

Language Politics in Scotland

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Scotland

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Contents

Preface

1. Scotland's Politics	1
2. Linguistics	2
3. The Politics of Language	
a) Name Calling	5
b) Place Names	5
c) A Political History?	7
4. Language and Politics	
a) Interim Support	9
b) The Government	11
c) The Political Parties	12
d) Local Government	13
e) Surveys and Sources	15
5. The Language in Politics Survey (L.I.P.) 1995	
a) Aims of the L.I.P.	16
b) Methodology	17
c) Findings	19
6. Conclusion	28
7. Bibliography	29
8. Appendix	32

Preface

In November 1994, I attended the International Conference at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven titled “Nations and Languages and the construction of Europe”. During that conference I purchased an information booklet produced by the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages and turned to the section on Scots. Reading it I discovered that Scots was the only language listed by the Bureau for which no Data exists. I resolved then, with friends in Aberdeen to try to get a question relating to the Scots language built into the national census and thus put on equal terms with Scotland’s other languages. Any such question would however not furnish statistics about Scots until at least the start of the Twenty-First Century. The need for some interim information is obvious to all those with an interest in minority, lesser-used or non-state European languages. This report is intended to offer a basic level of information until such time as a more comprehensive survey can be undertaken.

The survey has been supported by a review of the history and politics of Scotland’s languages. Without such a review, a clear understanding of current attitudes towards Scotland’s languages is almost impossible to gain.

I would like to express my thanks to everybody that contributed to this report, especially those that conducted the “Language in Politics” survey, but also to all those individuals and organisations that took the time to reply to the questionnaires or offer constructive advice on the text of the report. Special thanks go to Dr. Meg Bateman, Dr. John Shaw, Dr. Catherine Macaphee and Professor Ken Mackinnon for their time and advice. I am also greatly indebted to Robert Gordon, BSc, for teaching me the value of databases and significantly enhancing my computer literacy.

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1. Scotland's Politics.

“Our present is still decided for us in a centralised United Kingdom Parliament where our democratically expressed wish for Home Rule is constantly frustrated. Thus has it been for many years. What has this to do with language? Everything, for politics determines the way we view language and culture and in time that influences how we view ourselves.”¹

Scotland's politics are, like the nation herself, quite distinct from the rest of the United Kingdom. In Scotland there are not three significant political parties, but four. Uniquely her government is not made up of the most successful political party at elections, nor even the second placed party. The government of Scotland is routinely formed of the party which poles third and sometimes even fourth at major elections. This peculiar situation has led to the evolution of a distinctive party system in Scotland where each opposition party claims to provide the only viable solution to a government which 75% of the Scottish electorate did not vote in and cannot vote out. The SNP are joined by Labour, the Liberal Democrats and the Greens in seeking a Scottish Parliament as a positive solution to Scotland's political, economic and cultural aspirations.

Outside of 'party politics', Scotland's cultural movements grow in strength, all placing their own emphasis on the component of Scotland's 'national identity' which motivates them - be it language, music, dance, a particular institution, folklore or literature. These movements all want the same thing, the promotion and recognition of the portion of Scottish culture which is most important to them.

While exclusively political groups focus on the debate over a Scottish Parliament, cultural groups have elevated the question of language policy to a significantly higher profile within the political agenda. As one academic put it “the resurgence of interest in Gaelic has close links with various political aspirations for Scotland”.² By gaining major concessions from the government, the achievements of the Gaelic lobby launched the whole issue of language into the political arena and caused many speakers of Scots to ask themselves the question: "Why them and not us?!"

¹B Kay, *Scots, The Mither Tongue*, (Ayrshire, 1993), p.11

²D Thomson, *Why Gaelic Matters*, (Edinburgh, 1984), p.88

2. Linguistic Scotland.

There are three indigenous languages spoken in Scotland today - English, Gaelic and Scots. All are spoken throughout Scotland with the majority of Scots and Gaelic speakers also being bilingual with English. Additionally, a survey conducted in 1991 has indicated approximately 95,000 of Scotland's population speak languages other than these as their native language.¹

Historically it is impossible to establish a period when Scotland has been a monolingual country. All that can accurately be related is that in this period or that, a given language has held a particular status among the effective government of the age and that alongside that language others have been spoken by large sections of the community. Indeed Gaelic, Scots and English have all been the 'language of State' at given historical periods. During the period of the Scottish Wars of Independence "the different peoples of Scotland who variously spoke French, Scots and Gaelic were united by their differences"² and from that period "until 1707 the language of the Scottish parliament was Scots, as was the language of legislation and court procedure".³ In the same century about 30% of the population of Scotland lived in the Gaelic speaking Highlands⁴ with other community Gaelic speakers living in the eastern shires of Banff, Aberdeen and Angus. The Scots language however "outside Scotland has rarely been accorded the status of a separate language [...] partly because English people have found it convenient to forget that Scotland was not politically united with England until 1707".⁵

After the union of 1707, the Scottish Anglophile-intelligentsia began to look to the south for political, cultural and economic inspiration. From then on the Scottish 'establishment' has undertaken a process of Anglicising its own indigenous institutions and has been largely successful in the linguistic Anglicisation of many parts of Scotland.

In the Gaidhealtachd the process of Anglicisation was effected at a time when the number of Gaelic speakers was possibly at its greatest. The attack took several forms. Firstly it coincided with the demographic upheavals of the 19th century. Large numbers of people were forced, encouraged, or decided to leave their homelands in what is usually referred to as 'the Highland clearances'. Entire communities were relocated to other parts of Scotland or sent overseas to the colonies. Those that remained were left in a country where the Scottish Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (S.S.P.C.K.) was empowered to ensure that education of the Gaidhealtachd should become compulsory and conducted through the medium of English. Once English was established as the medium of education and advancement, numbers of Gaelic speakers began to decline sharply. To highlight the

¹K Mackinnon, *Gaelic in 1994*, Report to the EU Euromosaic Project, (Black Isle, 1994), p.2

²M Lynch, *Scotland - a new history*, (London, 1991), p.xiv

³Mackinnon, *Gaelic in 1994*, p.13

⁴W Ferguson, *Scotland 1689 to the Present*, (Edinburgh, 1990)

⁵D Leith, *A Social History of English*, (London, 1983), p.154

effectiveness of these policies, in 1891 there were over 250,000 Gaelic speakers, but by 1991 the number had fallen to 66,000.

