth* ‘constant voice’ (of a waterfall), *sìor-fhuam na mara* ‘the constant sound of the sea’, etc), light (*sìor losgadh* ‘constantly burning’, *sìor bhoillsgeadh* ‘constantly shining’), etc. It may even be used with repetitive actions as in *Bha e sìor choimhead air an uair, agus ma dheireadh cha robh e cur an uaireadair na phòc* ‘idir. ‘He looked at the time again and again (lit. “he was constantly watching”), and in the end he didn’t put (lit. “wasn’t putting”) the watch in his pocket at all.’

Examples for verbal nouns intensified by *sìor* in the corpus can be found in Example 154:

Example 154.

- a) **movement:** *tighinn* ‘coming’, *tionndadh* ‘turning’, *teicheadh* ‘withdrawing, escaping’, *leum* ‘jumping’, *dol* ‘going’, *ruith* ‘running’, *coiseachd* ‘walking’, *falbh* ‘leaving’, *màrsail* ‘marching’
- b) **change:** *teannadh* ‘beginning’, *crìonadh* ‘ending’, *atharrachadh* ‘changing’, *dlùthachadh* ‘approaching’, *fàs* ‘growing’, *losgadh* ‘burning’, *àrdachadh* ‘raising’, *dùmhlachadh* ‘thickening’, *tuiteam* ‘falling’, *fàsgadh* ‘pressing’
- c) **communication:** *labhairt* ‘speaking’, *èigheach* ‘shouting’, *moladh* ‘praising’, *urnuigh* ‘praying’, *bruidhinn* ‘speaking’, *foighneachd* ‘asking’
- d) **of water:** *dòrtadh* ‘pouring’, *sruthadh* ‘flowing, streaming’
- e) **of light:** *losgadh* ‘burning’; in an abstract sense: *oighreachd a bha sìor bhoillsgeadh* ‘heritage that was constantly shining’

⁵¹ Quirk et al (1972: 93 §3.39) refer to this as a “subjective, emotionally coloured tone”; see also Vince 2003²: 2.

The clause ... *airson a bhi sìor cheothadh na pioba* ... ‘for constantly smoking the pipe’ is a rather visual example for the verbal usage. The two tokens for root verbs are as follows:

Example 155.

- a) *Mar sin sìor mhealaidh sibh an tìr/ Is glòir na rìoghachd sin* ... ‘Accordingly you will always enjoy the land and glory of that kingdom ...’
- b) *O chàirdean gaoil, nach iarr sibh i,/ Sìor iarraibh i gu bràth*, ... ‘Oh dear/loving friends (lit. “friends of love”), won’t you ask for it, keep asking for it forever, ...’

As nouns and verbal nouns are connected, many of the nominal tokens carry the same meaning as that we have seen with the verbs:

Example 156.

- a) **of water:** *sìor-onfhadh nan tonn* ‘the constant rage of the waves’, *sìor-uisge* ‘eternal rain’, *sìor bhoinnealaich uisge* ‘constant drops of water’
- b) **sounds:** *an sìor-cheòl/ lomnochd a th’ aig ar marannan* ‘the constant bare/naked music that our seas have’, *sìor-ghuth borb an easa* ‘the constant barbaric/harsh voice of the waterfall’, *sìor-fhuam na mara* ‘the constant sound of the sea’; *sìor chrònan nan caochan* ‘the constant murmuring/humming of the streamlet’
- c) **communication:** *nì sìor-luadh* ‘constantly make comments/talk’, *sìor ràdh* ‘always saying’
- d) **change:** *sìor phreasadh* ‘constantly crumpling’, *sìor phutadh (air aghart)* ‘constantly pushing (forward)’
- e) **movement:** *sìor(-)ghluasad* ‘constantly moving’; ... *no idir caisbheart mu ’n casan goirte le sìor-imeachd is coiseachd feadh gharbhlaichean* ‘... or any footwear at all on their foot hurt by the **constant pacing and walking** through the rugged country’; *Caithear spionnadh le sìor phlosgadh féithean a’ chridhe* ... ‘Energy is wasted by the **constant palpitation** of the muscles of the heart’
- f) **(reference to emotions:** *sìor-ghaoil/sìor-ghràidh* ‘eternal love’)

Similar to the examples above, *sìor* gives the following nouns (as well as to Example f above) the meaning of being ‘permanent/constant’ (note the negative connotation of *sìor-chunnart* ‘constant danger’ and *sìor chlaoidh* ‘constant oppression/exhaustion’):

Example 157.

- a) *Le sìor-ghàir’ air a’ bhraoisgein* ‘With constant laughter after giggle’ (lit. “on the giggle”)
- b) *Sìor Làthaireachd Dhé* ‘The Constant Presence of God’
- c) *’na shìor-chunnart* ‘in constant danger’

- d) *Bu leòr mo ghearain-sa [...], ach cha do mhair iad ach ùine ghoirid an taca ri sìor chlaoidh air a shìneadh a-mach bho thùs gu éis, gun furtachd [...] a dh'aotromaicheadh an t-eallach dhaibh.* 'I had plenty of complaints myself [...], but they didn't last but for a short time compared to (the) constant oppression drawn out from beginning to end without any consolation [...] that would (have) eased their burden.'
- e) ... *ach gu bheil sìor-bheò aige anns a' mhór mhath.* '... but that it has eternal life to a great degree.'

To take a step even further away from the intensifier function that *sìor* typically lends verbs, with certain nouns *sìor* shows a meaning 'not changing' or, rather, 'everlasting', referring to the durability of a state, but without the sense of expanding an action or a feeling: *sìor-mhaighdeannas* 'eternal maidenhood/virginity'; see also *don t-sìor thaigh-geamhraidh*, *don t-sìor thaigh-foghair is earraich is samhraidh* 'to the eternal winter home, to the eternal autumn and spring and summer home' in a religious chant over a corpse, to facilitate the soul to leave the body:

*Tha thu dol dhachaigh an nochd don t-sìor thaigh-geamhraidh,
don t-sìor thaigh-foghair is earraich is samhraidh,
Thu dol dhachaigh an nochd air seirm nan canntair.*

'Tonight you're going home to the eternal winter house,
to the eternal autumn and spring and summer house,
You're going home tonight on the melody of the chanters.'

In *sìor-mhaireannach* 'everlasting, perpetual' and in *gu sìor-mhaireannach* 'forever', as well, *maireannach* being 'durable, (long-)lasting, permanent', it intensifies the meaning of the adjective, giving a further emphasis to its (very similar) sense.

Finally, a combination of two intensifiers (accompanying verbal nouns), may shed some light on the relation of their meanings (connotations) and degrees. Moreover, the verbal nouns express two close emotional terms, which, as we have observed, are common with both intensifiers:

Cha b' ann a' fìor lùigeachdainn ach a' sìor mhiannachadh le uile chridhe ... 'It's not that you really wished for it, but that you were constantly longing for it with all your heart...'

7.4.3. Orthography

Non-verbal phrases containing *sìor* often occur with a hyphen (all 4 adjectival tokens and 23 out of 37 nouns (62%) are hyphenated (where 3 non-hyphenated forms are compounds)). Regarding verbs, however, only one-third of the verbal forms stand with a hyphen (77 out of 231 tokens, i.e. 33 %), both of the root verbs are non-hyphenated. Since *sìor* normally intensifies verbs, it might be considered as a plain adverbial form in this case, without any compound meaning. The difference is even more significant when comparing newer sources (no hyphen) and earlier sources (with hyphen), although certain fixed phrases have remained compounded (e.g. *sìor-uisge* ‘eternal rain’).

A certain noun-verb distribution may apply to two sources from Lewis – both are from the early 20th century, in which verbs tend to occur without hyphen, while nouns appear to be hyphenated: *gu bheil sìor-bheò aige* ‘that he has eternal life’; *sìor-fhuam na mara* ‘the constant sound of the sea’ vs *a’ sìor dhol* ‘constantly going’; *sìor dhòrtadh* ‘constantly pouring’. Another source from the first part of the 20th century (dialect unknown), at first sight appears to prove the opposite pattern: it contains the nominal example *le sìor phlosgadh féithean a’ chridhe* ‘the constant palpitation of the heart’s muscles’, while hyphenates all the verbal nouns (e.g. *a’ sìor-dhol*). However, the latter source serves as a good example for my argument above according to which compounding requires hyphenation as opposed to adverbial use: compare this example with the other nominal token from the same source: *faodaidh sìor-fhàsgadh aon chluais air an adhartan a leigeil* ‘one ear may be constantly pushed on the pillows’. In early, traditional and acquired language (hyphenation either typical or not), conventionality and phonological reasons (initial stress: hyphenated, equal stress or stress on second component: non-hyphenated) appear to play a part in orthography: *an t-sìor-ghràidh* ‘of the eternal/everlasting love’ – *’na shìor shuain* ‘in his eternal slumber’ (quasi-storytelling register; most tokens with hyphen/hyphenated); *Tha sìor bhoinnealaich uisge tighinn às a’ chreig am mullach na huaimh so*. ‘**Constant drops of water** comes (lit. is coming) from the cliff on top of this cave.’ vs ... *Le sìor-ghàir’ air a’ bhraoisgein* ... ‘With **constant laughter** after giggle’ (acquired language; most tokens without a hyphen).

7.4.4. Questions to native speakers

In the case of *sìor*, the question has arisen if it is principally used with negative connotation when intensifying verbs of communication. Again, it can be examined whether there is any relation between hyphenation and stress pattern (bearing in mind any possible difference in dialect and/or age).

In the present chapter I have analysed the results from the corpus study on the intensifiers *fior* ‘really, truly’, *làn* ‘fully, absolutely’, *sàr* ‘extremely’, and *sìor* ‘constantly, continually’. These all have root meanings, on which the intensifier meanings are based: *fior* can relate to purity or authenticity, *làn* may form part of compounds as a quantity noun, whereas its intensifier meaning is more restricted. *Sàr* conveys a high position or quality, alternatively, it can be related with the arts. *Sìor* intensifies verbal meanings as opposed to the other adverbs above, which normally intensify adjectives (as expected). Interestingly these words frequently have hyphenated forms.

In the next section I summarise the results of the corpus study in relation to other languages, in a sort of brief typological study of the semantics and grammar of adjectives.

8. Results of the corpus study from a more universal perspective

8.1. Intensifying function

The word for ‘good’ is not uncommon as an intensifier in the world’s languages (we only need to look at English translations like *walking a good distance* (not just a short one) or *having good knowledge of something* (i.e. knowing something well), although – modifying nouns – *good* here is an adjective from a grammatical perspective). There are some intensified adjectives in Chinese and Hungarian below.

Example 158.

- a) Chinese: *hǎo dà* ‘very big’, *hǎo měi* ‘very beautiful’ (where *hǎo* means ‘good’)
- b) Hungarian: *jó nagy* ‘quite/very big’, *jó drága* ‘quite/very expensive’, *jó nehéz* ‘quite/very heavy’ (where *jó* means ‘good’)

In Gaelic also nouns referring to abstract concepts can be intensified with adjectives – and this is remarkably common in structures like *tha cuimhn’/fios agam* ‘I remember/know’:

Example 159.

- a) *deagh-thoilichte (le)* ‘really happy (with)’
deagh chuimhne ‘remember well’, *deagh fhios* ‘know well’
deagh ùine ‘good/long time/while’, *deagh astar* ‘good/great speed’
ann an deagh sheann aois ‘in a good old age’
- b) *an ìre mhath* ‘quite, moderately’ (lit. “in a good grade/level”), *treis/greis mhath* ‘a good while’, *còrr math* ‘a great more’

Even *droch ghalair* and *tinneas/galar dona* have their counterparts in English: *a bad illness*, *badly needing*, etc. We can see from the examples above that in the case of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ both the preceding and the plain adjectives can function as intensifiers.

Occasional examples of *seann* make a more unusual intensifier – each rare in Scottish Gaelic itself: *seann droch Nàmh* ‘our bad old Enemy’/ *seann droch shaoghal sin* ‘that bad old world’, *seachd seann sgìth* ‘sick and tired’. It is striking that even though *seann* as an intensifier is not likely to occur, when it does, it tends to occur together with another intensifier (*seachd*) or preceding adjective (*droch-*). This makes *seann* rather distinctive in intensifier function. It is also worth noting that unlike in languages like Chinese or Hungarian (see above), in which ‘good’ tends to intensify simple, plain adjectives (as intensifier adverbs normally do), in Gaelic abstract nouns can just as well be intensified by adjectives with intensifying function (the same applies to English).

8.2. Universal contrasts and symmetries

8.2.1. Opposites (quality, age)

First of all, we find the opposites of quality ('good' vs 'bad') and age ('new/young' vs 'old') in every language, these concepts representing a part of human cognition. In Gaelic we have even seen the role of contrast in the different frequency patterns for the use of *deagh-* and *math* as opposed to *droch-* and *dona*. To recall the discussion on this I here repeat sentences from Examples 75(a) and 102:

Example 160.

- a) ... 'S *àite math* an seo nam biodh esan as an *droch-àite*... 'This is a *good* place if he were in a bad place.' (Example 75a, 102c)
- b) *Tha na h-Eireannaich mar mhuinntir eile, droch dhaoine 's daoine maithe 'nam measg.* 'The Irish are like other folks, bad people and good people (/non-religious and religious?) among them/mixed.' (Example 85c, 102a)
- c) *Cha d' fhuair droch-ràmhaidhe ràmh math riamh.* 'A bad rower (has) never found a good oar.' (proverb)

What is not universal in the world's languages, is the distinction between animate and inanimate usage of both 'new/young' and 'old', although the concept is present in most languages in some way or other: it often occurs in at least one of them, just like in English, which shows a distribution for the meanings 'young' (animate) and 'new' (inanimate). Examples from other languages are referred to in Table 14.

Table 14.

	new	young	old (inanimate)	old (animate)
Hungarian	<i>új</i>	<i>fiatal</i>	<i>régi</i>	<i>öreg/idős</i>
Chinese			<i>jiù</i>	<i>lǎo</i>
Spanish	<i>nuevo/a</i>	<i>joven</i>	<i>antiguo/a</i>	<i>viejo/a</i>

Even in English the word *elder* can only be used for people and not for objects or concepts. In light of this it is worth taking a look at the other member of this opposition.

8.2.2. Animate/inanimate symmetry (age)

In the case of Scottish Gaelic three variations of 'new' can be encountered. These are as follows: *ùr* meaning 'new' or 'fresh', *òg* usually in the sense 'young', and *nuadh*, which may be a dialectal variant for *ùr*, in the inanimate sense 'new' (the Irish word for 'new' is *nua* or *úr*), but it also occurs in innovative compounds with the meaning 'modern' (eg *nuadh-eachdraidh* for 'modern history'). Considering these varieties, it is obvious that

Gaelic does show the animate – inanimate distinction for both ‘old’ and ‘new’, the only difference being that there is no distinction of order in the case of ‘new/young’ (although note the AN compounds of *nuadh-*), whereas the various meanings of ‘old’ may also be distinguished by word order. Interestingly enough, however, there are proper compounds to be encountered with *òg* as the specifier, referring to an early time, rather than to the age of a person or other living creature: *òg-mhadainn* ‘early morning, dawning’, *Ógmhios* ‘June’ (lit. “early/young month”).

The opposition of ‘little’/‘young’ and ‘old’/‘big’ has also proved to be a useful device in languages to express relationships: they form part of conventional compounds like *grandma* (German *Grossmutter*, Hungarian *nagymama*, etc, all of which literally come from “big mother” (cf Irish *mo mháthair mhór* “my big mother”, i.e. ‘grandmother’), similarly *shima soni* in Navajo and *seanmhair* in Gaelic (literally meaning “old(er) mother”). In some languages we even encounter parallel expressions with ‘little’, as in Navajo *shima yazhi* “little mother” for ‘aunt’ (the – now derogative – Hungarian *kisanyám* (“my little mother”) might originate in the same – or similar – meaning). Chinese *xiǎo* ‘little, small, young’ + SURNAME and *lǎo* ‘old, experienced’ + SURNAME have special meanings in addressing each other, and show hierarchy at a workplace.

8.3. Meaning varieties and meaning change

According to the observations in the previous chapters, preceding adjectives show a certain conceptualising function, for which we have seen various, colourful examples, often triggering change in meaning. In the case of *droch latha* and *latha dona* ‘bad day’ the difference was grammatical: the first being more subjunctive (with the future or conditional tenses), the latter more factual and certain (in present or past). *Deagh obair* has proved to be associated with job in a more abstract sense (‘good job’), while *obair mhath* referred to an individual work (‘good work’). Other examples for meaning change included *astar math* for ‘good distance’ and *deagh astar* for ‘good speed’, *àm math* for ‘appropriate time’ and *ann an deagh àm* meaning ‘in time’, *galar dona* for a ‘bad illness’ and *droch ghalair* for ‘great suffering’ (i.e. ‘bad illness’ in an abstract sense). The difference is even more salient when the more abstract phrase becomes a compound with a figurative sense such as *droch-àite* for ‘hell’ as opposed to *àite dona* referring to a dirty, unsuitable place. Similar compounds are *an droch-shùil* ‘the evil eye’, *seann ghille* ‘bachelor’ and *seann mhaighdean* (or *sean(n) nighean* in Lewis) ‘old-maid’.

As I have pointed out before, *seann* and *aosta* appear to have a number of specific functions. While *seann-* is the typical adjective with reference to age, old types (e.g. *seann*

téipichean céire ‘old wax tapes’, *seann teine* ‘old fireplace’), previous roles (‘former’: e.g. *seann saighdear* ‘old soldier, veteran’, *seann leannan* ‘old sweetheart’) and traditionality (*seann òran* ‘folksong, traditional song’ (vs *òran aosda* ‘old song’), *seann sgeulachd* ‘traditional story’, *sean-fhacal* ‘proverb, saying’, *seann eòlas* ‘lore’, *seann-taigh* ‘traditional (black-)house’ (vs *taigh aosda* ‘old house’), etc), *aosta* is associated with buildings or institutes having existed for a while (e.g. *’na shloinn seanchaidh aosda* ‘in his old storyteller family’, *cladh aosda Chille Chòmhghain* ‘the old graveyard of Kilchoan’) and gives a more poetic reference to age (e.g. *cnàmhan aosda* ‘old bones’, *ceann aosd* ‘old head’, *fuam aosd na mara* ‘the old sound of the sea’), and the past: *làithean aosda* ‘old days’. It also appears to show connection with wisdom (cf *eòlas aosd nam boireannach* ‘the old knowledge of (the) women’). I have also mentioned the possible distinction between *seann charaid* ‘old friend’ (where the friendship has existed for a long time) and *caraid aosda* ‘old friend’ (referring to the friend’s age). If this suggestion is true, the similarity with the use of Spanish *viejo/a* is striking: *una vieja amiga* ‘an old friend’ (referring to the length of the friendship) vs *una amiga vieja* ‘an old friend’ (age). (The difference between *una mujer vieja* and *una vieja mujer* ‘an old woman’ is similar to that between *boireannach aosda* vs *seann bhoireannach* in Gaelic.) In Table 15 I illustrate the relation between the patterns of the Gaelic and Spanish adjectives.