In the non-Gaelic speaking areas there were also demographic changes. Much of the rural population was also forced into emigration but usually less brutally (and this is an aspect of history that is therefore less well known) than in the Highlands. In schools similar measures were employed to ensure the English language became dominant over Scots, and the use of Scots in the classroom was often punishable in a similar fashion to Gaelic in the Highlands - and in many places with similar results.

It is extremely hard to establish the linguistic situation of Scotland. The only specific language question asked on the national census form relates to the numbers of speakers of Gaelic in Scotland. There is no comparable question in the census form for Scots, so figures for speakers vary from zero to 5,000,000 depending on who is reporting them. The usual erroneous conclusion that is drawn from the census however is that once you have counted the 2% of Scots that speak Gaelic, the other 98% of Scots must both speak English as their native language and not wish to speak any other Scottish language. Sociologists seem confused too, one stating categorically that Scotland "is largely bereft of that potent building block of nationalism, a distinctive language"¹ but then continuing that "there is little to differentiate Scotland linguistically from England since Gaelic is spoken by less than 2% and Scots struggles to remain a distinctive language".² From saying there is no linguistic difference to admitting the existence of two other indigenous languages is quite a remarkable leap. However McCrone is not alone. Many academics and politicians work on the '98% must speak English' basis. Until there is a quantitative question built into the census it will be impossible to establish the number of people that speak Scots. In the meantime, if adequate questions are not asked, then definite conclusions relating to the opinions of Scotland's linguistic communities cannot effectively be attained.

The 1993 annual report of the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages reports its recognition of Scots as a European language along with its only surviving overseas dialect through the representation of the Ulster Scots Language Society. This recognition has effectively ended the debate over Scots' linguistic status and liberated her campaigners to lobby the politicians for linguistic equality within Scotland.

Despite European recognition, neither Gaelic nor Scots is recognised in British legislation as an 'official' language (though Gaelic as a native language is regarded as a qualifying factor of British nationality along with English and Welsh). Official status has not been offered since "the Scottish Office has generally contended that this is unnecessary as there has never been specific legal discrimination against the languages like there has been against Welsh in the 1536 Act of Incorporation".³ That the

¹D McCrone, *Understanding Scotland: The Sociology of A Stateless Nation*, (London, 1992), p.197

²Ibid., p.211

³Mackinnon, *Gaelic in 1994*, p.3

enforced implantation of an alien language medium into the education system of any given region does not constitute 'legal discrimination' is a matter of some debate. Yet, despite the dramatic decline in the number of speakers of Scots and Gaelic, there have been significant advances for the cultural and political status of both languages in the last fifteen years.

During the 1980's activity from Gaelic pressure groups eventually led to the formation of Gaelic nurseries and playgroups organisations. Gaelic education had been paid lip service since the start of the 20th century but parents wanted real opportunities for their children. The campaign was successful and from the establishment of the first Gaelic medium unit in 1982, there are now 45 Gaelic medium primary units and 100 pre-school playgroups in Scotland.¹ The success of the Gaelic education campaign encouraged a strong Gaelic media campaign which again was successful and culminated in the government establishing the Gaelic Television Committee (CTG). This in turn ensured that Gaelic programming was to become an integrated feature of Scottish television programming (in contrast to Welsh TV's separate Welsh language channel).

The Scots lobby responded. Despite initial anger aimed at 'foreign language' TV programming by some - voiced through letters in the media - reaction to Gaelic TV has been remarkably supportive, though in view of the results of the 1981 public opinion poll on attitudes to Gaelic in Scotland, that is not really surprising. Scots speakers' reaction to Gaelic language success has led to the formation of new organisations, such as the Scots Language Resource Centre in Tayside, and the expansion of existing Scots language groups - primarily the Scots Language Society - seeking to emulate the 'gains' attained by the Gaelic lobby.

¹Ibid, p.3

3. The politics of language.

a) Name Calling

The labelling of Scotland's languages themselves has often provided a vehicle of expression for political aspirations. An example is provided by the word 'Scots' itself which was originally employed linguistically to describe the Gaelic language but which was later employed to identify the Anglo-Saxon related language formerly called 'Inglis' in Scotland. By the late fifteenth century the linguistic progeny of Anglo-Saxon had diverged sufficiently for the speakers of the Scottish form to begin identifying their language by the appellation 'Scottis'. At the same time it became common for those speakers to describe contemporary Gaelic speech and communities in Scotland as 'Ersche'.¹ The various adjectives describing the Scottish tongues cloud our view of the actual perceptions held by the linguistic communities towards each other at given periods in history. Clearly, the speakers of 'Inglis' in Scotland were not English, just as the speakers of 'Ersche' were not Irish. Both were indigenous Scottish populations that used languages related to languages spoken in neighbouring countries. Scots Gaelic and Scots had both evolved into languages quite distinct from those spoken in Ireland and England. It has unfortunately remained a political expedient for some people to describe Scots Gaelic as an Irish dialect or Scots as an English dialect, depending on their political agenda or belief - or indeed to relate '15th century perceptions' based on limited evidence (that of sections of the literate minority) coupled with 20th century prejudice. However the politics of language does not just concern the labelling of the languages of Scotland but also encroaches onto the labelling of geographical areas of Scotland.

b) Place Names

*"Gaelic has no word precisely equivalent to Lowlands; nor does it have a word for Highlands...the Gaelic speaking area is Gaidhealtachd and the rest is Galldachd [and] there is some degree of vagueness in the way they are used and they carry strong cultural connotations"*²

The modern usage of the Scots Gaelic terms 'Gaidhealtachd' and 'Galldachd' carries political overtones which are loaded, erroneous and require revision. The word Gaidhealtachd is commonly used as the term which describes the area which covers the mainland Highlands and Western Isles. The implication from the word is that this is the area where Gaelic belongs. Gaelic is mainly today functioning as a community language in the Hebrides and if the term 'Gaidhealtachd' should be applied at all, surely it should be specifically to that location. There is a certain peculiarity in fact that the word

¹J D McClure, *Why Scots Matters*, (Edinburgh, 1988), p.14

²J MacInnes, 'The Gaelic perception of the Lowlands' in W Gilles (ed.), *Gaelic and Scotland, Alba agus A'Ghàidhlig*, (Edinburgh, 1991), pp.89-90

Gaidhealtachd is now applied to the Highlands at all. The suppression of Gaelic and scarcity of Scots-speaking communities has made this location the one part of Scotland in which English is unrivalled as the prevalent language. Colm O Baoill has offered a solution by differentiating the present Gaelic speaking communities by using the term Gaidhealtachd or fìor-Ghaidhealtachd (the true Gaidhealtachd), while the former Gaelic speaking Highlands should be ‘Gaidhealtachd’ in inverted commas.¹ John MacInnes informs us that this area is also known by some as ‘An t-seann Ghaidhealtachd’ - ‘the old Gaidhealtachd’,² yet this is unsatisfactory as it leaves out other (perhaps as many as it includes?) ex-Gaelic speaking areas of Scotland outwith the Highland line e.g. Galloway and Fife. If areas are to be linguistically demarcated in Gaelic at all, then could the Highlands not now be more accurately described as the ‘Beurlatachd’ as Gaelic has been suppressed by English rather than Scots? The answer is that they could, but the politics of language prevents it. The description of the Highlands as the ‘Gaidhealtachd’ indicates an arbitrary line within which many people (Highland and Lowland) believe Gaelic should be identified, regardless of where it historically was, or actually is, spoken - in island townships and city schools alike. Scottish Gaelic now defines a specific geographical location for itself which is inaccurate and has several negative implications. Some of those that campaign against Gaelic being promoted outside the Western Highlands and Islands (both pro- and anti-Gaelic campaigners) could reasonably argue that since Gaels define an area which is ‘Gaelic’, then that is where Gaelic should be promoted.

Another negative situation arises where Gaelic speakers are being raised and educated in the Lowlands yet do not belong to, and are therefore estranged from, the ‘Gaidhealtachd’ (and in some way ‘mainstream’ Gaelic culture?) by being native to the ‘Galldachd’. At the same time, the majority of the population of the ‘Gaidhealtachd’ are English speakers who cannot be classed as Gaels since they do not speak Gaelic. If the absurdity of the ‘English speaking Gaidhealtachd’ and ‘Gaelic speaking Goill’ are to be addressed then perhaps the usage of this terminology should be as well. Gaelic has adapted to the unsuitability of geographical terminology before. Few young Gaelic speakers today are encouraged to refer to the Western Isles as the ‘Innse Gall’ (the islands of foreigners), the preferred name now being ‘Na h-Eileanan Siar’ (The Western Isles). After all, the location of the ‘fìor-Ghaidhealtachd’ in a place called the ‘Innse Gall’ does carry peculiar (and ironic) connotations.

The prolonged use of ‘Gaidhealtachd’ and ‘Galldachd’ encroaches on Gaelic’s claim to be a national language, limiting the development potential of the language to a particular region of Scotland while neglecting the rest of Scotland’s Gaelic population and heritage. Given that speakers of Scotland’s older indigenous languages are to be found in every part of the country, it is probably more profitable for those with an interest in promoting them as national, rather than regional, languages simply to regard Scotland as that which it is - a country in which several, equally valid, indigenous languages are spoken.

¹C O’ Baoill, ‘Gaeilge na hAlban - Gaeilge gan ghluaiseacht’, in *Measra Uladh*, (Ireland, 1974)

²MacInnes, ‘*The Gaelic perception of the Lowlands*’.

In that way Scotland's linguistic partisans might direct their efforts to the achievement of their aims without engaging in counter-productive and damaging 'sniping' against each other.

c) A Political History?

It is often rightly stated that there is no such thing as objective history. While there is great validity in that statement, there are still those historians that strive for objectivity. There are those however that continue to disperse misinformation, and history often falls victim to the politics of language. In the books of Peter Berrisford Ellis for instance, the politics of language are argued vigorously. He talks of the 'Celtic' countries - Scotland, Ireland, Man, Wales, Cornwall and Brittany. Linguistic politics are employed here to identify specific areas but there is no consistency shown when the subject of Galicia arises. While accepting that Galicians are the descendants of a Celtic population, he informs us of his contempt for the suggestion that Galicia should be considered as a part of the Pan Celtic League - since they speak a Romance language. "The only criteria for recognition of a Celtic people is a linguistic one. Therefore, any adoption of the Galicians into the Celtic fold would be detrimental to the national claims of the genuine Celts".¹ There is a clear flaw in his rationale given that 98% of Scots and Irish, 80% of the Welsh and most of the Bretons under 40 speak non-Celtic languages. Quite where this leaves the Cornish and the Manx is unclear, but given they have the same number of Celtic speaking communities as the Galicians, some re-evaluation of the term 'Celtic country' is obviously required. It would be more accurate (but less politically and emotionally acceptable for many with a romantic disposition) to redefine a Celtic country as one which still contains living Celtic language speaking communities. Obviously this would necessitate the re-definition of those other countries and regions which have lost their Celtic populations but still feel a strong enough relationship with their history to celebrate and emphasise their Celtic heritage. Such a move would however open up a new debate regarding places like Canada which contains several Gaelic communities which could entitle them to ask for recognition as a 'Celtic' country.