Table 15.

Spanish			Sc. Gaelic		
connotation	type of adjective	examples	connotations	type of adjective	examples
existed some time ago, i.e. 'former'	preceding	<i>un antiguo colega</i> 'a former colleague'	earlier or traditional types, previous roles	preceding	<i>seann teine</i> 'old fireplace' <i>seann sgeulachd</i> 'traditional story' <i>seann saighdear</i> 'veteran'
existed a long time ago	plain	<i>un pueblo antiguo</i> 'an ancient people'	past, existed previously or earlier	plain and preceding	<i>làithean aosta</i> 'past days' <i>seann Ghàidhlig/Sean-Ghàidhlig</i> 'old Gaelic/Irish' <i>Seann Linn na Cloiche</i> 'Early Stone Age'
having existed for a long time	preceding	<i>una vieja amiga</i> 'an old friend'	having existed for a long time: - relationship - buildings or institutes	preceding or plain	<i>seann charaid</i> 'old friend' <i>'na shloinn seanchaidh aosda</i> 'in his old storyteller family'
age	plain	<i>una mujer vieja</i> 'an old woman'	age	preceding; and plain: especially more poetic expressions, mostly related to nature	<i>seann-duine</i> 'old man' <i>cnàmhan aosta</i> 'old bones' <i>leacan aosd a' chladaich</i> 'the old stones of the shore'

Since *seann-* is the more productive adjective for 'old' in Gaelic, it tends to be used for age, which, being the most natural, tangible sense, must be the default meaning of this adjective. We can also find old languages and ages – 'existed a long time ago' – with *seann-*, as well as buildings or institutes having existed for a while with *aosta*. In the latter case though I have to note that we are talking about an inanimate object or concept, which may be closer in meaning to plain *antiguo* than preceding *viejo* – compare *un pueblo antiguo* and *'na shloinn seanchaidh aosda*.

An interesting distribution in the use of words for 'old' can be observed in Chinese as well. As we have seen before, in Chinese *lǎo* usually refers to people, as in *wǒ bǐ nǐ lǎo* 'I'm older than you.'. The word 'old' for objects is *jiù*. However, we can express the sentence 'This book is old.' in two different senses: if we are referring to the paper the

book was printed on, we can use the word *jiù* without any problems. On the other hand, if we mean to refer to the content of the book (an abstract concept), we have to say *lǎo* instead of *jiù*.

Example 161.

Zhè shì běn jiù shū. ‘This book is old.’ (material)

Zhè shì běn lǎo shū. ‘This book is old.’ (content)

8.4. Emphasis and word order

In many languages emphasis plays a significant role in word order. This can be observed in the examined adjectives in various languages. In Example 162 I give some Spanish examples for emphasis in operation:

Example 162.

- a) *Mario es un **mal chico**.* ‘Mario is a **bad boy**.’ (criticism – emotional) vs
*Me he encontrado un **chico malo**.* ‘I’ve met a **bad boy**.’ (neutral gathering of events)
- b) *Me gusta leer **libros buenos**.* ‘I like reading **good books**.’ (neutral) vs
*Qué película te apetece ver? Una **buena película**.* ‘What kind of film would you like to watch? A **good film**.’ (answer to a question – choice from various options)
- c) *Mi padre trabajo en un **gran hospital**.* ‘My father works at a big hospital.’
(not at a small one: important quality)
*Yo tengo una **cama grande** a la izquierda.* ‘I’ve got a **big bed** to the left.’
(neutral – part of description)
- d) *la nueva idea* ‘the new (alternative) idea’ vs *la casa nueva* ‘the new house’

I have encountered a similar example in Navajo, where *alchíní yázhí* had the neutral sense ‘little children’, whereas *nizhóní yázhí at’ééd* served as an emotional vocative phrase in a lullaby meaning ‘beautiful, little girl’. In the case of Gaelic I considered this possibility in examples containing *deagh fhios* or *fios math*:

*Tha **deagh fhios** againn gu bheil duine nas trice a’ laighe fo diabetes ma tha mórán de ghualuisgean ’na biadh.* ‘We know very well that people more frequently suffer in diabetes if their food contains more carbohydrates.’

*’S bhithinn-s’ a’ feitheamh, **fios mhath** aige carson...* ‘And I would be waiting, (and) he knowing fine why...’

I have also discussed the case of *greis*, where *deagh ghreis* should mean ‘a long while’, whereas *greis mhath* ‘good while’ refers to a less definite length, usually connected to a part of a time period, interval (‘after some while’, ‘for a certain while’, etc), well-represented by the following example: *Ach greis mhath às deidh seo, dh’fhàs Beasa tinn* ‘But a good while/some time after this, Bessy grew ill’. As here we deal with intensification, it is interesting how its degree changes in relation to *deagh*- and *math*.

In an NA language (where the default, neutral adjectival phrase consists of a noun followed by an adjective) a structure in which the adjective precedes the noun ought to be marked. There are two main occasions in which adjectival phrases are marked. When the adjective is emphasised, it contributes to the meaning of the phrase to a significant degree, as we have seen above. The other is compounding. In a compound the adjective represents an inherent feature of the expression. Unlike in the emphasised expressions then, these qualifiers/specifiers do not need to be highlighted and separated from their bases/generics (this might be reflected by the stress pattern), although the expression itself may well carry a significant, individual meaning (cf *droch-rud* ‘devil’ for instance). Examples for this are French *petite fille* ‘little/young girl’ as opposed to *fille petite* ‘small girl’ and Spanish *pequeño niño* ‘baby boy/son’ as opposed to *niño pequeño* ‘little boy’, which I already mentioned towards the end of section 3.4, just like *gran ciudad* (lit. “big town”) for a city and *pequeña ciudad* (lit. “small town”) for a town, as well as familiar cases regathered here in Example 163:

Example 163.

- a) *deagh charaid* ‘a good friend’ (i.e. a person who is close to someone) vs *caraid math* ‘a good friend’ (i.e. whose behaviour/attitude as a friend is good), *deagh-chomhairle* ‘good advice’ (in general) vs *comhairle mhath* ‘some good advice’ (the quality of the advice is more salient)
- b) *droch thinneas* ‘bad/serious illness’ (lasting or fatal) vs *tinneas dona* ‘bad illness/disease’ (the speaker’s opinion – quality is more salient)
- c) *seann fheadhainn* ‘(the) old ones’ vs *feadhainn aosda* ‘old ones/people’

Spanish examples like *buen carácter* ‘good character’, *mala nota* ‘bad (low) mark’ or *gran familia* ‘big family’ may show a more pronounced similarity with Example a and b, having the same meaning as the alternative phrase, only being more conventionalised (frequently used, usually referring to the same thing/context or answering a tacit question (how big is your family?/what kind of family do you have?)). Similar examples in Hungarian include the compounds *kisgyerek* ‘little child’ (usually a toddler or around), *kiscica* ‘(little) kitten’,

jóbarát ‘good friend’⁵², *jókivánság* ‘good wish’, *öregember* ‘old man’, etc (in all of these compounds the specifier refers to an inherent meaning of the whole word).

It is important to remember though that not all compounds are proper compounds (see sections 3.5.1 and 3.7). There is a considerable number of improper compounds in Gaelic as well (cf *gean-math*, for example!). We can see the same pattern in the Navajo compounds *shima yazhi* ‘mother’ + ‘little’, i.e. ‘aunt’ and *shima soni* ‘mother’ + ‘old(er)’, i.e. ‘grandma’. Since compounds are conservative expressions, emphasised phrases are naturally less compoundlike, which can be the best attested in these compounds (compare the Navajo examples at the beginning of this section).

8.5. Register

What I have not discussed here is the question of register. Two registers have proved to be significant in the use of the examined adjectives: those of religion and literature. In religious context *math* is a common choice of adjective (*Nì math* meaning ‘God’, *dòchas math* ‘good hope’ in a religious hymn, *duine math* ‘good, religious person’, or *leabhar math* ‘good book’ for the Bible) (although *deagh dhòchas* ‘good hope’, *deagh-ghean* ‘goodwill’ occur as well), while *droch* occurs in compounds and collocates with religious references: *droch spiorad* ‘bad spirit’, *droch-rud* ‘hell’ (or without hyphen: ‘a bad issue’), *droch-àite* ‘hell’, *droch dhuine* ‘non-religious/bad person’; (although there are also few examples regarding people with *dona*: *boireannach dona Crìosdaidh* ‘a bad Christian woman’, *profist dona* ‘a bad prophet’, *diabhal dona* ‘bad devil’ (referring to a man)). Among intensifiers *fìor* is often encountered in religious texts in accordance with its connotation of purity: *fìorghlan* ‘immaculate’, *fìor(-)fhuil (Chrìost)* ‘pure/noble blood (of Christ)’, *fìor ghràs Dhè* ‘God’s true grace’, *fìor spiorad Chrìosda* ‘the true spirit of Christ’; however, in connection with verbal nouns the abstract connotations of *làn* renders it suitable for religious contexts: *Làn fhoillsich mi mo pheacadh dhuit...* ‘I fully revealed my sin to you’ and *Tha m’ aigne air làn-fhosgladh...* ‘My spirit/soul has fully/entirely opened’.

Regarding literature, *aosta* appears to provide a more poetic device to express age in Lewis sources, often related to body parts or natural creations, whereas *sean* as a plain adjective still can be encountered in poetry, despite its datedness:

⁵² I have to add that the Hungarian Orthography Dictionary gives the one spelling *jó barát*; however, the usual stress patterns for this phrase indicate that there are at least two different meanings for it: 1) *jó barát* [good as a friend] 2) *jó barát* [somebody’s close friend]

*... ach saoilidh mi g' eil e dà-fhillte cràidht
tha 'g àrach 'na a chridhe **boile shean**,
's a' leantainn troimhn an teine loisgeach bean,
a threòir bho dhall is ionnsachadh le pàisd.*

‘... but I think that he is double tormented (i.e. twice as unhappy)
who nourishes (lit. is nourishing) an **old passion** in his heart,
and follows (lit. is following) a woman through the burning fire,
his strength from a blind man and learning with a child.’

Based on the results of the corpus study, discussed in chapters 4–7, in the next chapter the interviews with native speakers are presented and analysed.

9. Native speakers' judgements

This chapter describes the interviews which have been carried out with native speakers in order to test the results that emerged in the corpus study. Although this chapter is the shortest, it forms an important part of the thesis, since it has played an essential role in clarifying a number of questions.

9.1. Aims and exercises

The corpus study has revealed many interesting patterns. However, many of these are suggestive rather than absolutely certain, and as such, require further investigations. One way to gain more insight into doubtful observations is to seek native speakers' opinion on the subject. Unfortunately, the space for this investigation is rather restricted as the length of the interview limits the number of questions that can be answered, which leaves many questions unanswered. Due to limitation of time only a low number of speakers were interviewed (10); neither did all parts of the questionnaire work out as planned. On the other hand, this part of the research has clarified many of the questions addressed in the interviews, and in some cases even questions that were not specifically investigated. The intensifiers presented the main problem, as, apart from *fior*, speakers generally agreed on using them infrequently; on the other hand, this in itself confirms their high register.

The full test can be consulted in the Appendix. Each interview lasted for 30 or 40 minutes, and the test included 7 exercises (referred to as sections (§) in the rest of the chapter) altogether, 3 of these to explore the meaning and use of preceding and plain adjectives, 3 for intensifiers, and 1 (on stress and orthography) for both. The exercises were mainly translations, a picture description, stress recognition, and continuum of strength. Each of these are described in more details in the following paragraphs.

According to my observations, plain adjectives qualify tangible nouns, while preceding adjectives convey conceptuality and abstractness. To test this observation, §1 contained tangible nouns: professions, animals, and vehicles. I gave 2 pictures of each to the informants with two adjectival phrases to be translated (I also used some other plain adjectives for distraction). In §1b the informants had to translate unusual phrases consisting of tangible or abstract entities and the adjective 'good', 'bad', or 'old' (e.g. *good feather*, *old sadness*). In §2 the phrases to be translated were 'good day', 'bad day' with pictures reflecting weather, and 'good night', 'bad night' with pictures implying more complex/abstract meanings (referring to feelings related to the specific period of day, such as entertainment or boredom).

To examine whether preceding adjectives in certain cases are related to subjectivity (grammatical reason) or emphasis (pragmatic reason) I used several sentences distributed between §2 and §4. The two sentences for *good reason* and *good year* are shown in Example 164:

Example 164.

*Believe me, I had a **good reason** to go to Glasgow.* – emphasis, certain (past tense)

*Even if I had a **good reason**, I wouldn't do such a thing.* – fairly neutral, uncertain
(conditional)

*I have passed my exams, I've found a job and my sister got married. It was a **good year**.* – emphasis, certain (past tense)

*I hope the next year will be a **good year**.* – neutral, uncertain (future tense)

The role of contrast in the use of plain adjective *aosta* (or *sean*) was examined with the following sentences (also in §2 and §4):

Example 165.

a) *Gaelic is an **old language** as it stayed unchanged for centuries.* (age)

*This song was written in the **old language**.* (period of use)

*The **ancient language** of the Greek wasn't an **old language** at that time.*
(both – period of use vs age)

b) *I've got an **old friend** from primary school.* (existence of friendship)

*I've got young friends and **old friends**.* (age – used together with opposite)

I also intended to check if my assumption about the poetic connotation of *aosta* was right with the following sentence in §2: *The night whispered **old words** from the wood.* Whether preceding adjective *seann-* reflects traditionality, I aimed to examine with the pictures for the use of *seann-/aosta/sean* with people, clothes and dances.

In §4 the informants had to translate nonsense words and loan words qualified by 'good', 'bad' and 'old'. This section was supposed to identify the **default adjective** – the adjective used automatically, more productively by the speaker. Loan words may also relate to the default usage of adjectives with types of entities (e.g. object (*yoyo*), food (*spagetti*, *sushi*), abstract (*déjà vu*), etc). In the corpus the choice for the adjective used with certain nouns appeared to be influenced by the number of the noun. In §3 I asked the plural of certain adjectival phrases to examine the preferences to the adjective in singular and plural.

I examined the use of *fior* with the adjective *deagh-* or *math* (§2): whether there is any difference in the translation of *true*, *good friend* and *really good friend*. I also asked for the

phrase *true, old man* in one sentence with *seann-saighdear* ‘veteran’ (lit. “old soldier”), and for *fìor(-)sheann-duine* in §5. With respect to the use of intensifiers with verbs: I wished to survey the use of *làn* with a verb in §4: *entirely/fully opening*. I also meant to find out whether it could be used in physical sense (*fully opening his arms*) or only in abstract sense (*entirely opening his mind*). (Since in the corpus I observed intensifiers more frequently with verbal nouns, I used the continuous.) In §7 I expected the use of intensifiers like *sìor* and *làn* with verbs (*whistling/whispering/complaining all the time* or *immersed in whistling/whispering/complaining*), and also wished to examine whether *sìor-* may be used both with positive and negative connotations (*smiling/helping* or *fighting/shouting all the time*). In §6 I asked the speakers to place the intensifiers on a continuum to explore the degree of intensification they convey. I used two nouns and two adjectives both with positive and negative connotations: *gruaim* ‘gloom’, *cruaidh* ‘hard’, *toil* ‘pleasure’, and *toilichte* ‘happy’ – each with *fìor*, *sàr* and *làn*; then a verb with *fìor*, *làn*, and *sìor*: *fìor mhiannachadh* – *làn mhiannachadh* – *sìor mhiannachadh* ‘longing, wishing’.

The main purpose of §5 was to investigate the connection between pronunciation (i.e. stress) and orthography: to understand the use of hyphen in words such as *droch-latha*, *droch-bhean*, and occasionally the difference between the phrase with preceding and plain adjective (e.g. between *deagh obair* and *obair mhath*). I showed the informants the word pairs or triples and attempted to use the assumed stress pattern when pronouncing them.⁵³ Subsequently they had to tell me if they see any difference between the phrases. According to my hunch no hyphen implies equal stress, whereas hyphenation indicates initial stress. The section was also meant to check more figurative or specific meanings, such as in *droch-shùil* ‘evil eye’, *droch-rud* ‘devil’, and *droch-dhaoine* ‘criminals/villains’. Similar to the above, I intended to interpret the variation in the writing of *sàr* with *facal* ‘word’, *duine* ‘man/person’, *bàrd* ‘poet’: whether the use of the hyphen refers to a difference in meaning (e.g. *sàr dhuine* ‘an exceptional man’ vs *sàr-dhuine* ‘nobleman/leader’, *sàr bhàrd* ‘an exceptional poet’ vs *sàr-bhàrd* ‘a leading poet’). In §3 I wished to test another aspect of the hyphenation in relation with *sàr*. In the corpus certain phrases with *sàr* alternated in hyphenation depending on the number of the noun. Singular phrases like *'sàr-mharaiche* were hyphenated, thus I attempted to pronounce them with initial stress. I used sentences like *'S e 'sàr-mharaiche a th' ann.* to provide more fluent, more natural, more spontaneous

⁵³ I did not show the words to the first informant, who then suggested that it is easier to interpret the exercise if the hyphenation is to be seen.

pronunciation. Then I asked the speakers to put the sentence into plural. Since plurals were non-hyphenated in the corpus, I expected equal stress in their answers.

9.2. Informants

I interviewed 10 informants: 6 native speakers⁵⁴ from Lewis (1L, 3L, 5L, 6L, 11L, 12L), 1 from Harris (10H), and 3 from South Uist (2U, 4U, 7U). Concerning their age, 4 of them were between 25 and 60, and 6 were 60 or above. Their exact distribution among the age groups was as follows:

20-30: 1 (Lewis) 1L

30-40: 1 (South Uist) 4U

40-50: 1 (Lewis) 3L

50-60: 1 (Harris) 10H

60-70: 4 (1 from South Uist, 3 from Lewis) 2U; 6L, 11L, 12L

70-80: 2 (1 from South Uist, 1 from Lewis) 7U; 5L

9.3. Problems

Stress, in general, proved not to be reliable in the interviews, since the informants focussing on the words in the translations did not seem to be natural even in pronouncing the sentences. In particular, §3 did not seem to work: although the speakers did use double stress (or second element stress) in the plurals (such as 'sàr 'chompanaich~, 'sàr 'chompanaich, 'sàr 'mharaichean~, 'sàr 'mharaichean), which was the expected result, it occurred to me that they used the same pattern when reading out the hyphenated singular words for themselves (e.g. 'sàr- 'chompanach~, 'sàr- 'chompanach, 'sàr- 'mharaiche~, 'sàr- 'mharaiche). On top of that, I did not manage to utter the presumed pronunciation myself when presenting the singular words for them.

In part b of the exercise I asked for the plural of some adjectival phrases and was expecting different adjectives in the singular and the plural (e.g. *deagh rùn* but *rùintean math(a)* for 'good intention', *deagh chuimhne* but *cuimhneachan math(a)* for 'good memory', *seann-daoine* as the plural of *duine aosta* 'old man', *mnathan matha* as the plural for *sean-bhean* 'old woman/wife'). Here the informants tended to stick with one of the adjectives. If they changed the adjective that was to accord with their own general word choice (for example they would change *aosta* to *seann-* if they did not use the adjective *aosta* at all). They never used the suggested alternation between *deagh rùn* and *rùintean math* or *deagh chuimhne* and *cuimhneachan math*. 3L hesitated after saying *deagh*

⁵⁴ I consider someone a Gaelic native speaker if their first language was Gaelic.

rùintean as the plural of ‘good intention’ (which was *deagh rùn* for all informants who answered this question), and added *rùintean mhath* [sic] as well. The same informant gave both *cuimhneachan mhath* and *deagh chuimhneachan* as the plural of ‘good memory’. In the other cases the singular – plural distinction probably plays no role in choosing the right adjective.

I did not gain many examples for the relevant adjectival phrases from the description of the pictures. Some contributed to the expression of ‘an old man’, regarding age: *duin’ aost’*, *dannsair aosta* ‘old dancer’, *seann-duine* (from South Uist) and *bodach* (without an adjective), on the other hand, hardly anyone used the phrases ‘old clothes’ and ‘old dance’. When I asked them about traditionality, most of them noted that they would not use *seann-dannsa* for ‘a traditional dance’, and *seann-fhasanta* ‘old-fashioned’ was preferred in connection with ‘old clothes’. Most people agreed to say *dannsa traidiseanta* or *nàiseanta* ‘traditional or national dances’, *dannsa Èireannach* or *Gàidhealach* ‘Irish or Highland dance’ instead of *seann dannsa* ‘old dance’. It appears that speakers prefer calling the dances by specific names. One of them defined *seann dannsa* as “a dance that’s been around for many years”. For some speakers *seann aodach* refers to rags that you do not wear anymore, a speaker from Lewis would not use *seann dannsa* and *seann aodach* at all (see more on the use of preceding adjectives in Lewis below in section 9.4.1.1). I am still not completely certain that *seann dannsa* does not hold the element of traditionality for some speakers. However, the question would need to be addressed from a different perspective.

Most of my informants coped well with the unusual phrases and loan words. However, when the qualified words did not have any meaning (i.e. in the section with nonsense words), they grew confused. After analysing the data, I found that they fit in the patterns quite smoothly. In some cases it indicates very clearly how the speaker tries to identify a certain entity behind the sounds (which eventually adds to the exercise with the unusual phrases), in other cases the use of a default adjective comes through. (In the case of the unusual phrases (§1b), my first 3 informants misunderstood the word *feather*, and translated *good father* instead, but that did not cause much trouble, as both refer to rather tangible nouns.)

My attempts to evoke the use of an intensifier before a verb have almost failed completely. In the phrase *entirely/fully opening*, speakers tended to translate *entirely/fully* with the adverbial phrase *gu tur: làn* with a verb does not seem to be used in spoken Gaelic. Neither did they use intensifiers in the last exercise (apart from 7U, see section 9.4.2.3), even though intensifier phrases had already been introduced in the section before.

9.4. Results

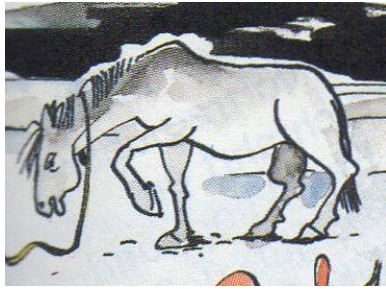
9.4.1. Preceding vs plain adjectives

9.4.1.1. Dialects (Lewis/Harris vs South Uist)

My informants basically came from two dialect areas: 6 from Lewis and 3 from South Uist. Although Lewis is over-represented in the survey, as I have interviewed twice as many informants from Lewis, the results seem to show a definite distinction between the two dialects. The speaker from Harris matched the pattern of Lewis speakers.

Two informants from South Uist used the preceding adjectives *deagh-* and *droch-* in all cases. In the language of speakers from Lewis and Harris *math* functions as a default adjective, which means it is used with remarkable frequency. Some speakers use *dona* as well. *Seann-* is over-productive in both dialects; however, Lewis speakers say *aosta* as well. 12L tends to use plain adjectives only (apart from compounds/fixed expressions like *droch shùil* ‘bad look, glare’): *math* for ‘good’, *dona* for ‘bad’, and *aost* for ‘old’. Some speakers from Lewis would not use preceding adjectives, and in their opinion preceding adjectives (especially *deagh-* (or *deigh-* in Lewis)) are wide-spread only in the Southern islands. Although I am not certain which islands in the south this remark specifically refers to, my survey shows a similar difference between Lewis and South Uist speakers. This would suggest that *deagh-* and other preceding adjectives are spreading from the south (in Lewis they were usually ignored by people who had used the language less frequently since they had left Gaelic-speaking communities). Interestingly, 7U from South Uist uses *math* quite frequently (that is the default adjective for ‘good’ for this speaker). 2U from South Uist used *sean* or *aosta* with *pàiste* ‘child’ (age of a person – nonsense phrase) and *aodach* ‘clothes’ (object) (but not with *iasgair* ‘fisherman’ (profession), *càr* ‘car’ (vehicle) or *each* ‘horse’ (animal)). 10H from Harris also uses both plain adjectives (*sean* and *aosta*) for ‘old’, whereas 4U (South Uist) uses only *sean*, to occasionally mark distinction with the preceding adjective *seann-*.

In Lewis the tendency was to use *seann-* with most words, the default adjective for ‘bad’ was *droch-* for most informants, but it was *math* for ‘good’. *Math* was the usual choice for ‘good’, the adjectives for ‘bad’ and ‘old’ vary more. *Aosta* was occasionally used to mark the age of a person or animal (three informants from Lewis (one of them was 12L) translated ‘old horse’ as *each aosta* (it might have been influenced by the picture, which shows a particularly old horse)).



‘Bad mouse’ was *luchag dhona* for 11L, which may be an example of criticism (consider that the phrase is rather unusual; see section 9.4.1.5 further on criticism). 1L (the youngest speaker) used *dona* quite frequently (even with abstract concepts), although the default adjective for this informant (with nonsense words) was *droch*-. Two speakers from Lewis used the plain adjectives for food: *spagetti math* ‘good spaghetti’ and *sushi dona* ‘bad sushi’, but the preceding adjective in the case of *droch d(h)elicatessen* ‘bad delicatessen’. For describing a profession 1L chose the preceding adjective: *deagh sheinneadair* ‘good singer’. Similarly, 7U from South Uist did the same, although used the plain adjective with animal and vehicle: *each math* ‘good horse’ and *aiseag mhath* ‘good ferry’. In the cases of both *droch d(h)elicatessen* and *deagh sheinneadair* the preceding adjective might refer to the quality of a semantically more complex entity (an institute vs a building, a profession vs a person). (There is one example for the opposite distribution: *delicatessen dona* but *droch sushi*, although it might be just playing with the variation.) Alternatively, the use of *deagh*- in qualifying a profession may have developed from emphasis, praising the person’s abilities (see section 9.4.1.3 further on emphasis).

Regarding time expressions, all answers from South Uist were as follows:

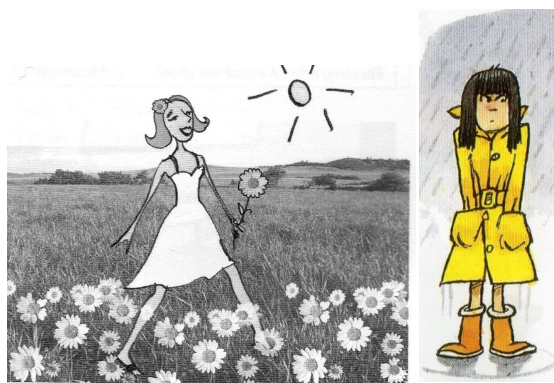
good day (weather): *latha math*

bad day (weather): *droch latha*

good night (entertaining, etc.): *deagh oidhche*

bad night (boring, etc.): *droch oidhche*

‘Bad day’ was *droch latha* and ‘bad night’ was *droch oidhche* for all speakers. In Lewis ‘a good night’ can be *oidhche mhath* as well (3L from South Uist would use it only as a greeting). 6L from Lewis translated ‘good day’ as *deagh latha*. It may convey more emphasis on the beauty of the day, which makes me doubt whether there is a distinction between the weather and a more abstract meaning. My informants did not use *latha dona* ‘a bad day’ as a reference to the weather, although feelings may be involved even in these cases, just as *deagh latha* may refer to a joyful, sunny day for 6L (see pictures). Abstract and tangible concepts seem to merge in the case of these time expressions.



good day

bad day

9.4.1.2. Conceptualisation and tangibility

I intended to test the conceptualising function of preceding adjectives with the unusual phrases in §1. However, the use of adjectives *deagh-* and *math* did not show any difference between tangible and conceptual nouns. One possibility is that it might have worked as one of the factors in the past that determine the present distribution of *deagh-* and *math* (consider words like ‘good reason’ and ‘good intention’, the Gaelic for which were *deagh aobhar* (occasionally *reusan*) and *deagh rùn* for most speakers), but synchronically it has less influence on the word choice. As I have noted before, *deagh-* seems to substitute *math* in the south (probably losing the distinction), and spread in the north as well (giving more opportunity for variation)⁵⁵. The eldest informant from South Uist (7U) still uses *math* with many words: consider *each math* ‘good horse’, *ite mhath* ‘good feather’, *gloinne mhath* ‘good glass’, as well as the loan words *spagetti math* ‘good spaghetti’, *yoyo math* ‘good yoyo’. What is remarkable here is that all of these words are tangible – referring to either an object or an animal – as opposed to words like *deagh obair* ‘a good job’, *deagh reusan* ‘a good reason’, *deagh smuaintean* ‘good thoughts/intention(s)’, or *deagh chuimhne* ‘good memory’. The conceptual word I used with ‘good’ was ‘silence’ or ‘peace’ and the fact that even 7U from South Uist qualified this abstract word with *math* (*sàmhchair mhath*) suggests that there should be an alternative explanation for this word choice (why all informants excluding two from South Uist used the plain adjective *math* with the abstract noun as well: *sàmhchair/socair mhath* ‘good silence/peace’). Namely, this phrase might have a religious connotation such as *dòchas math* ‘good hope’ (see Example 57 in section 4.2 and section 4.2.7 about register).

1L used *dona* with both tangible and abstract words, although *droch-* with nonsense words. For six speakers ‘bad’ was *droch-* in all three phrases. 10H was the only informant

⁵⁵ Although due to my limited data, general claims cannot be made.

who used the plain adjective *dona* with ‘pillow’ and the preceding adjective *droch-* with the abstract ‘hope’ and ‘happiness’.

1L and 6L generally used *aost*’ for a person’s age (6L even *duine aosta* for ‘a veteran’, but *seann iasgair* ‘old fisher’ for a profession; also 6L was one of the informants who translated ‘old horse’ as *each aosta* (animal)). Three more speakers translated ‘old infant’ using the plain adjective: 2U (from South Uist): *pàiste sean/aosta*, 5L: *leanabh sean* (although answered tentatively, and did not use the plain adjective in any other cases), and 10H: *òganach aosta* (the latter used *aosta* with the conceptual word ‘sadness’ as well).

9.4.1.3. The role of emphasis

There were two speakers who differentiated between the sentences with ‘good reason’ and ‘good year’: 5L chose *deagh aobhar* in the past sentence with emphasis, and *aobhar math* in the neutral, conditional sentence. Similarly, the speaker used *fìor dheagh bhliadhna* in the emphatic, and *bliadhna mhath* in the neutral sentence. 10H chose *deagh bhliadhna* in the past sentence with emphasis, and *bliadhna mhath* in the neutral, future sentence. South Uist speakers used *deagh-* in all four sentences. From Lewis, 1L and 3L translated ‘good reason’ as *deagh aobhar* and ‘good year’ as *bliadhna mhath* both times; 6L and 10H used *aobhar math* ‘good reason’ in both sentences; and 11L (and 12) qualified both words with *math*.

Some informants chose other means of emphasis: 3L used the intensifier *fìor* to say ‘good reason’ in both sentences (*fìor-dheagh aobhar* ‘a really good reason’) (this speaker also used *fìor mhath* ‘really good’ in the emphatic utterance, although in predicative sense). 6L put the emphasis on a different word in ‘I had a good reason’: *bha aobhar math agamsa* (lit. ‘a good reason was at myself’), and stressed the preceding adjective in the emphatic sentence containing ‘good year’: *‘deagh ‘bhliadhna* vs *,deagh ‘bhliadhna* (neutral).

Other, more spontaneous evidence came from elsewhere: half of the informants found no difference between *deagh bhiadh* and *biadh math* (or occasionally stated preference to one over the other). On the other hand, speakers 3L and 6L found *deagh bhiadh* more spontaneous or stronger; 7U said that it depended on context but *deagh bhiadh* refers to better foods; 10H translated *deagh bhiadh* as ‘excellent food’ in contrast with *biadh math*, which refers to a food that you like less. Similarly, informants explained *deagh obair* as conveying more enthusiasm (3L), with the emphasis on ‘good’, rather than on ‘work’ (which would be *obair mhath*) (4U). For two other speakers (10H, 11L): *deagh obair*

means ‘a very good/excellent work’, while *obair mhath* ‘a good, fine work’ (which is just alright).

For 1L, who generally uses *math* for abstract concepts as well, *deagh aobhar* may have developed from emphasis (cf 3L, who uses *fior-dheagh aobhar* in both the emphatic and “neutral” sentences). (Also consider, that for 6L and 10, also from Lewis (and Harris) *aobhar* stands with *math* both times.) I refer to this process in which emphatic phrases spread in speech in section 4.2.2. The informants noted such expressions as “more spontaneous”, “immediate” (with respect to *deagh bhiadh* and *deagh obair*), which can refer to this difference between everyday/spoken and written/more formal language. Alternatively, the frequent use of *deagh aobhar* may also be due to its conceptual sense (also consider the frequent use of *deagh rùn* for ‘good intention’, for instance: all speakers who knew or remembered this word, qualified it with *deagh-*).

9.4.1.4. Meanings

Some of my informants managed to give me subtle differences in meaning between phrases with preceding adjectives and those with their plain counterparts. 1L translated *deagh obair* as “a job well done”, while *obair mhath* as “a good *kind* of work”. 2U would say *deagh obair* when “you’re doing a good job” or “a job is good”, but *obair mhath* only in the second meaning. This means that *deagh obair* refers to a more abstract concept for these speakers, although in a somewhat different sense.

A similar distinction can be observed in 7U’s word choice for ‘good memory’ (if there is any distinction at all). 7U translated ‘good memory’ as *deagh chuimhne*; however, could not think of a plural for this word at first: probably considering ‘memory’ as a mental skill. Trying to say ‘memory’ as a countable noun (i.e. [a picture in your mind]) the informant said *Bha cuimhne mhath aca...* ‘They had a good memory’ *Bha deagh chuimhneachan aca*. ‘They had good memories.’ If my interpretation is right, this speaker prefers *deagh chuimhne* for ‘good memory’ as a mental skill and *cuimhne mhath* for ‘memory’ as a [a picture in your mind] (which is a more tangible, countable noun), but again *deagh chuimhneachan* in the plural (note that the first meaning does not have a plural). Although note that this informant does not usually use the latter variant (*cuimhne mhath*) of this expression.

In one of my questions I aimed to find out whether my interpretation of *an droch-shùil* and *droch shùil* in the corpus as ‘the evil eye’ and ‘baleful look’, respectively, was correct. The interviews have revealed three different meanings for *droch(-)shùil*: (1) ‘evil eye’, (2) ‘glare/filthy look’ (i.e. ‘baleful look’), and (3) ‘bad eye’ (when “something is wrong with

your eye”), but with different distribution in the case of the individual speakers. 3L, 10H and 6L, 7U, 11L knew the meaning ‘the evil eye’: putting a cast or spell at somebody, a curse. For 3L and 10H this expression can be used more informally, meaning ‘a filthy look’ you give somebody, but would not use the phrase in the third, most literal meaning, as they felt that it could be misinterpreted. For 11L it could refer to ‘a bad eye’. Speakers 1L, 2U and 4U were familiar with the less abstract and more literal senses, i.e. with ‘glare/dirty look’ and ‘bad or dodgy eye’. 7U, interestingly – in contrast with the other South Uist speakers (2U and 4U) – mentioned ‘evil eye’ as the sole meaning of the phrase. *Sùil dhona* was only accepted by 5L, 6L and 12L, meaning ‘a bad or sore eye’. 5L would also use *droch-* in the same sense, 12L for “a bad look”, and 6L for ‘the evil eye’ (as I have mentioned above). Speakers 1L and 4U were uncertain about the phrase with the plain adjective. I summarise the meanings in Table 16:

Table 16.

SPEAKER	DIALECT	droch-shùil _evil eye	droch(-)shùil _glare	droch shùil _bad eye	sùil dhona
1L	Lewis		X	X	?
2U	South Uist		X	X	
3L	Lewis	X	X		
4U	South Uist		X	X	?
5L	Lewis			X	X
6L	Lewis	X			X
7U	South Uist	X			
10H	Lewis	X	X		
11L	Lewis	X		X	
12L	Lewis		X		X

It appears from the table above that most speakers use *droch shùil* in two senses. The pronunciation did not always give a clue, but concerning the orthography, *droch shùil* could be connected with the literal meaning and *droch-shùil* with the curse. Considering that the informal meaning ‘giving sy a filthy look/glare’ according to one of my informants might have developed from the original meaning ‘evil eye’, I would suggest hyphenating both of them. The numbers of speakers using the different combinations of meanings (which are too low for being significant) also suggest that we distinguish between the meanings ‘glare’ and ‘bad eye’.