The way scholars view history can be dependent on the convictions of those that teach them. There are several ways to interpret historical evidence. It is often easier to perpetuate or dismiss myths rather than to research the facts surrounding them. The Battle of Harlaw in 1411 provides a relevant 'linguistic' illustration. Usually the fight is portrayed as one between 'wild Gaelic-speaking Highlanders' and the 'peaceful civilised Scots-speaking Lowlanders'. To view it as such is to be deliberately selective with the evidence. The leader of the 'Lowlanders' was Gaelic-speaking and an illegitimate son of the Wolf of Badenoch who, as "early as 1392 was leading [Gaelic] ceteran troops on raids",² while his opponent, Donald of the Isles, was "Familiar with the Scottish court and with its

¹P B Ellis, *The Celtic Revolution*, (Ceredigion, 1995), p.22

²D Horsburgh, *Gaelic and Scots in Grampian*, (Aberdeen, 1994), p.19

prevailing language, Scots”.¹ Horsburgh concludes that the battle “was a matter of high politics rather than ethnic rivalry”.² To admit that would undermine the claims of some that the linguistic populations of Scotland were tied to specific locations rather than widely spread and integrated. Historical selectiveness is not only the preserve of those that seek to confine the Gael to the north and west. The historiographers of Celtic Scotland themselves often focus their studies on specific areas of Scottish Gaelic history. This study usually centres essentially on Clan Donald and the Lordship of the Isles while playing down, or being dismissive of, other important areas and families of Gaelic Scotland. MacInnes tells us that one thing we can deduce “from the evidence of Gaelic tradition is that the integrity of Alba, Scotland, is never in question”.³ It would seem to follow that anything which threatened that integrity should consequently be treated historically as ‘anti-Scottish’. The House of Argyll has had a bad historical press and one author tells us that the Campbells were “Gaeil ag troid ar son na Galltacha in aghaidh na Gaeltachta”⁴ - ‘Gaeils fighting for the Lowlands against the Highlands’. It is equally possible to evaluate ‘the Campbell position’ as that of ‘loyal Scottish-Gaelic subjects’ defending Scotland against harmful internal destabilising elements. After all, leaders of Clan Donald had tried to use their powerful position in the 15th century with the Treaty of Westminster to “no less a task than the dismemberment of the kingdom”⁵ and again in the 16th century they entered into an alliance with King Henry VIII of England with the aim of aiding an English invasion of Scotland.⁶ The politics of this are obvious - and hard for many to reconcile with their perceptions of Gaelic, The Lordship of the Isles and Scotland.

One cannot accurately talk in such broad historical terms as “the Highlanders...” or “The Lowlanders...”. These groups seldom, if ever, acted as a homogeneous mass and the composition of Scottish armies and institutions usually contained large numbers of people from all her linguistic communities. Scottish soldiers fought for a variety of reasons ranging from coercion, religious conviction, feudal commitment or material gain while ‘language loyalty’ usually provided the vehicle of expression of, rather than the motivation for, participation.

Another typical example of historical gerrymandering would have us believe that “in Scottish residence the Lowlanders are slightly more recent than the Highlanders. Their forefathers were English-speaking people, the Angles of Northumberland, who worked their way northward from England”.⁷ The statement is politically loaded and flawed for various reasons, not least since the Angles did not speak English but Anglo-Saxon and only few of them ‘came north’, rather the language transferred through cultural osmosis after the establishment of the burghs. Equally perplexing is the ignoring of the fact that many Lowlanders carry essentially Gaelic names and are of recent ‘Gaelic’ origin. Some with non-

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³MacInnes, *The Gaelic perception of the Lowlands*, p.93

⁴O’ Baoill, ‘Gaeilge na hAlban’, p.90

⁵D J Macdonald, *Clan Donald*, (Loanhead, 1978), p.102

⁶Ibid., p.144

⁷C W Dunn, *Highland Settler*, (Wreck Cove, 1991), p.4

Gaelic names may be of Gaelic origin on their mothers' side, and others are Scots from areas where Gaelic declined during earlier time periods and sometimes bear names which reflect this, like Buchan and Murray. Many other Lowlanders carry names which indicate their families came from former Gaelic speaking areas and have surnames like Ross, Sutherland or Islay. Dunn omits to allow for community language shift and bilingualism and ignores the facts surrounding Scotland's linguistic evolution.

4. Language and Politics.

"[Politics] have a duty to reflect the society at whose heart it lies. Scottish writers, individuals and indeed cultural organisations have been strident in their defence of Scots but this has not been matched by a like commitment on the part of Scottish political parties".¹

a) Interim Support

Though this quotation applies to Scots, it is equally applicable to Gaelic. The languages of Scotland are a source of cultural wealth and pride to the nation. It is not surprising therefore that over the years many groups and structures have evolved and vigorously worked to ensure their survival and development. Though this has been true for both Scots and Gaelic, there is no doubt that today Gaelic has forged support structures which the Scots language lobby must work hard to emulate.

Since the mid eighteenth century the most obvious form of political and cultural expression in Scotland has been the medium of literature, as to put it simply "no other means of communication and protest were available".² Individuals and societies produced works that were political in both message and medium since the act of writing in Scots or Gaelic had evolved into a political statement in itself. In the nineteenth century, John Murdoch of Inverness began *The Highlander* newspaper which "gave the Gaelic language revival movement a distinctly political and inevitably nationalist flavour".¹ Thompson believes that the political potential of the Gaelic language was not capitalised on since the emphasis of the Celtic revival focused on the history of the Celtic peoples, their music, art, dress and sports rather than their language. At the same time politically motivated Gaels were absorbed with the issues of the Highland Land League and similar bodies, their language seeming to be of secondary concern to the other issues. One result of the political agitation however also resulted in a break through for Gaelic. In 1884 the Napier Commission report was produced and "for the first time in the history of Scotland, an official document, published at government expense and signed by reasonable persons, made an

¹A Sobey, 'Scots Realpolitik', in *Talking Scots*. Supplement to *Fortnight*, no. 317, (Northern Ireland, no date)

²C Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes: Scotland since 1914*, (Edinburgh, 1993), p.132

outspoken protest against the unpatriotic folly and unintelligence of the official anti-Gaelic policy for Gaelic education”.²

Publication in the older languages continued with Erskine’s ‘*Guth na Bliadhna*’ which ran from 1904-1925 and which was “dedicated to the freedom of Scotland and the discussion of all cognate questions”.³ Scots literature was further forged into an effective medium of political expression during the Scottish Literary Renaissance of the 1920’s and 1930’s. Hugh Macdiarmid (C.M. Grieve) supported “the connection between literature and nationalism”⁴ and other writers like Naomi Mitchison, Eric Linklater and Lewis Grassie Gibbon (James Leslie Mitchell) all “paid careful attention to the case for Scottish Independence”.⁵ The relationship between Scottish writers and concerns for Scotland’s political and cultural future has continued to develop - reaching new strengths during the 1970’s when a climate emerged where “Scottish-ness was an asset not a liability [...] which greatly added to the credibility of the Scottish Nationalist(sic) Party”.⁶ This relationship between the Scottish literati, the older languages and political expression has continued its development during this period of protracted Conservative government during the 1980’s and 1990’s.

From MacMhaighstir Alasdair and Burns onwards the older indigenous languages have been politically employed as a powerful medium of expression for discontent. This in turn has given them, above their other literary qualities and interest to philologists, an added dimension of vitality which has helped to sustain them until other support structures were (eventually) created for their development.

¹F G Thompson, ‘Gaelic in Politics’ in *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, vol. XLVII, (Inverness, 1971-72), p.80

²F G Thompson, ‘Gaelic in Politics’ in *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, vol. XLVII, (Inverness, 1971-72), p.91

³Ibid., p.83

⁴M McCulloch, ‘Inter War Criticism’ in C Craig (ed.) *The History of Scottish Literature*, vol. iv, (Aberdeen, 1989), p.121

⁵I Murray, ‘Novelists of the Renaissance’ in C Craig (ed.) *The History of Scottish Literature*, vol. iv, (Aberdeen, 1989), p.105

⁶R Stevenson, ‘Scottish Theatre 1950-1980’ in C Craig (ed.) *The History of Scottish Literature*, vol. iv, (Aberdeen, 1989), p.356

b) The Conservative Government

All the political parties in Scotland have evolved some form of language policy, however trying to establish the Government's position on languages is a task which is considerably hindered - not least by the party of government in Scotland. The Conservative and Unionist Party declined to respond to repeated requests to provide a copy of their language policy document or information relating to it. No Conservative MP responded to my letters and a special advisor to the Secretary of State for Scotland told me that Iain Lang "does not answer questionnaires of the kind sent by you"(!), but he continued that "It was this Government [the Conservatives] which established the Gaelic Television Committee with Government support of almost £10 million...the biggest ever single boost to the Gaelic language [and] the Government will continue to support the Gaelic language in future".¹ Overlooked or ignored by the Government is the fact that, between 1981 and 1991, the number of Gaelic speakers declined by over 14,000 (20%). This was possibly the biggest single blow to the Gaelic language in recent years, and a "loss which is greater than would be expected from mortality, migration or intergenerational language shift".² It must be assumed that many Gaelic speakers were forced into exile through economic necessity. The Scottish population as a whole dropped substantially in the same period also. Support for a language through monetary grants alone seems somehow pointless if there continues to be a reduction in the recipient population able to utilise them. If the Government is serious about its claims to support the Gaelic language in the future it will have to look to models such as Ireland's 'Udaras na Gaeltachta': a firm, and so far effective, initiative to retain the population and intensify "The linguistic, cultural, social, physical and economic development of the Gaeltacht...through, not only the creation of new jobs, but also by safeguarding existing employment".³ The state however does provide further assistance to Gaelic "through an annual grant to the Gaelic Books Council [and] assistance to literary and performing arts is undertaken through the Scottish Arts Council".⁴

The Scottish office letter sent by Mr Young makes no reference to the Scots language, though the government has recently stated that "Government support for Scots and Gaelic is based on an appreciation of the need to preserve important elements of Scottish culture and heritage".⁵ The first tangible evidence of support for Scots was offered through the Scottish Office Education Department in 1991 who advocated the inclusion of the "Scots language within the curriculum for children aged 5-14. The Scots language in its various forms and Scottish literature are seen as part of the heritage and

¹A Young, Special advisor to the Secretary of State, Scottish Office, 12.10.94

²K Mackinnon, *Gaelic language usage in community and media domains, Western Isles of Scotland, 1987/1988*; A paper for the 5th International Conference on Minority Languages, University of Wales, 5-9 July, (Wales, 1993)

³P Farrell, General Secretary, Fianna Fail, 20.10.94

⁴Mackinnon, *Gaelic in 1994*, p.22

⁵A Fenton and D A Macdonald,(eds.) *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on the Languages of Scotland: Studies in Scots and Gaelic*, (Edinburgh, 1994), p.175

entitlement of pupils at all stages".¹ Additional Governmental support for Scots is supplied through grants paid to the Scottish National Dictionary Association and to the Friends of A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue (£39,425), while the Scottish Arts Council sponsors a Scots language magazine and is estimating expenditure of £25,000 on "writers' bursaries, travel and research grants" and funded the Traditional Music and Song Association with a grant of £22,300.²

While appreciating that any advancement of support for Scotland's languages indicates an improvement over previous years, one cannot help but observe the inequality in the distribution of resources between Scots and Gaelic. The Government, when asked, is unable to tender an explanation and one is drawn to the conclusion that they have no cohesive policy for, or understanding of, Scotland's languages.