The informants gave me the following translations for *droch rud*: ‘a bad thing/happening’; “a thing or sg you’re talking about, a news is bad”. Only 3L differentiated between two meanings, although with regard to the hyphenation even this informant was uncertain. According to the pronunciation (and to the abstractness of the

meanings), he suggested *droch rud* ‘a bad thing’ (literal) and *droch-,rud* “full of badness” (more abstract). Answering my question the speaker added that the latter could refer to ‘devil’, but only in an abstract sense.

Speakers 1L and 4U helped differentiating between *droch bhean* ‘a bad wife’ (failing at what a wife traditionally means) and *bean d(h)ona*: “a wife that is a bad person as well”. Here the plain adjective *dona* may convey criticism: *droch-* refers to the semantics (meaning) of *bean* ‘wife’, while *dona* evaluates the person herself. (6L, 7U and 10H would not use *dona* with *bean* at all.) *Droch dhaoine* refers to ‘bad people’ in general, reflecting on evilness. I asked only half of my informants (5) about the pictures which showed villains and criminals, but all of these speakers found that the phrase *droch dhaoine* matched the pictures:



9.4.1.5. Other factors

The role of the plain adjective *dona* in **criticism** has been mentioned several times in the above discussion. It usually serves to express negative opinion about people (and perhaps animals, telling them off – see 11L’s *luchag dhona* ‘bad mouse’). 3L found *bean dhona* ‘bad wife’, *duine dona* ‘bad man’ critical, but *droch bhoireannach* ‘bad woman’ as well (although consider that this speaker does not tend to use *boireannach dona* at all). For 4U (from South Uist!) both *boireannach dona* and *bean dhona* work (expressing “more hatred and nastiness”). 10H noted in relation with *droch bhoireannach* and *boireannach dona* that the choice for the adjective “depends on degree – what they are bad at”. (Speakers 3L and 6L prefer using *droch bhoireannach*.)

We have already seen that the plain adjective *aosta* (and *sean*) normally refers to the **age** of a person, animal, or – sometimes – object (e.g. *aodach aosta* ‘old clothes’). This tendency is confirmed by the distinction between *seann-taigh* and *taigh sean* for 4U: in the sentence *Tha taigh sean agam*. ‘I’ve got an old house.’, *taigh sean* refers to a house in which “everything is old”, whereas *seann-taigh* denotes a previous house (e.g. the family’s old home). I gave two sentences containing ‘old friend’ to the informants, separated within

§3: one with reference to ‘a long-existing friendship’ (*I’ve got an **old friend** from primary school.*) and one referring to age (*I’ve got young friends and old friends.*). In the translation for the first sentence every informant (apart from 12L) used the preceding adjective *sean(n)-*. In the other sentence, in which ‘old’ was in coordination with the opposite adjective ‘young’, four informants chose a plain adjective: *caraidean sean* (1L, 7U) or *caraidean aost(a)* (10H, 11L) (five with 12L). Nevertheless, I doubt it was influenced by the presence of the other plain adjective *òg* (as we usually see the opposite in coordinations with *math* and *droch-* (see Example 102 in section 5.2.3 for discussion), which means that this word choice marks the age reference. Two informants from South Uist (2U, 4U) and 6L applied stress to make the distinction more obvious: ‘*seann-*, *charaidean* ~ ‘*seann-* ‘*charaidean* (but ‘*seann-* ‘*charaid* in the first sentence).

In the discussion of the corpus study I commented on the **poetic use of *aosta*** (see section 6.1.1). In the interviews I used the following sentence to check my assumption: *The night whispered **old words** from the wood.* I used references to nature as in the examples from the corpus and a word combination which has a specific, fixed meanings with *seann-* (*seann fhacail* ‘old words’, or *seann-fhacail* ‘proverbs’). However, none of my informants changed this phrase in the sentence (certainly apart from 12L who did use *faclan aost*’), which they naturally found rather strange. They all translated it as *seann facail* ~ *sean(n) fhacail* ~ *seann fhocail* ~ *sean(n) fhaclan*. (4U misunderstood the phrase.) I have to conclude that register might not be the clue for the use of *aosta* in a poetic sense. Before introducing an alternative explanation, I need to remark on the distinction of the two plain adjectives, *sean* and *aosta*.

Two informants commented on this subject. 10H (Harris) felt that *aosta*, when used in relation to people, is more polite and milder than *sean*. For 2U (South Uist) *aosta* is stronger than *sean*, *sean* meaning ‘old’ and *aosta* ‘really old’. At first sight these two interpretations seem rather contradictory. However, 2U also adds that *aosta* refers to the older generation, which may eventually mean that *aosta* entitles respect, thus it may be felt more appropriate in connection with people. (This also may be the cause for the decreased use of *sean* these days.) In my opinion, this lofty connotation may explain its use in more literary expressions, and perhaps also with abstract concepts such as *brònach(d) aosta* ‘old sadness’ (10H), *déjà vu aosta* ‘old déjà vu’ and *toileachas aosta* ‘old happiness’ (6L) (although 6L does not always distinguish between preceding and plain adjectives).

In the discussion of the corpus study I pointed out the high productivity of the preceding adjective ***seann-*** (in section 6.1.1), and suggested that the plain adjectives start playing a role in the language when a **contrast** is evoked (see section 6.2). To test this assumption I

used two senses of ‘old language’ distributed between §3 and §6: one sentence referred to an older form of a language, the other to the age of a language. The third sentence contained both meanings. In the first two sentences all informants used *seann-*, apart from 6L (who translated *cànan aosta* as ‘old language’ in the sentence where it referred to age). In the sentence with the double phrase, stress made the difference for this speaker: *Charobh ,seann- 'chànan na Greugaich na 'sheann 'chànan aig an àm.* (i.e. The old language wasn’t *really* an old language.) (and since it is placed in focus, the speaker chose the preceding adjective in this case). At first 4U did the same, but subsequently this informant changed the sentence to make the distinction. 7U used the word *idir* ‘at all’ to emphasise the contrast: *Chan e ,seann- 'chànan idir a bha 'san t- 'seann 'chànan Greugach aig an àm sin.* “The old language of the Greek wasn’t an old language at all at that time.” 1L was the only informant who showed the expected result: this speaker used *cànan aost’* for age in the double sentence, and only there. 2U made the distinction as well, but translated ‘ancient language’ as *cànan aosta*, i.e. distinguished between the words ‘old’ (*seann-*) and ‘really old’ (i.e. ‘ancient’) (*aosta*) (see above, about the difference between *sean* and *aosta* for 2U). The other South Uist speaker (4U), who does not use *aosta* at all, chose *cànan shean* for ‘ancient language’, although was not certain about the sentence. (The same speaker made the distinction between *seann-duine* ‘veteran’ and *fìor dhuine sean* ‘a true old man’ in the sentence *He’s not a veteran, he’s a true old man.*, although translated ‘true good friend’ as *fìor dheagh charaid*. (This speaker normally does not say *math*, but neither *sean*.)

Although 11L used the preceding adjective in all four cases, a very interesting phonological pattern appears to have emerged in the answers: it might as well be a coincidence but the speaker used *sean-chànan* for a language that is old (age) and *seann-chànan* for the earlier form of a language on both occasions. Table 17 summarises the relevant answers (any emphasis (stressed constituent) written in **bold**):

Table 17.

	age	form	form	age
1L	<i>sean-</i>	<i>seann-</i>	<i>sean-</i>	<i>aost’</i>
2U	<i>seann-</i>	<i>seann-</i>	<i>aosta</i>	<i>seann-</i>
4U	<i>seann-</i>	<i>seann-</i>	<i>seann-/sean</i>	<i>seann-/seann-</i>
11L	<i>sean-</i>	<i>seann-</i>	<i>seann-</i>	<i>sean-</i>
6L	<i>aost’</i>	<i>seann-</i>	<i>seann-</i>	<i>seann-</i>
7U	<i>seann-</i>	<i>sean-</i>	<i>seann-</i>	<i>seann-... idir</i>

With the sentence above containing the word ‘**veteran**’ I aimed to test the compound *seann-s(h)aighdear* (in §4). Four informants translated ‘veteran’ with relevant phrases:

seann shaighdear (10H; lit. “old soldier”), *seann-duine* (4U) or *duine aosta* (6L) (lit. “old man”), and *sean eòlaiche* (3L). In section 4.2.6 I remarked on **variation as a stylistic device**. One example for this is *seann-duine* and *fior dhuine sean* from 4U. 6L presented a similar solution when choosing different nouns and adjectives in *duine aost’* for ‘veteran’ and *fior sheann bhodach* for ‘a true old man’.

9.4.1.6. *Seann-* and attributive *aosta/sean*

One of the major impacts of the interviews is clarifying the distribution of the adjectives meaning ‘old’ (i.e. preceding *seann-* and the plain adjectives *sean* and *aosta*). In this section I more reflections are made on these words.

The meaning [being around for a long time] and actual age are very close meanings, which may be a possible reason for the spreading (and high productivity) of *seann-*. It is difficult to differentiate for example between a more tangible, physical age of a building (‘it’s old so it’s falling apart’) or the concept of having existed for a long while. *Seann-* being the stereotypical adjective for the sense ‘old’, phrases with *aosta* are idiosyncratic, unique in a sense (cf *seann eòlas* vs *eòlas aosta* for ‘old knowledge’). Their meanings can be illustrated on a scale:

animate: *aosta/sean* inanimate (tangible – objects) abstract (concepts): *seann-*

These meanings tend to merge (they are not clearly distinctive), which makes *seann-* spread in all meanings (living organisms have *age* in its more everyday sense (biological age), whereas old ideas, old customs, etc draw in extra connotations).

Aosta and poetry:

Attributive *aosta* and *sean* are the typical adjectives to indicate biological age, additionally, *aosta* may entitle respect. As *seann-* is so wide-spread and for abstract nouns, in particular, the normal qualifier is the preceding adjective, *aosta* naturally lends idiosyncrasy to the phrase, being unusual with abstract nouns (e.g. in *eòlas aosta*). In the case of body parts, the poetic sense originates from the **partitiveness** (from the reference to a part of the body, rather than to the person themselves). Regarding natural entities (sea, wind, rock, etc), we usually feel them closer to animate entities, living organisms, although from a more abstract perspective. (Here we probably deal with different levels of abstractness.) *Aosta* may in effect anthropomorpholise these words (cf a similar distinction in the case of a building in Hungarian: *régi kórház* ‘old hospital’ – *régi* qualifying inanimate entities (i.e. objects or concepts, etc), this is the normal adjective in this phrase – whereas *öreg kórház*

(*öreg* means ‘old’ in the cases of people and animals) displays a more personal, affectionate voice).

9.4.2. Intensifiers

9.4.2.1. Register

Regarding the intensifiers, the speakers agreed that they are not frequently used in the spoken language. Tokens from the corpus prove the high register of these words: *làn* is normally encountered in religious texts, *sàr* is highly literary: many tokens are from poems, and *sìor* often occurs in both poetry and religious works. The commonest intensifier in everyday language is *fìor*: for example, 2U frequently uses *fìor*, but not the other three intensifiers. 3L does not use *sàr* at all, not often *làn* either, but is more familiar with *fìor*.

As expected, intensifiers are even rarer with verbs. 6L uses only *fìor* with a verb, 1L none of them, and was familiar with *sàr* and *làn* only when they qualified nouns (*gruaim* ‘gloom’ and *toil* ‘pleasure’) in §6. (Note that *làn ghruaim* can be understood as a predicative genitive phrase, ‘full of gloom’.) *Làn* is particularly rare – it probably occurs in expressions like *Tha làn fhios agam/S làn thoil leam ...* ‘I have full knowledge.../I am completely pleased...’ somewhat more frequently than with verbs.

Sìor does not form part of the vocabulary of speakers 11L, 1L, 2U and 6L. 3L found it highly formal and high register, only applicable in writing. The speaker mentioned only two phrases with *sìor*: *sìor-dhol am meud* ‘greatly increasing’ and *sìor-fhàs nas motha/nas lugha* ‘always getting bigger/smaller’. 7U would not use *làn* or *sàr*, and recognised *fìor mhiannachadh* but not *sìor mhiannachadh* in §6. In the last section, however, this informant translated all four phrases – positive and negative – containing ‘constantly’ with *sìor*: *sìor-ghearain* ‘immersed in complaining’ (i.e. “continually complaining”), *sìor-shabaid* ‘constantly fighting’, *sìor-èigheach* ‘constantly shouting’, *sìor-ghàireachdaich* ‘constantly smiling’, *sìor-chuideachadh* ‘constantly helping’). The informant claimed to use *sìor* but added that probably this should be *fìor*. (1L uses *fìor* instead of *sìor*.) 4U translated only positive phrases (*a’ sìor ghàireachdaich* ‘constantly smiling’, *a’ sìor chuideachadh* ‘constantly helping’) with the intensifier. 5L did not translate the sentences in §7 (neither did 3L); however, gave the examples *sìor ghearain* ‘constantly/always complaining’ and *sìor-chuideachadh* ‘always helping’ afterwards.

9.4.2.2. Degree of intensification

§6 dealt with the degree of intensifiers, in which the informants had to place them on a scale. According to 6L *fìor* signifies a bit of emphasis (‘very, truly’) – *sàr* even more – and

làn is the full degree (7U) (in 4U's words: 'really' – 'exceptionally' – 'completely'). *Fìor* usually conveys a degree similar to 'very' or 'quite' (somewhere around very – very high degree), but occasionally it can indicate an extremely high degree (as 7U put it: *fìor* is "the absolute truth"). For some speakers *sìor* seems to substitute *sàr*: 12L translated *sìor* as 'extremely' (2U, 12L), and they put the verbs *fìor-mhiannachadh* – *sìor-mhiannachadh* – *làn-mhiannachadh* in the same order as the nouns and adjectives (*fìor* – *sàr* – *làn*). For others the meaning of *sìor* merges with that of *fìor* (1L, 7U). Usually *làn* indicates the uttermost degree in connection with nouns and adjectives, and *sìor* in connection with verbs (or "top of the scale", as 10H referred to *sìor*).

For at least half of the informants the order of the intensifiers qualifying nouns and/or adjectives is: *fìor* – *sàr* – *làn* (1L, 2U, 6L, 11L, 12L). 5L identified *làn* as the lowest of the three, not the highest: *làn* – *fìor* – *sàr*. Speakers 4U and 10H made a more complicated ordering. 10H gave the same order as 5L for *gruaim* 'gloom': *làn ghruaim* – *fìor ghruaim* – *sàr ghruaim*, and *fìor* – *làn* – *sàr* for the rest. 4U gave the most popular order for the negative phrases: *fìor ghruaim/chruaidh* – *sàr ghruaim/chruaidh* – *làn ghruaim/chruaidh*; in the case of the positive ones *làn* was the lowest, and the rest as follows: *fìor thoil* – *sàr thoil* but *sàr thoilichte* – *fìor thoilichte*.

Speakers 3L and 7U were familiar only with *fìor* in spoken language, and appeared to use it to indicate different levels of intensification. They felt *fìor* the lowest in *fìor ghruaim*, higher in *fìor chruaidh*, and placed the positive phrases at the highest degree (no wonder, since 7U described *fìor* as the "absolute truth"). (3L actually placed *fìor ghruaim* a little bit higher than 7U, and also *fìor chruaidh* was at the uttermost degree for this speaker.)

9.4.2.3. Meanings of the intensifiers

According to my informants, the four discussed intensifiers have the following meanings: *fìor*: 'really, very, truly', *làn*: 'fully, completely', *sìor*: 'continually' (7U), 'always, constantly' (5L), and *sàr*: 'greatly' (1L), 'exceptionally' (4U). 10H defined *fìor-mhiannachadh* as 'very much wanting sg', *làn-mhiannachadh* as 'full of wanting sg', identified *sìor* as top of the scale, and *sàr* indicating some esteem. For 12L *fìor-mhiannachadh* refers to 'very strong wishes' and *làn-mhiannachadh* translates as 'full of wishes' (*sìor*: 'extremely'). 5L feels *fìor* intensive (e.g. 'particularly deciding at') (would not use *làn* with a verb) and translates *sìor* as 'constantly, always'.

I presumed that *sìor* was related to negative connotation, criticism. Since 7U relates *sìor* to *fìor*, this speaker uses *sìor* also with positive connotation ('constantly smiling/helping')

in §7. (4U translated only the positive phrases with *sìor*.) I presume that some speakers feel a close connection between *sìor* and *fìor*: probably influenced by the similar sounding of the two intensifiers, their meanings merge for them. (5L found both negative *sìor ghearain* ‘always complaining’ and positive *sìor-chuideachadh* ‘always helping’ familiar.)

Concerning the combination of *fìor* and the adjective ‘good’ (as *deagh-* or *math*) my assumption about the different translations for ‘true good friend’ and ‘really good friend’ has not proved to be true. For most speakers there is no difference between the translations for the two expressions, and none of them translated ‘true good friend’ using the combination of the intensifier and a plain adjective: *fìor charaid math/deagh-charaid fìor*, neither with two plain adjectives: *caraid math fìor/fìor math*; although 11L translated ‘a true good friend’ as *fìor charaid* and ‘really good friend’ as *caraid fìor mhath*. The phrase generally used was *fìor dheagh charaid* but *caraid fìor-mhath* for 1L. (5L, 7U and 10H used a different phrase in the case of the second expression for distinction, while 12L translated both phrases as *caraid math dha-rìribh*.) The cause for the negative result may be that the meanings of ‘true’ and ‘good’ seem to be very close in Scottish Gaelic, therefore speakers do not feel the need to distinguish between the two meanings.

To the contrary, three informants translated ‘true old man’ in the presumed way in the sentence *He’s not a veteran, he’s a true old man*: *fìor dhuine aosta* (1L), *fìor dhuine sean* (4U), *fìor-bhodach aost*’ (or also *fìor dheagh bhodach*) (3L). There are two possible explanations for this: despite the solution above, speakers may tend to distinguish between ‘really old man’ (*fìor sheann-duine*; see below) and ‘a true old man’; alternatively, it may be due to the contrast with *seann-s(h)aighdear/seann-duine*, etc (for ‘veteran’) in the same sentence. The rest of the speakers gave a similar solution to ‘a true good friend’ above: *fìor sheann duine/bhodach* or (7U) *fìor-sheann-duine*. In §6, the informants translated *fìor(-)sheann-duine* as ‘a really/very/particularly old man’. Only 1L interpreted the phrase as *fìor* qualifying the compound *seann-duine*: ‘a real/true ancient’ (instead of putting the intensifier and the adjective together: [*fìor sheann-*] *duine* ‘a really old man’).

None of the informants could give an explanation for the hyphenation in *fìor-sheann-duine* vs *fìor sheann-duine*. Nevertheless, 2U referred to a distinction in lenition: in that of *duine*: *fìor sheann-duine* ‘a really old man’ – *fìor-sheann-dhaoine* ‘really old people’.

9.5. Interpretations of orthography

I wished to study native speakers’ view on orthography (i.e. hyphenation) in §7. In most cases my informants claimed no difference between the hyphenated and non-hyphenated phrases. According to 4U and 7U (both from South Uist), the accent/emphasis is on a

different word in the two forms. For 3L hyphen creates a compound, i.e. the two words should “run together” in these phrases, exhibiting a more complex meaning. According to this interpretation, hyphenation would be avoided in clearly adjectival phrases in which the adjective’s mere function is to qualify the noun, without affecting the word’s inner semantics (e.g. the translation of ‘a really old man’ should be ideally written without any hyphens: *fìor sheann duine*).

The two former informants referred to a more phonological reason (semantic in the sense that speakers normally put the stress on the constituent which they wish to emphasise or highlight). I suggest a similar explanation in the case of the frequent hyphenated form *droch-latha*, meaning ‘a bad day’. A phrase with the preceding adjective *droch-* frequently bears double or second element stress (even in *droch oidhche* ‘a bad night’). However, 8 of the 10 informants pronounced *droch latha* with initial (primary) stress: *'droch ,latha* ~ *'droch là*. (The same stress pattern can be observed in compounds: cf *'droch-,rud* ‘full of badness’ (person) vs *,droch 'rud* ‘a bad thing’; *'droch-,shuìl* ‘a dirty look’ vs *,droch 'shuìl* ‘a dodgy eye’.) Probably the same applies to the form *droch-bhean* for ‘bad wife’.

I also aimed to study the role of hyphenation in words like *sàr-fhacal*, *sàr-dhuine* and *sàr-bhàrd*. 10H described *sàr* as carrying “some esteem”, which interpretation is underlined by the following translations: *sàr dhuine* ‘a really good/great/excellent/splendid/renowned man’, ‘a fine fellow’, ‘a really special person’; *sàr bhàrd* ‘a great/excellent/super/renowned bard/poet’, ‘a poet with distinction’. The speakers generally agreed that *sàr fhacal* did not make much sense, but translated it as ‘a really good/great/excellent/fantastic/super’ or ‘important word’. Neither were they familiar with its hyphenated version, which I encountered in the corpus. 1L and 4U distinguished between the hyphenated and non-hyphenated forms of *sàr-dhuine* – *sàr dhuine* and *sàr-bhàrd* – *sàr bhàrd*. With hyphen, 1L translated *sàr-dhuine* as ‘a chief man/person’, while it means ‘gentleman’ for 4U. Both of them identified *sàr-bhàrd* as a ‘high-bard’ (who is defined as a ‘great poet’). Without hyphen *sàr dhuine* refers to ‘a great person/man’, ‘an exceptional man’ (but not necessarily the head), and *sàr bhàrd* to ‘a great poet’ (in general, in someone’s eyes). Hyphenated forms indicate more prestige and honour, or a special role, while non-hyphenated ones solely reflect an opinion, referring to someone more average. The stress pattern accords with the orthography in the examples from 4U: double stress in phrases (*fìor 'shàr 'dhuine* ‘an exceptional man’) and initial stress in compounds (*fìor 'shàr-dhuine* ‘gentleman’). Although 3L did not find the hyphenated phrases sensible, explained the difference as follows: without hyphen they refer to qualified phrases as ‘a

super man’, ‘a super poet’, whereas the hyphenated forms would denote semantically united entities such as “superman” or “superpoet” (who is best than all the rest).

Although the interviews did not confirm my suggestion according to which *sìor* would be more common with negative meanings than with positive ones, it is an interesting observation that 7U pronounced negative '*sìor shabaid* 'constantly fighting' and '*sìor 'èigheach* 'constantly shouting' with double stress, while positive phrases such as '*sìor-ghàireachdaich* 'constantly smiling' and '*sìor-chuideachadh* 'constantly helping' with initial stress (although the same informant translated my sample expression 'immersed in complaining' also with initial stress: '*sìor-ghearain* 'constantly complaining').

9.6. Summary

The interviews suggest a distinction between the dialects of Lewis/Harris (7 informants) and South Uist (3 informants). The difference is the preference for preceding adjectives in South Uist, and for plain adjectives (especially *math*) in Lewis. The results also confirm that personal preferences and language experience play an important role as well. 7U, for instance, shows more similarity to Lewis speakers in some aspects of vocabulary, e.g. in the more frequent use of *math*. *Seann-* is highly productive, *droch-* is also frequent as default adjective. In the vocabulary of some speakers *deagh-* and *droch-* are connected to conceptuality, while *math* and *dona* to tangibility. *Deagh-* may convey emphasis for some speakers, *dona* may be a device for criticism of people (or maybe animals). The plain adjective *aosta* (and/or *sean*) frequently indicates the age of a person or animal. In some cases the choice for the preceding or the plain adjective is arbitrary, or shows an individual (and dialectal) preference for the preceding or plain adjective. Speakers 1L and 4U tend to interpret contrast whenever relevant, and make distinction between any slight differences in meaning (see e.g. *droch bhean* and *bean d(h)ona* (9.4.1.4), *sàr dhuine* and *sàr-dhuine* (9.5), or the contrast with *seann-* (9.4.1.5)). The intensifiers studied have proved to relate to a high register, *fìor* 'truly, really' is the most commonly used in everyday speech.

Regarding orthography, some speakers interpret hyphenation as the indicator of stress or emphasis, for others it conveys semantic unity, thus a sign of compoundhood.

10. Conclusion

In this thesis I introduce the vast area of Scottish Gaelic compounds as well as shedding light on some differences between the meanings and use of preceding and plain adjectives. After having shown the general patterns of compounding, I introduced compounds in Celtic languages. In Chapters 4–7 I analysed the corpus study I had carried out on 20th-century texts, which focussed on adjectives and intensifiers. To check assumptions emerging from the corpus study, I interviewed 10 native speakers and discussed the results in Chapter 9. In the current chapter I summarise the factors which appear to determine the choice between the two types of adjectives as well as questions of compoundhood regarding the investigated phrases. At the end of the chapter I give some suggestions on the orthography of these expressions (bearing in mind the results of the corpus study and the interviews). Finally, I describe areas of research that have been excluded or can be addressed in the future.

10.1. Preceding or plain adjective?

Preceding adjectives are generally preferred in South Uist (and probably on other southern islands), whereas plain adjectives (especially *math*) are more common in Lewis. From plain adjectives, *math* is used more frequently in general (probably by the influence of the Bible). According to my observations, *deagh-* might be spreading from the south, although in the case of *fios* ‘knowledge’, the corpus contains many examples for *deagh fhios* from earlier dialect sources, with *fios math* occurring only in later sources from Lewis. The reason for this is probably that the preceding adjective is typical in structures like *fios/cuimhn(e)*, etc *a bhith aig* ‘to know/remember’ (the use of *math* in *Bha dòchas math agam* ‘I really hoped’ is probably due to the religious connotation of *dòchas* ‘hope’). The Lewis version with *fios math* may originate from the frequent application of the clause *a bhith fios glè mhath/deamhnaidh math a bhith aig* ‘to know very well/damned well’ (back-formation). (On the other hand, the corpus confirms the use of *deagh fhios* in Uist.)

Some Lewis speakers frequently use the plain adjective *dona* for ‘bad’ as well, while *droch-* is the preferred adjective in South Uist. Concerning the adjective meaning ‘old’, *seann-* appears to have spread greatly, as earlier sources abound with attributive *aosta*, while the later tokens are all from Lewis (native speakers from Lewis also used it frequently). Attributive *sean* appears to be more common towards the south (South Uist, Skye, etc); however, it is not so widespread in present day dialects. Besides dialect the preferred choice for a particular adjective (or the combination of them) is highly

determined by the speaker's own intention and individual experiences (i.e. which phrases they have encountered, how much variation they prefer using in their speech/writing, etc).

10.1.1. Register

Ma(i)th may be the original adjective, being more widespread in earlier sources, even occurring in Uist (as well as on the Inner Hebrides and on the Mainland), and it also shows a potential close connection with the register of religion (cf the 3 occurrences of *eòlas maith* 'good knowledge' in narratives and a religious text from the first half of the 20th century). In the thesis (see section 4.2.7) I have pointed out a possible religious connotation in the case of *dòchas* 'hope' and *adhbhar~aobhar* 'reason'. These phrases commonly occur with the plain adjective *math* despite their abstract meaning. The interviews revealed another possible example for this phenomenon: *sàmhchair/socair mhath* 'good peace/silence'. I have also discussed the religious connotation of *duine math* 'a good/Christian man' (not necessarily in the sense 'Christian', but more obvious in plural phrases: *daoine matha/maithe* 'good/Christian people'), as well as in *Leabhar Math* 'Bible', *leabhraichean matha* 'religious books', and *nì math* 'god' or *nithean maithe* 'good/Christian deeds'. Regarding the opposite adjective 'bad', *droch-dhuine/-dhaoine* 'bad man/people' may refer to non-Christian(s), especially in the plural. Otherwise *dona* is the usual adjective in religious phrases referring to people (e.g. *boireannach dona Crìosdaidh* 'a bad Christian woman', *diabhal dona* 'bad devil'). The latter usage is more related to criticism (or non-verbal statements) (note the preceding adjective in *droch spiorad* 'bad spirit', which has a more conceptual meaning). This is further underlined by the observation according to which the distinction between *droch-* for 'bad' and *math* for 'good' is frequently encountered, often in relation to religion.

10.1.2. Semantics

There are two semantic factors which are worth discussing with respect to the choice between the two adjectival types. The feature of **abstraction** appears to lie in the vocabulary – it forms part of the semantics of a word. This is a "historic" aspect: some words are inherently used with *deagh-*, others with *math* (e.g. *deagh aobhar* 'good reason', *deagh rùn* 'good intention', *deagh smuaintean* 'good thoughts', etc vs *each math* 'good horse', *ithte mhath* 'good feather', *gloinne mhath* 'good glass', etc). **Emphasis**, on the other hand, is related to the speakers' prevailing intention, i.e. it is a more pragmatic aspect of the language. It provides a device for more shaded expression.

10.1.2.1. Abstraction

With regard to abstract vs tangible phrases, preceding adjectives tend to relate to more complex semantic structures, leaving the more obvious, more simple meanings to the plain adjectives. Therefore, plain adjectives tend to refer to the most tangible entities (people, animals, objects) and pronominal expressions. For instance, *deagh-* stands with professions (this may be related to praising, note that emphasis is only a factor in the case of *deagh-*) or with a person with the appropriate qualities for a job, etc (*deagh dhuine* as ‘the right man’ and also maybe *deagh oidhche iasgaich* ‘the right night for fishing’), whereas *math* qualifies vehicles and animals. Similarly, *droch-* refers to the complex semantics of *droch dhelicatessen* ‘bad delicatessen’ (it may refer to the products, staff, etc, i.e. all parts of the whole institute – not only to the condition of the building itself), *droch àite* ‘bad place’ likewise (consider its occurrence in contexts with clear references to ‘hell’), whereas *dona* can describe the qualities of food. *Rud dona* (which is encountered in more recent sources of the corpus) expresses a pronominal sense similar to *rudeigin dona* ‘something bad’, whereas *droch rud* ‘a bad thing’ is probably meant more as a concept, let alone the abstract reference to someone’s character or behaviour as *droch-rud* ‘full of badness’. *Spiorad* ‘spirit’ is the only religious word in the corpus the tokens of which are each accompanied by the preceding adjective *droch-*, as opposed to references to people or anthropomorphic entities all qualified by *dona*.

Seann- also carries more abstract meanings compared to more pronominal *aosta* (*cuid* ‘some’, *dithis* ‘a couple /of people/’, *feadhainn* ‘ones’, *tè* ‘one’ (fem.)), although the latter two, mostly being references to people, also occur with *seann-* in the corpus (in sources from South Uist). *Seann-* may easily connote **old types** (see *seann-taigh* ‘a (traditional) black-house’ vs *taigh aosta/sean* ‘an old house’ (physical/constitutional age), and *seann fhacal* denoting the old form of a word), **a previous period** (*Seann Linn (na) Cloiche* ‘Early Stone Age’) or **a former role** (e.g. *seann taigh* ‘previous house’, *seann-chànan* ‘an old form of a language’ vs *cànan aost(a)* ‘an old language’, occasionally *seann s(h)aighdear* ‘veteran’ and perhaps *seann leannan* ‘old/former sweetheart’, *seann fheadhainn* ‘the old ones’) and presumably **traditionality** (see *seann(-)òran* ‘folksong/traditional song’, *seann sgeulachd* ‘traditional story/tale’), as opposed to the most simple definition of age (biological or physical), which can be successfully highlighted by the plain adjective. Attributive *aosta* is often used to indicate a person’s or animal’s age (see for example *caraidean sean/aost(a)* in native speakers’ translations for age reference in the phrase ‘young friends and old friends’), and it is also encountered in connection with living organisms (*craobh aosda* ‘an old tree’), natural constructions, body

parts, and other tangible (and countable) nouns, especially if it makes a distinction with a phrase containing *seann-* (e.g. *aodach aosta* ‘old clothes’, *làithean aosta* ‘past days’ – reference to somebody’s age or life, *òran aosda* ‘an old song’ vs *seann-òran* ‘folksong’, *cànan aosta* vs *seann chànan*).

In some cases the conceptualising feature of preceding adjectives is applied to differentiate between meanings: *deagh obair* can refer to ‘a good job’, or doing ‘a good job’, while *obair mhath* to ‘a good employment’ or ‘a good work’ (with a tangible result); *deagh astar* usually stands for ‘good speed’, while *astar math* for ‘good distance’; *deagh chuimhne* means ‘good memory’ as a mental skill, while *cuimhne mhath* ‘good memory’ as a picture in mind (the plural of which is either *deagh chuimhneachan* (native speaker from South Uist) or *cuimhneachan math* (from a Lewis source in the corpus) meaning ‘good memories’ (i.e. pictures in mind)). Similarly, *droch ghalar* stands for ‘a bad illness/pain’ (psychological), while *galar dona* for ‘a bad disease’; *droch dhaoine* refers to ‘bad people’ such as criminals or non-Christians, or convey the connotation of evilness, whereas *duine dona* ‘bad man’ expresses the speaker’s opinion about a person, just as *bean d(h)ona* evaluates the person who is a wife besides (unless it simply means ‘a bad woman’) as opposed to *droch bhean* ‘a bad wife’. In the case of *seann-* and *aosta*, both adjectives tend to refer to people; however, *aosta* is connected with biological age, as well as with respect (compare Chinese *lǎo* ‘old, experienced’ which is a respectful address towards a senior member at work). This indicates wisdom in certain phrases (see *sgialachdan aosda* ‘old stories’, *eòlas aosd* ‘old knowledge’, *a’ bhréig aosd* ‘the old lie’), and may be one reason why it occasionally occurs even with abstract nouns (see e.g. 10H’s *brònach(d) aosta* for ‘old sadness’). *Fàileadh dorch aost* ‘an old dark smell’: highlights the aging quality of the smell (probably very uncomfortable as if food had been left somewhere for a very long time). The low number of tokens with attributive *sean* may be explained by *aosta*’s connotation with respect.

10.1.2.2. Emphasis

In the corpus we have seen many examples for the emphatic use of *deagh fhios*, and this may explain the distinction between *deagh ghreis* and *greis mhath* ‘a good while’ as well. In the interviews native speakers provided further evidence for the highlighting function of *deagh-*: in the sentences two informants’ answers confirmed the emphatic sense of *deagh bhliadhna* over *bliadhna mhath* a ‘good year’, and one of these informants provided the same pattern for *deagh aobhar* vs *aobhar math* ‘good reason’ as well. Some speakers also referred to the quality of being good in *deagh obair* ‘good work’ and *deagh bhiadh* ‘good

food’ as stronger than in *obair mhath* and *biadh math*, respectively. Although emphasis is usually related to *deagh-*, I have given a similar explanation even for the difference between *droch thinneas* and *tinneas dona* ‘a bad illness’, claiming that the former refers to a more serious illness than the latter.

10.1.3. Time expressions

Concerning time expressions, *math* is typical in the cases of *latha* ‘day’, *oidhche* ‘night’, and *feasgar* ‘afternoon/evening’ (probably due to its fixed role in greetings) as well as with *greis(eag)~treis* ‘a while’ and *ùine* ‘time, a while’, although occasionally *deagh-* may also qualify these nouns, probably due to emphasis or perhaps subjectivity (it is also worth consideration that in *Na Klondykers treis* always occurs with *math* and *ùine* with *deagh-*, the former being a countable, the latter an uncountable noun). The only exception is *àm* ‘time’, which is usually qualified by *deagh-*. In the case of *àm* I have observed a sort of meaning change, in that *àm math* refers to ‘appropriate time’ (a point in time that can be referred to), while *deagh àm* stands for ‘high time’ or ‘(in) right time/just in time’ (emphasising the quality of the time in relation to something). In the cases of the adjectives ‘bad’ and ‘old’, all time and weather expressions stand with the preceding adjectives *droch-* (*side*, *tìde*, *aimsir*, *uair*, *àm*; even in the coordinative *deigh agus droch thìde* ‘good and bad weather’) and *seann-* (*tìm*, *aimsir*, *uair*), although *làithean* ‘days’ also occurs with *aosta*, in which case it is connected to a person’s age and/or memories, rather than to a previous period of time. Similarly, *droch latha/làithean* conveys a more abstract meaning (‘bad day(s)’ (in general, not referring to weather)) – other tokens for *droch latha* (with reference to weather) are subjunctive (conditional or referring to a habitual situation (generalised statement)) as opposed to *latha dona* (past tense) (see next section). The difference between the distribution of *math* and *droch-* can be seen also in native speakers’ answers, as most native speakers chose *latha math* for ‘good day’ (South Uist: the rest – ‘bad day’, ‘good night’ and ‘bad night’ – with preceding adjectives), but all of them used *droch latha/oidhche* for ‘bad day’ and ‘bad night’, respectively. (Additionally, weather and abstraction appeared to merge.)