c) The Opposition Political Parties

The Liberal Democrats have no written policy on Scots but do for Gaelic, though they have said that they wish to place Scots, Gaelic and English on an even footing. The Liberal Democrats' policy document for language states: "We firmly support the development of Gaelic as a working language rather than merely preserving it as a cultural language". Malcolm Bruce MP in a response to my queries on the subject wrote back: "Although we have no written policy directly for Scots, we do recognise an individual's right to employ it and not to be penalised because of it",³ while one of his parliamentary colleagues Mrs. Ray Michie MP said in a recent press release: "Scots should be proud to use the Scots language and never shirk from its everyday usage, in courts, in classrooms, and throughout the country".⁴

Labour has a Gaelic policy but no firm policy document for Scots, though George Robertson MP has stated that "Labour is keen to preserve our Scottish cultural diversity and to encourage the wider use of Scots and Gaelic".⁵ Education in Scotland is funded by the Government through the Scottish Office who then direct it to the Regional authorities who decide how it is used. In this way the Conservative Government has been able to assume the credit for educational initiatives undertaken by Regional authorities controlled by other parties. While the Conservatives boast of being the Government that facilitated the establishment of Gaelic medium education, Mr Robertson pointed out that "Labour-controlled Strathclyde was the first education authority in Scotland to set up a Gaelic medium primary unit although it [Gaelic medium education] is threatened by local government reorganisation".⁶

¹ A Fenton and D A Macdonald,(eds.) *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on the Languages of Scotland: Studies in Scots and Gaelic*, (Edinburgh, 1994), p.175

²Ibid.

³Malcolm Bruce MP, 18.10.94

⁴Mrs Ray Michie MP, 13.12.94

⁵George Robertson MP, 17.10.94

⁶George Robertson MP, 17.10 94

The Scottish National Party is the only party so far to have the word 'Scots' (relating to language) in any policy document although even they have only tagged it on as a supplement to their document on Gaelic. That document states that it is the intention of the SNP to develop Gaelic “as a compliment to, and not an alternative to, the Scots language”.¹ The SNP set up a Gaelic secretariat in 1968 and in 1974 undertook to develop a Gaelic policy. At their 1994 conference Gaelic education was a major issue and the SNP resolved to ensure all Scottish children between the ages of five and fourteen gain some 'exposure' to Gaelic language education - a move not welcomed by Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Araich (CNSA) and other Gaelic educational organisations who believe that ‘compulsion’ and Gaelic do not mix.² One need only look to Ireland to see the evidence. Whether compulsory or not, "education policies may well prove to be the key to successful community language-maintenance".³ The long term benefits of such policies can only be imagined, but short term benefits are already apparent through the creation of teaching positions, expansion of existing, and creation of new, educational facilities, and all the benefits associated with a community rediscovering its self-respect.

d) Local Government

The status of language as an issue of importance improved when Gaelic “had become for the first time, the official language of local government in the Western Isles following the reorganisation of local government in the 1970’s”.⁴ The development of Gaelic as a working language of local government was coupled with the evolution of coherent philosophies linking social, cultural and economic development. The Western Isles Community Education Project, for example, works on the principle that “Basically life is indivisible and that, therefore, promotion of economics at the expense of social development, or social at the expense of cultural, is arbitrary, artificial and in the long run likely to be unsuccessful”.⁵ It is felt that many projects designed to create jobs bring harmful and/or destructive elements into fragile communities and will therefore be counterproductive in achieving their primary objective of protecting those communities.

The Highlands and Islands Development Board (H.I.D.B.) was established by parliament in 1965 to deal with the problems of a neglected area affected by steady decline and depopulation. In 1976 they sent a delegation to Co. Donegal to evaluate the work of Udaras na Gaeltachta. They were sufficiently impressed to introduce the Community Co-operative Scheme in 1977 though little direct interest was shown in Gaelic until a report was produced for them in November 1982. Highland region

¹Dr Allen Macartney MEP, 13.10.94

²Finlay Macleod, Spokesperson for CNSA, interview conducted on 5.10.94

³Mackinnon, *Gaelic Language Useage in Community and Media Domains*, p.6

⁴T C Smout, ‘Patterns of Culture’ in A Dickenson and J H Trebble, *People and Society in Scotland*, vol. iii, 1914-1990, (Edinburgh, 1992), p.270

⁵J Clive, ‘What future for Gaelic speaking communities?’ in C H Williams (ed.), *Linguistic Minorities, Society and Territory*, (Clevedon - Philadelphia - Adelaide, 1991), p.195

had established a Gaelic sub-committee as far back as 1977 and their findings resulted in a Highland Structure Plan being approved by the Secretary of State in 1980.¹ This plan in combination with the 1982 report to the H.I.D.B. led to the establishment of Comunn Na Gàidhlig (CNaG) in conjunction with the Western Isles Council, Strathclyde Regional Council and Highland Region. The H.I.D.B. also assisted other Gaelic related projects including funding for the Gaelic learners' organisation 'CLI' for three years between 1983 and 1986. Some more recent initiatives for Gaelic have included the Second National Gaelic Representative Conference held in Columbridge and organised by CNaG in May 1993 and the inaugurated Annual Gaelic Conference - Comhdhail nan Gàidheal, which met first in March 1994 in Inverness taking education as its theme on that occasion.²

The involvement of the regions in the support and development of language policy is very much dependent on the local language loyalty of the population, the controlling political party and the commitment of local language activists. Strathclyde region has active Gaelic and Scots populations and organisations functioning within its boundaries. It was the first region to establish Gaelic medium education (see above) and has become a partner in certain joint ventures for Gaelic such as Comunn Na Gàidhlig and the publishing venture Acair.³ Strathclyde has also held a major conference on the Scots language (after lobbying by the Scots Language Society) which was notable for using Scots as the main medium of communication and having bi-lingual Scots/English texts for all conference literature.⁴

Other regions are also prominent in the promotion of Scottish languages including Dumfries and Galloway, which has appointed a Scots Language Development Officer and Tayside which co-funded (along with the Saltire Society) the first specialist tutor of Scots. Grampian and Highland have both been supportive of Gaelic medium education. Grampian has also held several cultural events promoting the Scots language and hosted a conference on the language.