10.1.4. Subjectivity

I have discussed the possibility of a more grammatical factor in the choice between the preceding adjective and the plain adjective, namely the use of the preceding adjectives in subjunctive sentences (i.e. in future and conditional tenses, or when the speaker’s opinion is expressed: in expressions with a lower level of certainty) while the plain adjective in objective, factual sentences (i.e. in certain, concrete statements in the present and the past).

In the corpus study this assumption may be considered to be proved in the case of ‘good intention’ (*deagh rùn* vs *rùn math*, with a clearly intentional meaning), of ‘good time/while’ (*deagh ùine* vs *ùine mhath*, reference to the length of a time interval) (although *ùine mhath* can be found in subjunctive sentences as well due to its meaning – *math* being the default adjective for time expressions), and of ‘bad day’ (*droch latha* vs *latha dona*, reference to time/weather, from a South Uist source!) (although not in the case of ‘good day’, for which *latha math* is more commonly used).

10.1.5. Grammatical structures (and criticism)

Plain adjectives are usually more common in grammatical structures such as coordinatives (*math is/no dona* ‘good and/or bad’) (*seann-* too), listings⁵⁶ and adverbial phrases. *Math* and *dona* also frequently occur in vocatives or non-verbal expressions, thus *dona* can be effectively used for expressing a negative opinion, criticism (probably more common in spoken language): *mo ghille math* ‘my good boy’, *’ille mhath* ‘good boy!’, *duine dona* ‘bad man’, *bean dhona* ‘bad wife (and person)’, *profist dona* ‘a bad prophet’, (maybe even with animals:) *luchag dhona* ‘bad mouse’ (from 1L). In the corpus *dona* frequently occurs in earlier sources in phrases as follows: *bean dhona* ‘silly woman’, *duine dona* ‘grumpy man’, *àite dona* ‘dirty place’. In such phrases the emphasis probably is placed on the moral quality of the person, behaviour, quality/condition of a place, etc, or it expresses frustration. Due to the high productivity of *seann-*, as usual, it is just as common in coordinatives (with *òg* ‘young’, *ùr* and *nuadh* ‘new’) as the plain adjectives *aosta* and *sean* (if not more common); however, *aosta* (and *sean*) are more common in listings (together with other adjectives – probably referring to age). Such descriptions also frequently contain *deagh-* beside *math*.

Regarding adverbial modification, the intensifier *fior* tends to accompany preceding adjectives in adjectival phrases (i.e. if not predicative – exceptions: *galar fior dhona* ‘a really bad disease’ (may be back-reference), (*Bha*) *eòlas fior mhath* (*agam fhìn air an dithis*) ‘(I myself) had good knowledge (of the two)’), whereas other adverbs (such as *gu math* ‘quite’, *glè* ‘very’, *uabhasach* ‘terribly’, *anabarrach* ‘exceptionally’, *buileach* ‘completely’, *meadhanach* ‘reasonably’, etc) are restricted to plain adjectives (although most of these occur in predicative phrases). Again, there is also an example for *fior àite aosda* ‘a really old place’ in the corpus, as well as in the interviews: *fior dhuine aosta/sean* or *fior-bhodach aost* ‘true old man’ (but *fior(-)sheann-duine* for ‘a really/particularly old man’ (or ‘a real/true ancient’); whereas there is no such distinction observed in the case of

⁵⁶ i.e. adjectives listed one after another, usually separated by commas

fìor and *deagh-/math*) With regard to intensifiers other than *fìor*, *droch-* combines with *seann-* (*seann droch N à mh* ‘our bad old Enemy’, *seann droch shaoghal sin* ‘that bad old world’), while *seann-* combines with *deagh-* (*ann an deagh sheann aois* ‘in a good old age’). *Seann-* also combines with *seachd* in *seachd seann sgìth* ‘sick and tired’, as well as with the preceding adjective *corra-*: *corra sheann dàn* ‘an occasional old poem’, *corra shean crabhcan* ‘an occasional old hook’ (further evidence for the conventionalised state of phrases containing *seann-*).

10.1.6. Other factors

In nicknames the plain adjective *dona* is preferred for ‘bad’. To qualify a person with the adjective ‘old’, the majority of the names contain *seann-*, *aosta* occurs only in one case: *Aonghas aosda* ‘old Angus’ – either for its reference to the age of a person or due to alliteration). In fixed expressions, on the other hand, the typical adjectives are preceding adjectives: e.g. *Bu dheagh chaomh leam* ‘I really liked’; *a sheann eòla(i)s* ‘that he had known long ago’ (consider also *tha làn fhios agam* ‘I know completely’ and *is làn thoil leam* ‘I absolutely like’; or the potential distinction between *tha deagh chuimhne agam* ‘I remember well’ and *cuimhne mhath* ‘a good memory’). The typical adjective for loan words and verbal nouns (at least in the corpus) are preceding adjectives *droch-* and *seann-*. On the other hand, *math* qualifies loan words as well as verbal nouns just as *deagh-* does. The only loan word with attributive *aosta* ‘old’ in the corpus is *baidsealair aosta* ‘old bachelor’, which probably aims to highlight the person’s age.

10.1.7. Stylistic variation

Stylistic variation is another common device in languages that results in the use of various forms with similar meaning in a row. Its aim is to avoid repetition and hence making expression more colourful. One example for stylistic variation in the corpus is encountered in a dialogue in which *deagh shlàinte* is responded by *slàinte mhath* ‘cheers!’, lit. “good health”. *Le deadh-ghean caraid math* ‘by the good will of a good friend’ may be another example, or the occurrence of *seana thigh* ‘old house’ and *an tigh aosda ud* ‘that old house’ in the same text, referring to the same house (unless *seana thigh* means someone’s previous house). The informants also provided some examples in the interviews: e.g. *seann-duine* (for ‘veteran’) – *fìor dhuine sean* (for ‘a true old man’), *duine aost’* (for ‘veteran’) – *fìor sheann bhodach* (for ‘a true old man’) in the sentence *He’s not a veteran, he’s a true old man*.

10.1.8. Which adjectives to use?

Deagh- and *math* and the preceding adjectives *droch-* and *seann-* can basically be used with every noun. Alternatively, *deagh-* (/ *droch-*) could be used with abstract nouns (*deagh fhios* ‘good knowledge’, *deagh dhùrachd* ‘good wish’, *deagh thoil* ‘great pleasure’, *deagh shlàinte* ‘good health’; *droch nàdur* ‘bad temper/nature’, *droch bheairt/smuaintean* ‘wickedness’, *droch spiorad* ‘bad spirit’) and *math* (/ *dona*) with tangible/countable nouns (*athair math* ‘a good father’, *each math* ‘a good horse’, *bàta math* ‘a good boat’, *facal math* ‘a good word’, *latha math* ‘a good day’; *duine dona* ‘a bad man’, *àite dona* ‘a bad place’, *sushi dona* ‘a bad sushi’) (although some words – probably with religious connotation – may combine with *math*: *dòchas math* ‘good hope’, *adhbhar mhath* ‘good reason’, etc). If more semantic variation is preferred/required, I suggest the following differentiation: in certain cases *deagh-* functions as an emphasising device in that it expresses a stronger opinion or better quality (cf *deagh bhiadh* vs *biadh math* ‘good food’, or *deagh fhios a bhith aig* ‘to know very well’ vs *fios math a bhith aig* ‘to know well’. In lexicalised expressions, on the other hand, preceding adjectives are typical: e.g. *deagh charaid* ‘a good friend’ (a form of respect as opposed to the prescriptive phrase *caraid math*, in which the quality – here, the behaviour as a friend – is more salient), or even *seann mhaide* ‘an old stick’ (from the proverb *An car a bha san t-seana mhaide ’s duilich a thoirt às*. ‘The twist in the old stick is difficult to take out.’). According to native speakers’ judgements, *droch bhean* refers to the semantics of *bean* ‘wife’ (describing someone who does not perform well in her role of being a wife), whereas *bean dhona* describes the person’s moral qualities, which makes *droch bhean* a semantically more complex expression. Similarly, some speakers use only *droch bhoireannach*, but not *boireannach dona* in the sense ‘a bad woman’; its occurrences in the corpus suggest that it might have a special meaning (such as ‘a woman who teases men’). To emphasise the adjective in such cases, i.e. in evaluating a person (e.g. in criticism, such as *duine dona* ‘bad man’) (or perhaps animal), the plain adjective should be used (e.g. *caraid math* ‘a good friend’ (prescriptive form – see above), *baidsealair aosta* ‘an old bachelor’ (the biological age is important)). The plain adjectives may be a usual choice in vocatives and non-verbal expressions in general (e.g. *mo ghille math* ‘my good boy!’, *’ille mha(i)th* ‘you good boy!’; *àite dona!* ‘a bad (i.e. dirty, ugly) place!’), as well as in coordinatives (at least in the case of *math* and *dona*): e.g. *ainglean math is dona* ‘good and bad angels’, *gu crìch math no dona* ‘to a good or bad end’). The plain adjective *aosta* (/ *sean*) refers to the age of a person or animal (occasionally object – emphasising the (physical) age). Furthermore, *aosta* (as opposed to *sean*) conveys respect, referring to the older generation (or with an

intensified meaning: ‘really old’). Bearing in mind that *seann-* is a highly productive preceding adjective (which means that it may be used in basically all cases), it might be useful to add that contrast, in particular, can evoke distinction, i.e. the simultaneous use of both types of adjectives. I summarise the main patterns of use below (dependent on dialect and personal preferences/experiences):

Type 1: (typical in southern islands such as S. Uist) *deagh-* – *droch-* – *seann-*

Type 2: (typical in Lewis) *math* – *droch-* (or even *dona*) – *seann-*

Type 3: (if variation is preferred by the speaker) *deagh-*, (*droch-*) with abstract nouns – *math*, (*dona*) with tangible/countable nouns, pronouns

Additional factors:

- 1) *math* (and *droch-*) in connection with religion
- 2) *deagh-* for emphasis (but also preceding adjectives in fixed expressions)
- 3) *aosta* (/sean) to emphasise the age of a person or animal

10.2. Intensifiers

What I call intensifiers in this thesis, exhibit in effect a wider range of functions. Their intensifier function basically derives from the adverbial meanings of these words; however, it also reaches further dimensions. Below I give a summary on the usual meanings of these words, the connotations they carry and their intensifier function along with the register it is normally connected to.

10.2.1. *Fìor*

meanings: truth; true, real; (also as *gu fìor*) really, truly (also with verbs)

connotations: religious – purity (e.g. *fìor dhuine/ghille* ‘a true man/fellow’) – this may be the reason why *fìor* and *math* often occur together (see also *fìor-fhàilte* ‘a true welcome’, with the possible positive connotation ‘warm-hearted’); sometimes there is no distinction made between the intensifier meaning ‘really/truly’ and this reference to purity, consider the phrases with the preceding adjective *deagh-* in the sense of ‘good’: *fìor dheagh bhodach* for ‘kind/honest old man’, and *fìor dheagh charaid* ‘kind/honest, good friend’, which could just as well refer to ‘really good man’ and ‘really good friend’, respectively); the other usual connotation of *fìor* is authenticity, which is also encountered with loan words (e.g. *fìor Hitlerites* ‘real Hitlerites’, *fìor Mhoderate* ‘a true Moderate’)

register as intensifier: the most generally used, also in everyday speech

intensifier function: with adjectives (e.g. *fìor thoilichte* ‘really happy’, *fìor(-)mhath* ‘really good’/‘really well’, *fìor-ghlic* ‘really wise’, *fìorghlan* ‘really pure, immaculate’, *fìor*

neònach ‘really strange’, *fior dhorch* ‘really dark’, *fior olc* ‘really evil’, *fior àlainn* ‘really beautiful’, *fior ghoint* ‘really painful’ – also with preceding adjectives: *fior dhorch-* ‘really bad ...’, *fior sheann-* ‘really old ...’, *fior dheagh-* ‘really good ...’, *fior chorra-* ‘really rare ...’), adverbs (*fior bheagan* ‘really little’, *fior-theann* ‘really tightly’), a numeral (*b’ fhìor cheud ainm dith* ‘it was her very first name’), verbs (e.g. *a’ fìor lùigeachdainn* ‘really wishing/longing’; *fior chòrd* ‘really enjoyed’ also exists (probably due to its likeness to the phrase *fior thoil* ‘really like’), with nouns (in structures such as *b’ fhìor thoil le* ‘really liked’, *b’ fhìor aithne do* ‘knew well’, *fior fhios/chuimhne aig* ‘know/remember well’, *fior-iongnadh a chur* ‘really surprise, stagger’, *fior fheum/eagal air* ‘really need/fear’, *fior aire a thoirt* ‘pay real attention’, *fior dhragh/èiginn* ‘real worry/danger’, *fior chabhaig* ‘real hurry’; position: e.g. *fior thoiseach/mhullach/dheireadh* ‘(the) very beginning/top/end’, *fior-bhàrr mo chomais* ‘her/my very best’ (lit. “the very top of her/my ability”); abstract from adjectives: e.g. *fior luathas* ‘real quickness’, *fior bhlas* ‘real/true taste’, *fior bhòidhchead* ‘real/true beauty’; referring to personal opinion: *fior amadan* ‘a complete/real fool’; referring to relationship: *fior nàmhaid* ‘a real enemy’)

10.2.2. Làn

meanings: apart from the meaning ‘tide’, which relates to the “fullness of the sea”, *làn* functions as a quantity noun (mostly in genitive phrases: e.g. *làn na spàine* ‘a spoonful’, *làn a dhroma* ‘his backful’, *làn saoghail de ghruin mhallaichte* ‘a whole world of damnable pangs’, lit. “a worldful of damnable pangs”, *làn taighe chaorach geala* ‘a whole house of white sheep’, lit. “a houseful of white sheep”), which originates from its meaning ‘full’ (*làn ghrian samhraidh* ‘a full summer sun’); further meanings: entire, the whole, all the (e.g. *làn armachd* ‘full armour’, *’n a làn thrusgan* ‘in their full gear/kit’, *le làn bhraith-lìn a dhùbhlachadh* ‘by thickening the whole sheet’); fully-edged (*làn fhear-mara* ‘fully-fledged/genuine seaman/sailor’, *nar làn dhannsairean* ‘in our fully-fledged/genuine dancers’, *làn-duine/dhaoine* ‘fully-fledged/grown-up man/men’, *làn bhoireannach* ‘a fully-fledged/grown-up woman’); (*gu làn*) fully, absolutely (as in *làn armaichte* ‘fully-armed’) (also *loma-làn* ‘absolutely full’, etc)

connotations: completeness, absoluteness

register as intensifier: religious (among others)

intensifier function: with adjectives (e.g. *làn(-)chinnteach* ‘cocksure’, *làn-marbh* ‘stone dead’, *làn(-)riaraichte* ‘fully satisfied’, *làn(-)t(h)oilichte* ‘absolutely happy’, *làn fhileanta* ‘completely fluent’, *làn fhosgailte* ‘fully open’, *làn-dhearbhte* ‘fully convinced’), verbs (e.g. *làn(-)chreidsinn~làn creidsinn* ‘fully believing’, *làn thuigsinn* ‘fully understanding’,

làn fhosgladh ‘fully opening’, *làn-choisinn* ‘fully earned’, *làn fhoillsich* ‘fully revealed’, *làn-chrìochnachadh* ‘fully ending/finishing’), nouns/structures (abstract!) (e.g. *làn aonta* ‘full agreement’, *làn chomh-fhaireachdainn* ‘full compassion/sympathy’; *làn dòchas* ‘full/entire hope’, *làn ùidh* ‘full interest’, *làn fhàilte* ‘a full welcome’, *làn ùghdarras* ‘full power’, *thug làn bhuaidh air* ‘gained full victory over, completely defeated (sy/sg)’, *aig a làn àirde* ‘at his full height’, *làn chomas* ‘full ability/potential’, *làn dhùil~làn(-)dùil* ‘full intention/expectation (i.e. fully intend/expect)’, *làn(-)fhios* ‘full knowledge’, *làn(-)bheachd* ‘full/definite opinion’, *làn(-)chòir* ‘full right’, *làn thoil-inntinn* ‘full enjoyment/pleasure’, *làn thoil* ‘full willingness’, *’nan làn chabhaig/-shiubhal* ‘in their full hurry/travel’, *làn chead* ‘full permission’, *le a làn deòin* ‘with her full/absolute willingness’, *aig làn ìre* ‘at full level’, *a làn-dhìcheall* ‘his full effort’, *fo làn-sheòl* ‘under full sail’, *làn(-)àm/làn(-)thìde* ‘high time’, *làn-ghòraiche* ‘complete silliness/absurdity’)

10.2.3. Sàr

meanings: a highly ranked person, chief (e.g. *an sàr MacAsgaill* ‘the chief MacAsgaill’); noble, leading, excellent, outstanding (e.g. *sàr Mhac Shir Eachuinn* ‘noble Sir MacEachen’, *sàr-obair* ‘main opus’, *sàr obair* ‘an excellent/exceptional work’, *sàr-dhuine* ‘chief or gentleman’, *sàr dhuine* ‘an exceptional man’, *sàr-bhàrd* ‘a high-bard, leading bard/poet’, *sàr bhàrd* ‘a great/exceptional bard/poet’, *sàr-dhràma* ‘an excellent/outstanding drama’, *sàr chlogaid is lùireach* ‘a noble helmet and coat’ (one that shows prestige – probably valueable, etc), *a sàr-mhac òg* ‘his young exceptional son’ (refers to Christ), *mo shàr-chompanach* ‘my main companion/company’), (abstract:) *sàr anail* ‘excellent breath’; extremely, exceptionally, excessively

connotations: [esteem], noble (often together with *usal* ‘noble’); typically occurs with professions (e.g. *sàr-chlachair* ‘a leading/exceptional stonemason’, *sàr-iasgair* ‘a leading/exceptional fisherman’), but it may convey a similar connotation with nouns indicating identity (e.g. *Sàr-Ghàidheil* ‘a leading/exceptional Gael’) (consider also the parasyntetic compound *sàr-shnaidhte* ‘nobly-carved’); arts; mostly positive

register as intensifier: literature

intensifier function: with adjectives (e.g. *sàr-mhaiseach* ‘most lovely/graceful’, *sàr-chruaidh* ‘extremely hard’ (the only negative example), *sàr-iomraideach* ‘most well-known’ (of the Bible), *sàr thoilichte* ‘extremely happy’, *sàr-chlis* ‘extremely/exceptionally clever/swift’, *sàr-ghlan* ‘exceptionally pure/clear’), some nouns (typically abstract ones) (e.g. *ann an sàr òrdugh* ‘in excellent order’, *sàr-urram* ‘great honour’, *sàr mhisneach* ‘exceptional courage’, *sàr-ghasdachd* ‘great splendiddness’, *sàrchleas* ‘biggest trick’, *sàr*

bhunait ‘excellent/sure foundation’, *sàr leuman* ‘mad dashes’), and verbal nouns (*sàr tharraing*~*sàr-tharruing* ‘busily drawing/teasing’); and the deadjectival nouns *sàr-ionmhainn* ‘(the) most beloved’ and *sàr-eucoraich* ‘biggest sinners’

10.2.4. *Sìor*

meanings: eternal (e.g. *an cadal sìor* ‘in eternal sleep’); everlasting, eternal (as preceding adjective, or forming loose compounds): e.g. *sìor thaigh* ‘eternal home’, *sìor mhaighdeannas* ‘everlasting maidenhood’; permanent, constant; with verbs: forever (also *gu sìor*), constantly, continually; again and again

connotations: no stopping (not continuous aspect! – see section 7.4.2)

register as intensifier: literature and religion, very high register (only some speakers use it; often confused with *fìor* ‘really, truly’ (or sometimes with *sàr* ‘extremely, exceptionally’))

intensifier function: mainly with verbs/verbal nouns (words referring to action; e.g. *sìor mhealaidh* ‘will always enjoy’, *sìor iarraibh* ‘keep asking for it’; *sìor(-)dhol am meud* ‘greatly increasing’, *sìor(-)fhàs* ‘constantly growing/getting’, *sìor(-)chur* ‘constantly putting’, *sìor(-)thighinn* ‘constantly coming’, *sìor(-)chaoineadh* ‘constantly mourning/weeping’, *sìor(-)choimhead* ‘constantly watching’, *sìor mhiannachadh* ‘constantly longing’, *sìor-ghearan* ‘constantly complaining’, *sìor mholadh* ‘constantly praising’, *sìor-fhoighneachd* ‘constantly asking’, *sìor èigheach* ‘constantly shouting’, *sìor dhòrtadh* ‘constantly pouring’, *sìor shruthadh* ‘constantly flowing/streaming’, *sìor-onfhadh* ‘constant raging/fury’ (of the sea), *sìor luaidh air* ‘constantly referring to it’, *sìor chròn nan caochan* ‘the constant murmuring/humming of the streamlet’, *sìor choimhead* ‘watching again and again’), some adjectives (e.g. *sìor-bhinn* ‘ever sweet’, *sìor-mhaireannach* ‘everlasting’) and nouns (e.g. *sìor-cheòl* ‘constant music’ (of the sea), *sìor-fhuam* ‘constant sound’ (of the sea), *sìor-uisge* ‘eternal rain’, *sìor-ghàir* ‘constant laughter’, *Sìor Làithaireachd Dhé* ‘The Constant Presence of God’, *sìor bhoinnealaich uisge* ‘constant drops of water’)

Concerning the connotation of the above intensifiers, as is probably expected, *fìor* refers to true, pure, authentic feelings, *làn* to a feeling that fills you completely and *sàr* probably to deep feelings, whereas *sìor* highlights the duration of an action or a feeling. When qualifying adjectives (or nouns), *fìor* ‘really, quite’ tends to convey a little bit more intensity than *glè* ‘very’, *sàr* refers to a somewhat higher degree (‘exceptionally, extremely’), and *làn* to the absolute degree (‘completely’). With verbs the usual order is as follows: *fìor* > *làn* > *sìor* (or *fìor* > *sìor* > *làn*, for some speakers). If *fìor* is the sole

intensifier used by a speaker, it may incidentally refer to an exceptionally high degree (especially with positive values).

The preceding adjectives *sean(n)*- ‘old’ and *deagh*- ‘good’ may also function as intensifiers in the following phrases: *seachd seann* (*sgìth*) “more than wearied (tired)” (meaning ‘sick and tired’); *ann an deagh sheann aois* ‘in a good old age’. I have encountered another adjective *dubh*- ‘black’ in the word *dubh-sheanair* in the same sense as *sinn*- in *sinn-seanair* meaning ‘great-grandfather’.

10.3. Compounds

10.3.1. Obvious compounds

The most obvious cases of compounds exhibit a special or more abstract/figurative meaning, which (in the case of adjectival phrases) often contrasts with a less specific, more literal meaning. This can be well illustrated with the following two compounds of *droch*:- *droch-shùil* refers to a curse or a look, while *droch shùil* exhibits the literal meaning ‘bad eye’ (in this sense some speakers accept the plain adjective as well (*sùil dhona*) (for expressing ‘bad sight’ a different word, *amharc* is used)). Similarly, *droch-rud* describes a person’s character (‘full of badness, rascal’), whereas *droch rud* refers to a ‘bad thing’ in general (which is still more abstract than the pronominal meaning of *rud dona* ‘something bad’). (*Droch àite* ‘a bad place’ (‘bad as hell’) and *droch dhaoine* ‘bad people’ (‘evilness’, non-Christians or criminals, villains) may convey a similar connotation of a more conceptual, (in the latter case) moral quality, although cannot be categorised as compounds, here the main distinction being made between the preceding and the plain adjective (see below).)

Seann- has a non-literal meaning in a similar way to other languages in the words *seanair* ‘grandfather’, *seanmhair* ‘grandmother’ (historical compounds, the older forms being *sean-athair* and *sean(n)-mhàthair*, respectively (which may occasionally mean ‘old father’ and ‘old mother’). Other such compounds include *seann-mhaighdean* ~ *sean(n) nighean* (cf English *old-maid* and Hungarian *vénlány* (where *vén* is a dated word for ‘old’ and *lány* means ‘girl’; often derogative)) and *seann/seana-ghille* “old boy” for ‘bachelor’.

In other compounds *seann*- may convey traditionality (as opposed to its usual meanings ‘previous’ or ‘having existed for a long time’ – which, on the other hand, tend to behave as fixed expressions, thus normally no hyphenation occurs in these cases (see also (*mo dheagh*) *shean charaid* ‘my good old friend’ and *seann dannsa* ‘old dance’). These phrases are as follows: *seanfhadal* (= *gnàth-fhadal/gnàthfhadal*) ‘proverb’ vs *seann fhadal* ‘old word’ (also consider the doubling of the preceding adjective in *an t-seana t-seanfhadail*

‘the old proverb (gen.)’), *seann-taigh* (=taigh-dubh) ‘(traditional) black-house’ vs *seann taigh* ‘previous house’. In the latter case the literal sense is represented by the plain adjective in *taigh aosta* (Lewis) ~ *taigh sean* (S. Uist) ‘old house’. Also consider the lenition in *seann thaigh-seinnse* ‘an old pub/tavern’ (in a rather literal sense): *Seann thaigh-seinnse a bh’anns an Rabbie Burns, gu math lom ‘na bhroinn*. ‘Rabbie Burns was an old pub, rather bare inside.’ *Seann sgeulachd*, *seann sgeul* and *seann eachdraidh* are never written with hyphen in the corpus, while *seann(-)òran* only in academic titles, despite conveying the connotation of traditionality. Relying on the academic spelling of *seann-òran* ‘folksong’, I find it possible for *seann-sgeul* and *seann-eachdraidh* to apply hyphenation in the sense of ‘traditional story’, as opposed to the literal meanings *seann sgeul* ‘old story’ and *seann eachdraidh* ‘old story’ or ‘old history’. I am not so certain about *seann sgeulachd* as it appears to mean ‘a traditional story’ in all cases in the corpus; however, following the above pattern, it might be written with hyphen as well. (Similarly, *seann òran* may be non-hyphenated when it shares the meaning with *òran aosta* ‘an old song’.) (The phrase *seann uisg* ‘stagnant water’ is rather a collocation/idiom (fixed expression), therefore written without a hyphen, although it does add an extra negative connotation to its compositional (literal) meaning ‘old water’.)

Obvious compounds of *fìor* with a non-compositional or specific meaning include *fìor-uisge~fìoruisg* ‘freshwater’, *fìorchoin* ~ *fìor(-)choin* ‘true-bred dogs’ (a similar expression is *fìor(-)fhuil* ‘true/pure blood’ (referring to a clan, inheritance)). In the phrase *air fìor-bhàrr a comais/mo chomais* ‘to her/my very best’ (to do her/my very best) (lit. “at the top of her/my ability”), *fìor-bhàrr* is used in an abstract expression/idiom (which might also be reflected in pronunciation (initial stress vs double stress)) as opposed to other positional phrases such as *fìor thoiseach* ‘(the very) beginning’, *fìor mhullach* ‘(the very) top’, *fìor cheann* ‘(the very) end/head/top’, *fìor dheireadh* ‘(the very) end’, etc. *Fìor* also forms a compound with the preceding adjective *seann*-. *fìor-sheann(-)* ‘ancient, prehistoric’ vs *fìor shean(n)*- ‘really old’. *Fìor-eisempleir* ‘a true example’, i.e. ‘the right example’, and *fìor-fhàilte* ‘a real/true/warm-hearted welcome’ may carry an extra connotation of *fìor*, meaning ‘highly appropriate’, ‘the right one’, or, in the case of the latter: ‘the way it should be’, which, again renders them more abstract, complex expressions.

In the case of *sàr* we see another example for differentiating between meanings: *sàr-bhàrd* ‘a high-bard’ or ‘highly ranked poet’ highlights one member of a group, as opposed to *sàr bhàrd* ‘an excellent/exceptional poet’ in which case *sàr* reflects the quality of someone (or something). Similar examples are *sàr-dhuine* ‘chief’ or ‘gentleman’ vs *sàr dhuine* ‘an excellent/exceptional man’, *sàr-obair* ‘main work’ vs *sàr obair* ‘an

excellent/exceptional work’, also *sàr-chompanach* ‘main/best company’ vs *sàr-chompanaich* ‘excellent companions’. Other professions may have been influenced by *sàr-bhàrd* – and the expressions for ‘exceptional hero’ (*sàr-ghaisgeach*, *sàr(-)laoch*, *sàr-churaidh*), as most of these are written with a hyphen. The sole token for *sàr-mhac* ‘exceptional son’ also carries a hyphen, which may reflect the unique quality of the *son* in question, since it refers to Christ.

Làn is prefix-like in *làn-Ghàidhealtachd* ‘(the) whole Gaeldom’ – similar to ‘pan-’, defining the complex entirety of the base word (i.e. generic). It shows an abstract (intensified) meaning in *làn(-)àm/làn(-)thìde* ‘high time’, and neither is it fully compositional in *làn-duine* ‘grown-up man’/*làn-dhaoine* ‘grown-up people’. *Làn bhoireannach*, although not written with a hyphen, conveys a similar meaning: ‘a fully-fledged/grown-up woman’ (probably a less common expression; or the lack of hyphenation can be explained by different emphasis here: ‘a fully grown-up woman’, not ‘a fully grown-up man’, as opposed to ‘a fully grown-up woman’/‘a *grown-up* woman indeed’). *Làn chomataidhean* ‘main committees’, despite being non-hyphenated in the corpus, likewise could be regarded as a compound, if we take into account that it mirrors the suffixed *fo-chomataidhean* ‘sub-committees’ (note the complex semantic structure: [committees with full authority]). I also wonder whether *làn oilean* ‘full-breed’ is a compound in Gaelic just as in English. *Làn-bhiadh* “full/whole food” refers to a ‘wholly nutritious food’ as opposed to *biadh aotrom* ‘fast food’ (like sandwich or scrambled egg) (lit. “light food”).

10.3.2. Conventionalised phrases

Certain adjectival phrases are non-literal in a more subtle way. Usually convention plays a huge part in the formation of such phrases (i.e. how many speakers use them, how many times a speaker has heard the expression in a specific usage, etc). Consider the following example: *làn-mòr* ‘high-tide’ – refers to something specific, as opposed to *làn mòr* ‘high tide’ (conveys a more general meaning).

- 1) *làn mòr* ‘high tide’ – the tide is higher than usual (according to the speakers’ experiences) – the qualifier gives the generic an *extra* feature
- 2) *làn-mòr* ‘high-tide’ – one unique concept: “the point or time at which the sea reaches its highest level” (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2003) – the qualifier names an *inherent* feature of the whole expression

One adjectival phrase with an inherent quality in Gaelic is *deagh charaid* ‘good friend’ referring to the relationship with someone (vs *caraid math*, emphasising the morals or

behaviour of someone as a friend). Similar expressions may be, *deagh chomhairle* (vs *comhairle mhath*) ‘good advice’, *deagh(-)dhùrachd* ‘good wish’ (no *dùrachd mhath* in the corpus: shows the idiosyncratic nature of the expression with plain adjective), *deagh(-)rùn* (vs *rùn math*) ‘good intention’. Similarly, *seann-* may be encountered in a reference to an elder person in general, without emphasising their age: e.g. *seann bhean* ‘old woman’ (may refer to a particular person). Consider the following phrases with double adjectives: *seann-daoine aosda* ‘old old-man’, *seann mhnaoi aosd* ‘old old-woman’ (dat.), as well as the lack of lenition in *seann duine* ‘old man’ (more specific in meaning – ‘man’ vs ‘person’), but not in *seann dhaoine* ‘old people’ (more general meaning). *Fìorsgeulachd* is a good example for a conventionalised expression referring to something specific beyond its literal meaning ‘true story’, i.e. ‘non-fiction’ (parallel to *ursgeulachd* ‘new story’, i.e. ‘fiction’).

Hyphenation is common among words that I refer to as intensifiers throughout the thesis – in certain cases this can be interpreted that the adjective forms a close/loose compound with its noun; in other cases, however, the words do function as adverbs intensifying the adjective they precede. In such cases the reason for hyphenation is more opaque, and is either due to the initial stress (which albeit has not been proved sufficiently in the interviews), or some other factor of convention. In either case, it indicates a close connection between the intensifier and the adjective (see also Irish *fìorspeisialta* ‘really special’, etc, written as one word).

Common phrases with *fìor* tend to be hyphenated when preceded by *cho* ‘so’: e.g. (*cho*) *fìor-bheag* ‘(so) really small/ (so) tiny’, (*cho*) *fìor-chinnteach* ‘(so) really certain/ (really,) really/very certain’, (*cho*) *fìor-ghlan~fìorghlan* ‘(so) really pure/ (so) immaculate’ (also *fìorghlaineachd* ‘real cleanliness’; vs *fìor ghlan*, which occurs only once: probably double-stressed, emphasising the purity: ‘really ‘pure’), as opposed to less frequently used phrases: e.g. *cho fìor ghorm* ‘so really blue’, *cho fìor luath* ‘so really fast’. Hyphenation also occurs in the common phrase *fìor(-)mhath* ‘really good’ or ‘really well’, while the adverb *fìortheann* ‘really tight(ly)’ is written as one word in the corpus. Expressions with religious connotation, being conventionalised expressions, are frequently regarded as compounds: e.g. *fìorchreideach* ‘true believer’, *fìor-ghlan~fìorghlan* ‘really pure, immaculate’, *fìor-dhiadhachd* ‘true religion’. (*Fìor* carries a hyphen when intensifying preceding adjectives in two cases: *fìor-chorra-fhacal* ‘really occasional word’, *fìor-dhroch-chliù* ‘really bad reputation’ – see more on this under section 10.4 about orthography.)

In the case of *làn*, *sàr* and *sìor*, hyphenation (i.e. compounding) appears to be treated in an innovative manner as hyphen is applied in less usual combinations. As the interviews have revealed, *làn* is unusual with verbs in spoken language. Half of the adjectives and

verbs intensified by *làn* are hyphenated: *làn(-)chreidsinn* ‘fully believing’, *làn-fhosgladh* ‘fully opening’, *làn-chrìochnachadh* ‘fully ending’, *làn(-)thoilichte* ‘entirely happy’ (common), (*gu*) *làn-shònraichte* ‘most of all’ (lit. “fully especially”), also *làn-Chrìosdaidh* ‘fully Christian’. Consider the unusual intensifier meaning in *làn-marbh* ‘absolutely dead’ (somebody cannot be more than dead), which is probably a more conventional expression, as well as the nominal phrase *làn-onairean cogaidh* ‘full military honours’. It also tends to be hyphenated in fixed expressions: *a làn-dhìcheall a dhèanamh* ‘making all his effort/his full effort’, *a’ dèanamh làn-oidhirp* ‘making full attempt’, *air (a) làn-dòigh* ‘in (his/her) full spirit’, *air a làn-ghleus* ‘fully locked’ (refers to a gun). Other hyphenated nouns include *làn-aighear~lànaighear* ‘full delight’, *làn-dùrachd (ar cridhe)* ‘all the wish (of our heart)’, and *làn-ghòraiche* ‘complete silliness/absurdity’. The fixed expression *le làn-rùn* ‘with full intention’ ~ *na làn rùn aca* ‘in their full intention’ has a parallel with *fìor*: *dé am fìor-rùn a bh’aice* ‘which was her true intention’.

The normal meaning of *sàr* is connected to a higher rank, and it usually qualifies nouns in this sense (which may stand with or without a hyphen according to their meanings, as we have seen above). On the other hand it is often hyphenated with mental products: e.g. *sàrchleas* ‘biggest trick’, *sàr-fhacal* ‘habitual/noble? word/expression’, *sàr-bhriathran* ‘noble words’. This usage is probably connected to its connotation of poetry/the arts. Similarly, all adjectives and participles with *sàr* are hyphenated (except for one: *sàr thoilichte* (which spelling is probably underlined by equal stress), just as *fìor ghlan* above, it may emphasise the quality of happiness. Other abstract meanings can be encountered with a hyphen in the corpus: such as *sàr-urram* ‘great honour’, *sàr-ghasdachd* ‘great splendour’ (from the adjective *gasda* ‘splendid’), *sàr-bhuille* ‘a glorious stroke’ (action). The fact that hyphenation in the case of *sàr* has spread since the 1970s, may underline their conventionalised status, as earlier only obvious compounds were written with a hyphen.