Reasons and depth of support for linguistic policies vary in each Region. One author reminds us that "in all of these developments, the approval and support of a broad section of local politicians has been established. When there is a change in the air, the politicians will sense it and act upon it if they feel it will do them, their party or the country [...] some good".⁵

¹Clive, 'What future for Scotland's Gaelic speaking communities?'

²Mackinnon, *Gaelic in 1994*.

³Clive, 'What future for Scotland's Gaelic speaking communities?'

⁴Kay, *The Mither Tongue*, p. 12

⁵Ibid., p.13

e) Surveys and sources

Remarkably little research has been undertaken in the field of language policy impact and political party allegiance by linguistic communities within Scotland. A significant contributing factor to this is the lack of information relating to the current condition of the Scots language, and the number and distribution of its speakers. One survey that does give an indication was conducted among Scots native speakers at Aberdeen University. This research highlighted that:

“63% of informants acknowledged support for a party. Most responses were given for the Scottish National Party but the Labour party and Liberal Democrats followed closely”¹

The same report stated that 62% of Scots speakers replied positively, expressing the desire for a link between political independence and an improved status for Scots.

Little more information exists for Gaelic speakers but much of the work that has been collated has been done by Professor Mackinnon and can best be summed up in his own words:

“Voting intentions were also very clearly associated with the extent of support for Gaelic policies...In every area the highest support came from Nationalist voters [SNP] even in Skye where the typical voter had been Liberal, and the Western Isles where there was a higher proportion of Gaelic speakers amongst Labour Voters. Conservative voters were everywhere the least supportive (except in the Western Isles where the least supportive were minority party supporters, Don’t knows and non-voters)...Overall, as in the Lowland sample, political support for Gaelic policies fell on a continuum from most supportive to least supportive from SNP , Minority parties, Alliance parties [now Liberal-Democrats], Labour, No clear voting intention, to Conservative”²

A further survey conducted on the degree of language loyalty among Gaelic speakers in the Western Isles found that:

“Language-loyalty did associate with political affiliation (in terms of which party the respondent felt closest to). The highest loyalty scores were reported by those feeling closest to a party other than the main national parties - chiefly greens”³

¹F Iacuanello, ‘Linguistic awareness and attitudes in a sample of Scottish speakers’ in J D McClure (ed.) *Scottish Language*, no. 11/12, (Aberdeen, 1992/1993), p.66

²K Mackinnon, *Gaelic: A Past and Future Prospect*, (Edinburgh, 1991), p.176

³K Mackinnon, *Gaelic speaking ability, family and community Gaelic usage, and Gaelic language loyalty in the Western Isles, from 1986/1988 survey data*, (Hertfordshire, 1994), p.3

When the surveys are looked at in combination with the most recent General and Local election results, the Scottish National Party appear to draw most support from Scots speakers while Labour draws most from the Gaelic speakers. When it comes to promoting language policies however the SNP appear most supportive to both languages with Labour and the Liberal Democrats not far behind.

5. The Language in Politics (L.I.P.) survey 1995.

"There is no pretending that an attempt to pressure or revive a language in defiance of pressure from a dominant and foreign power can fail to be a political issue. That it is not widely perceived as such in Scotland [...] is a measure of the confusion which has affected our national life for two hundred years".¹

In an attempt to clarify 'the confusion' I initiated the 'Language in Politics' (L.I.P.) survey as part of my research to try to establish the role of language within the politics of Scotland.

a) The aims of the L.I.P. survey

This survey has had several aims. Without complete information on any subject we are unable to formulate a balanced perspective on it. This is true as much for the study of language as any other discipline. At present there is a dearth of information surrounding Scots. As long as that situation remains, misconceptions will continue to distort the way we view not only that language, but also Gaelic and English.

Limited statistics can provide the opportunity for information to be manipulated or employed for political advantage. One example might be where a campaigner against Gaelic television could argue that such broadcasting encroaches on 98% of the 'non-Gaelic speaking' populations air time. However that statistic itself does not allow for those that wish Gaelic to be their main language or a working language of their community. The findings from the L.I.P. survey suggest this figure to be as high as 80% in some parts of Highland Region. It is also possible that other parts could be the most anti any 'Gaelic resurgence'. They may feel more pressured than other parts of the country in having Gaelic 'forced' upon them simply due to their location - one example here might be the Scots speaking north-east of Caithness. These examples are given to illustrate the importance of establishing the largest possible body of information to avoid erroneous generalisations and misrepresentation of statistical information.

The Government claims to be concerned for the protection and promotion of Gaelic and Scots. So far it has failed to treat these languages with any consistency. It has only asked the population of

Scotland to partially linguistically identify itself through the census. The census is used to pinpoint Gaelic language communities and general distribution of Gaelic speakers in Scotland. This information has been used both positively and negatively by various bodies and individuals, but ultimately has resulted in much secure structures and opportunities for the Gaelic language. The L.I.P. survey was conducted with the hope of providing a basic indication of the condition of the Scots speaking community as well as indicating the way the various communities view each other.

c) Methodology

It is almost impossible to conduct a survey which will avoid condemnation as being flawed, ‘not sufficiently representative’ or not ‘statistically significant’. However, it is also true that many surveys which are undertaken using popular social survey methods do not return enough information, representative or otherwise, to allow detailed evaluation at all. Bearing this in mind I decided that the most constructive approach would be to undertake a national survey which would provide a reliable balance of information from every part of Scotland encompassing each age group, gender and social class. The method selected for the survey was by ‘Quota Sampling’ across three age groupings of the electorate (18-29,30-49,50+) by gender, and five occupational categories (to identify ‘social status’ by occupation). Quota sampling has its advantages in low cost, ease of administration and guaranteed information to work with. The major advantage for adopting this methodology is its compatibility with the EU Euromosaic project. Having a shared methodology means that the results may subsequently be compared with the Gaelic usage survey in Scotland and seven other minority language surveys elsewhere in the European Union. The Euromosaic Project was sponsored by the European Bureau for lesser used languages and funded by the European Union. The methodology was already familiar to me having worked on that project under the direction of Professor Mackinnon.