Sìor is unusual with anything other than a verb – with a verb it reflects a more adverbial meaning, while it bears more abstract connotations in the case of nouns and adjectives. These non-verbal phrases often carry a hyphen: e.g. *sìor-bhinn* ‘ever sweet’, *sìor-mhaireannach* ‘everlasting’, *sìor-uisge* ‘eternal rain’, *sìor-onfhadh* ‘constant raging’ (of waves) (but *sìor bhoinnealaich uisge* ‘constant drops of water!’); *sìor-cheòl* ‘constant music’ (of the sea), *sìor-ghuth* ‘constant voice’ (of a waterfall), *sìor-fhuam* ‘constant sound’ (of the sea) (but *sìor chròn nan caochan* ‘the constant murmuring/humming of the streamlet!’); *nì (iad) sìor-luadh* ‘(they) constantly make comments’ (but see *a’ sìor phreasadh* ‘constantly crumpling’, *a sìor phutadh (air aghart)* ‘constantly pushing

(forward)’, which grammatically function as verbs); *sìor-ghaoil/ sìor-ghràidh* ‘eternal love (gen.)’; *sìor-ghàir* ‘constant laughter’. According to these tokens, hyphenation occurs in fixed (grammatical) constructions and expressions (which spelling might – but not necessarily – reflect stress), as opposed to less frequently used, more arbitrary phrases. (Interestingly, in the case of verbs, hyphenation used to be more wide-spread in earlier sources. Also note that in longer structures *sìor* refers to the whole phrase rather than just to the first word of it: *sìor [bhoinnealaich uisge]* ‘constant [drops of water]’, *sìor [chrònan nan caochan]* ‘the constant [murmuring/humming of the streamlet]’, therefore hyphens are not applied.)

Initial stress may also cause hyphenation in some expressions with *droch-*: *droch-latha/là* ‘bad day’, and perhaps *droch-bhean* ‘bad wife’, which is a fixed expression at least (three informants would not say *bean dhona* at all!); *droch-sgeul* ‘bad news’.

10.3.3. Parasynthetic compounds

Derived adjectival forms are normally written with a hyphen in the corpus, as these function as *parasynthetic compounds* (with a complex inner grammatical structure such as in *green-eyed*: [[green eye]-ed]). Such compounds among the relevant tokens for my observations have occurred to be as follows: *deagh-rùnach* ‘benevolent’ (vs *deagh rùn* ‘good intention’ from the same author); *droch-nàdurach* ‘bad-tempered, bad-natured’ (vs 13/20 non-hyphenated tokens for *droch(-)nàdur* ‘bad nature/temper’); *sean-ghnàthach* ‘of old customs, conventional’ (vs *sean ghnàthan/seann ghnàths(an)* ‘old custom(s)’), *sean(n)-fhasanta* ‘old-fashioned’ (commonly used by native speakers in the interviews as well) (vs *dhen t-seann fhasan* ‘(of the) old fashion/style, old-fashioned’), (*nithe*) *seann-aimsireil* ‘(things) of old times’ (vs *seann aimsir* ‘old time’); *fìor-chnòthach* ‘eukaryotic’ (technical expression), *fìor-uidheamaichte* ‘well-qualified/specified’ (vs *fìor uidheam-smachd* ‘an actual/specific regulator’); *sàr-shnaidte* ‘nobly carved’; *làn-dhearbhte* ‘fully convinced’, *làn(-)fhiosrach* ‘of full knowledge, fully aware’. There is also a verbal example for such a structure in the corpus, namely the technical expression *a’ fìor-bhrìdeadh* ‘true-breeding’. A similarly complex structure may be observed in the hyphenated phrase *fìor-othaisg* ‘a true yearling sheep’ (i.e. a really young sheep), with the difference that here the inner structure affected is semantic, as *fìor* refers to the age of the sheep. The following two compounds of *sàr* may also belong in this group: *sàr-ionmhainn* ‘the most beloved’, *sàr-eucoraich* ‘the biggest sinners’, since the hyphenation might refer to the complex inner structure of these expressions: [the one who is loved the most], [the ones whose sins are the biggest], respectively.

10.3.4. Structures of quantity

The structures in which *làn* functions as a noun of quantity form another type of possible compound. Plenty of these phrases carry a hyphen in the corpus, clearly showing a distinction from the similar grammatical phrases: *làn(-)spàine* ‘a spoonful’ (vs *làn na spàine* ‘a fill of the spoon’), *làn-beòil* ‘a mouthful’ (vs *làn mo bheòil* ‘a fill of my mouth’), *làn(-)dùirn* ‘a fistful’ (vs *làn a dhùirn* ‘a fill of his fist’), *làn-sgeilid de uisge* ‘a saucepanful of water’, *làn-sùla* ‘eyeful’ (vs *làn a shùl* ‘full of his eyes’), *làn-làimhe* ‘a handful’. Other, probably less common phrases remain unhyphenated in the corpus: *làn poca* ‘a bagful’ or ‘pocketful’, *làn bòla* ‘a bowlful’, or see the most poetic *làn saoghail de ghuin mhallachte* ‘a whole world of damnable pangs’ and *làn taighe chaorach geala* ‘a whole house of white sheep’. There are two similar compounds consisting of longer structures: *làn-cuid-sheòl* ‘a full measure of sail’ (vs *làn a chuid sheòl* ‘the fill of his part/portion of tactic’, with a different meaning!), *làn-dì-bheatha* ‘full welcome’ (vs *làn dìth a bheatha* ‘a full welcome to him’, lit. ‘his life’).

Other compounds I have encountered during the corpus study: *math-ghamhainn* ‘brown bear’ (lit. ‘steer/stirk bear’; improper compound), (*seann*) *sia sgillinn* ‘(old) sixpence’; *creideamh-fìor* ‘true religion/belief’ (improper compound); *làn-mór* ‘high tide’ (improper compound); and the ‘long compounds’ *làn-fo-thuinn* ‘tide, foams’ (lit. ‘tide under waves’), and *làn-na-dùirne* ‘fistful’ (‘fill of the fist’).

10.4. Recommendations on orthography

I confine questions of orthography to obvious cases, not having carried out exhaustive research on this area.

Possible factors influencing orthography:

1) **pronunciation: initial stress** (e.g. *droch-latha* ‘bad day’, and maybe *droch-bhean* ‘bad wife’) – It should be considered where the stress is normally placed. If the stress is on the first constituent/component, the word is written with a hyphen, if the two components share equal stress, the expression is written as two words. It particularly works with phrases that also have specific or abstract/figurative meanings, e. g. *droch-rud* ‘full of badness, rascal’, *droch-shùil* ‘evil eye’ (curse) or ‘a filthy look/glare’.

2) **emphasis** is on the intensifier, rather than on both the intensifier and the adjective (here I refer to semantic, rather than phonological emphasis, i.e. stress) as in the case of *fìor-ghlan* ‘pure, immaculate’ vs *fìor ghlan* ‘really clean’

3) **unity, more complex/integrated meaning** (or even abstractness) – It should be considered if the word combination has a different meaning, which indicates that it cannot

be interpreted literally, e.g. *fìor-uisge* ‘real water’ vs ‘freshwater’ (saltwater is *real water* as well), *làn-bhiadh* ‘full food’ (ambiguous) vs ‘a whole, nutritious meal’ (more specific)

4) **convention** (usually fixed expressions/collocations)

Suggestions on orthography:

In the case of hyphenated intensifiers (convention), at this point I would suggest to accept the majority, although individual reasons also may play a role in the choice, in which cases the writer can decide against convention (according with pronunciation and meaning; cf *fìor ghlan* instead of *fìor-ghlan~fìorghlan*).

I would definitely suggest using a hyphen in phrases with abstract or figurative meaning (e.g. *droch-shùil* ‘evil eye’ or ‘glare’, *droch-rud* ‘rascal’, *seann-mhaighdean* ‘spinster’; *fìor-uisge* ‘freshwater’, *làn-àm* ‘high time’, *làn-duine* ‘grown-up man’, *làn-bhiadh* ‘whole, nutritious meal’), or in case of extra connotation: *fìor-fhàilte* ‘a warm-hearted welcome’, *fìor-eisimpleir* ‘right example’; when there is clear difference between two interpretations (to distinguish between meanings): e.g. *seann-taigh* ‘(traditional) black-house’ vs *seann taigh* ‘previous house’, *sàr-dhuine* ‘chief’ or ‘gentleman’ vs *sàr dhuine* ‘an excellent man’, *seann-duine* ‘old-man’ vs *seann dhaoine* ‘old people’, etc; in the case of parasynthetic compounds (e.g. *deagh-rùnach* ‘benevolent’, *làn-fhiosrach* ‘fully aware’, *fìor-uidheamaichte* ‘well-qualified/specified’) and complex semantics (e.g. *fìor-othaisg* ‘a real yearling’; *sàr-ionmhainn* ‘the most beloved’, etc).

On the other hand, regarding distinction between phrases with *deagh-* and *math* (*deagh charaid* – *caraid math* ‘good friend’, *deagh chomhairle* – *comhairle mhath* ‘good advice’, etc): there is no need for further differentiation in writing, and as normally these phrases are written without a hyphen in the corpus (and probably carry double stress), I would suggest keeping them non-hyphenated. In clear cases of pronunciation issues (i.e. when hyphenation is possibly due to initial stress and shows no other reasons for distinction, as in *droch-latha* ‘a bad day’, *droch-bhean* ‘bad wife’), I likewise suggest no hyphen, based on a native speaker’s opinion, who found semantic unity crucial in compound words. (Note that in the case of *droch-sgeul* there is also distinction in meaning: ‘bad news’ vs ‘a bad story’.)

Another interesting question is the hyphenation of intensifier + preceding adjective combinations. The examples in the corpus (and the native speakers’ judgements) have revealed the tendency to use double hyphens if there is already a hyphen between the adjective and its noun and the intensifier qualifies the preceding adjective only, but leaving the intensifier non-hyphenated if it refers to the whole adjectival phrase (cf *fìor-[sheann-duine]* ‘a really old man’: here *seann-duine* occurs as a compound but *fìor* intensifies

seann- and not the whole phrase, vs *fior* [*sheann-duine*] [acting as an old man] or ‘a true old man’). In the case of [*fior-sheann*]-*Chruimreach* ‘Proto Welsh’, the preceding adjective is a compound itself as well as the whole phrase (cf *seann-Chruimreach* ‘Old Welsh’). (See also *fior*-[*chorra*-[*fhacal*]] ‘a really occasional word’, *fior*-[*dhroch*-[*chliù*]] ‘really bad reputation’.)

I summarise the potential compound types (hyphenated word combinations), as well as non-hyphenated phrases in Table 18:

Table 18.

with hyphen		
initial stress in the case of intensifiers		<i>'droch-shùil</i> ‘evil eye; filthy look’, <i>fior-uisge</i> ‘freshwater’, <i>sàr-dhuine</i> ‘chief, gentleman’
phrases with specific or figurative meaning	initial stress?	<i>'fior-ghlan</i> ‘immaculate’, <i>'fior-mhath</i> ‘really good, excellent’
integrated meaning	initial stress?	<i>fior-othaisg</i> ‘a real yearling’, <i>sàr-ionmhainn</i> ‘most beloved’
parasyntetic compounds		<i>deagh-rùnach</i> , <i>fior-uidheamaichte</i>

without hyphen		
double stress		<i>'fior 'ghlan</i> ‘really good’, <i>'deagh 'charaid</i> ‘good friend’
literal meaning	double stress?	<i>droch shùil</i> ‘bad eye’, <i>fior uisge</i> ‘real water’ (as opposed to imagined water), <i>sàr dhuine</i> ‘an excellent man’

10.5. Further research questions

It could be further investigated which adverbs and intensifiers are used with which adjectives (especially in the case of *droch-* and *dona*, which do not show an unambiguous pattern in the corpus).

Another interesting area to explore is that of time and weather expressions, and whether subjectivity is a stronger factor in these cases. I have carried out a brief study on subjectivity in some of the nouns, but a more exhaustive investigation would be required. In general, it may be more typical with certain types of words.

I have not carried out exhaustive research on registers. The main registers that could be studied are those of religion and literature. One question of these would be to investigate

the religious connotation of *duine math* ‘a good person/man’, or how *droch-* and *dona* distribute between religious words and contexts. Native speaker interviews had a limited result on intensifiers as well, as these normally belong in higher registers. Poetic language might be examined separately in other research projects.

Stress patterns should be investigated with more suitable methods, although there is a possibility that they are not so relevant in issues of hyphenation in Scottish Gaelic after all. Although I have briefly referred to two distinctive dialects in this thesis, more research should be carried out on dialects, as well as on different age groups perhaps, which could shed light on the direction of ongoing processes in the language.

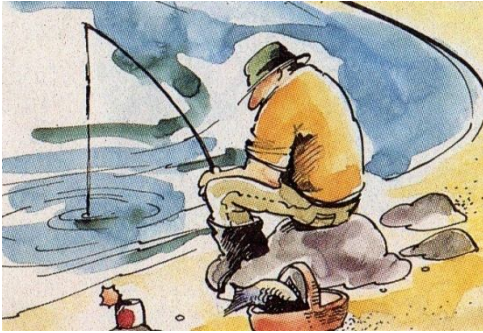
In future research I wish to analyse the use of the modifiers *ath-* ‘re-; next’, *leth-* ‘half’, and *ban-* ‘female’, as well as to further explore improper and proper compounds (e.g. the compounds of *taigh* ‘house’).

Appendix

TEST

1) Eadar-theangaich na h-abairtean seo:

a.



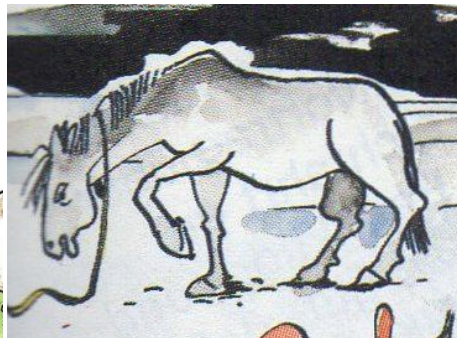
old fisher
bad fisher



good singers
young singers



small mouse
bad mouse



old horse
good horse



old car
bad car



good ferry
big ferry

b. *good feather, good glass, bad pillow, old infant; good silence, bad hope, bad happiness, old sadness, old enthusiasm – An canadh sibh na facail seo le deagh- no math, etc.?*

2) Eadar-theangaich na seantansan seo:

a. *Believe me, I had a **good reason** to go to Glasgow.*

*I've got an **old friend** from primary school.*

*The night whispered **old words** from the wood.*

a true, good friend – a really good friend

*I have passed my exams, I've found a job and my sister got married. It was a **good year**.*

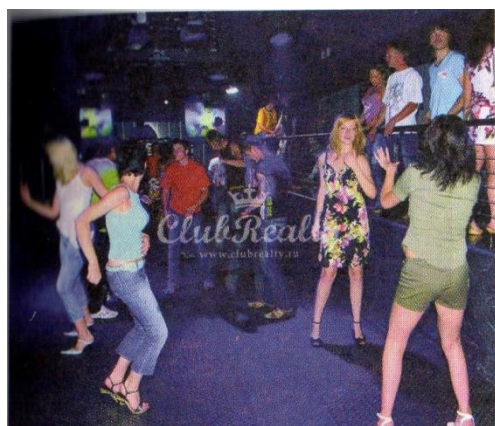
b.



good day



bad day



good night



bad night

c. *Gaelic is an **old language**, as it stayed unchanged for centuries.*

*I've got **young friends and old friends**.*

*Even if I had a **good reason**, I wouldn't do such a thing.*

*I hope the next will be a **good year**.*

d. *Dè an diofar a th' ann eadar deagh bhiadh agus biadh math?*

e. Innis dhomh mu dheidhinn na dealbhan seo a' toirt iomradh air aois nan aodach, nan daoine agus nan dannsaichean!



3) Cuir na facail seo 'san iolra (plural) (anns a' Ghàidhlig):

a. 'sàr-chompanach

'sàr-mharaiche

'sàr-fhear-ealain

'sàr-fhine

b. good purpose, good memory; bad man; sean-bhean; duine aosta

4) Eadar-theangaich na h-abairtean seo:

a. good cearad, good musadh, bad pearas, bad tratadh, old boigeir, old teite

b. good spaghetti, good yoyo, bad delicatessen, bad sushi, old confetti, old déjà vu

c. This song was written in the **old language**.

He was **entirely opening** his mind.

He was **fully opening** his arms.

The **ancient language** of the Greek wasn't an **old language** at that time.

He's not a **veteran**, he's a **true, old man**.

5) Dè tha na facail seo a' ciallachadh? A bheil iad diofraichte?

deagh obair – deagh-obair – obair mhath

droch rud – droch-rud

droch shùil – (an) droch-shùil – A bheil sùil dhona a' ciallachadh càil? Ciamar a chanadh sibh 'bad sight' 'sa Ghàidhlig? (He had bad sight in his old years.)

droch bhoireannach – droch-bhoireannach (agus boireannach dona?)

droch-bhean – droch bhean (agus bean dhona?)

droch-latha – droch latha



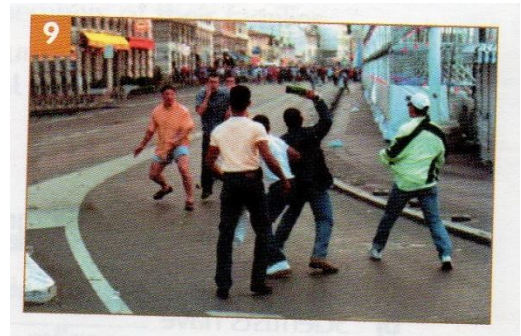
droch dhaoine – droch-dhaoine

sàr-fhacal – sàr fhacal

sàr-dhuine – sàr dhuine

sàr-bhàrd – sàr bhàrd

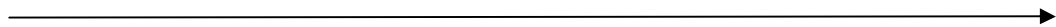
fìor sheann-duine – fìor-sheann-duine



6) Càit' an cuireadh sibh na h-abairtean seo air an continuum gu h-ìosal?

a. *fìor ghruaim – sàr ghruaim – làn ghruaim*
fìor chruaidh – sàr chruaidh – làn chruaidh

b. *fìor thoil – làn thoil – sàr thoil*
fìor thoilichte – làn thoilichte – sàr thoilichte



quite very to a very high degree to the uttermost degree

a. **Cuir fìor mhiannachadh – làn mhiannachadh – sìor mhiannachadh air dòigh a rèir an spionnadh.**

7) Ciamar a tha sibh ag ràdh:

complaining/whistling/whispering all the time

immersed in complaining/whispering/whistling

constantly fighting/shouting

constantly smiling/helping

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