The quota sampling method tries to eliminate social prejudice by ensuring that all ages, genders and social groupings are included. It is true however that the choice of ‘who’ in each of the groups is interviewed remains at the discretion of the interviewer. Multiple interviewers were engaged to fulfil the quota in each region, possibly compensating for any one individuals’ social prejudice. As a further safeguard, people known to be members of political parties or cultural organisations were not asked to help with the survey to avoid introducing unnecessary bias. Interviewers included English, Scots and Gaelic speakers and all interviewers were residents of the region in which they were interviewing. Where possible, interviews were conducted in the language most appropriate to the community. In my own surveying experience I have found that native speakers of lesser used languages often respond differently to the same questions - depending on which language they are asked in.

¹McClure, *Why Scots Matters*, p.67

The interviewers were asked to fulfil their quotas from the first people that they encountered from each given category regardless of the native language of that person or their place of origin. In this way it was hoped to gain an additional indication of the strength of each language by observing the degree to which it has been absorbed by people moving into a particular area, i.e. have Gaelic speakers living in Shetland learned Scots, or English speakers in the Western Isles learned Gaelic etc.

Data was collected from 450 individuals in 15 communities throughout Scotland - at least one sample from each Regional and Island Council controlled district. There were supplementary surveys conducted in the cities of Aberdeen and Glasgow to provide specifically urban data, while an additional survey in Skye in Highland Region was included to provide alternative Gaelic data to that of the Western Isles.

The percentages of the survey that identified themselves as Scots, English or Gaelic native speakers could not be definitively used to indicate the total numbers of those language groupings in Scotland. This is because Gaelic communities were deliberately targeted in order to ascertain any correlation's between Gaelic and politics, and seriously weights the survey with a large Gaelic speaking component. However, by eliminating the statistics from the targeted communities on the Western Isles and the Isle of Skye, we are left with a native Gaelic component of approximately 1.5% - almost identical to the national census figure and indicating that similarly adjusted figures for native Scots speakers (67%) and monoglot English speakers (31.5%) may possibly be accurate. However it should be remembered that the populations of the regions surveyed vary considerably so that a result from the Gaelic speaking Western Isles, the English speaking Highlands or the Scots speaking Northern Isles do not carry the same weight in terms of population as the urban statistics from Glasgow, Edinburgh or Aberdeen. The figures do however provide valuable data on each area.

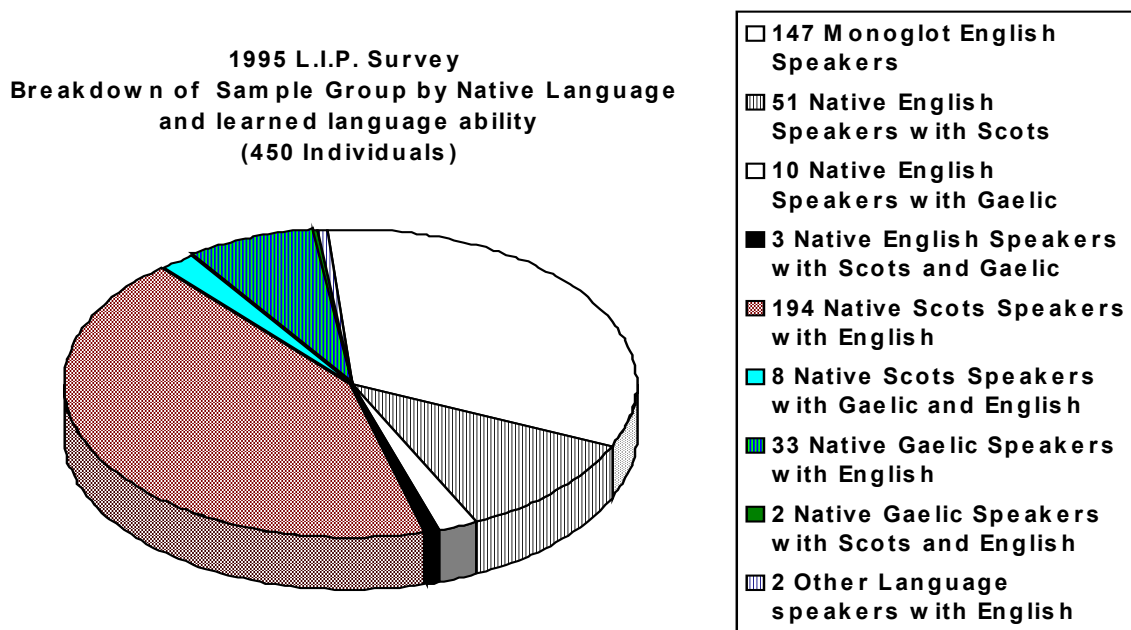
Researchers studying the Scots language have pointed out the linguistic insecurity that exists in Scotland especially among the speakers of urban dialects of Central Scots. Janet Menzies' research into attitudes towards urban dialects in Scotland concludes that in Britain, cultural pressure has established Standard English as the medium for written language which leads many people that speak Scots to believe that they are speaking English incorrectly. This in turn may lead to the phenomenon of linguistic self-hatred expressed in shame and distaste for one's own dialect¹ which in turn probably led to an unknown proportion of Scots speakers in the survey stating they were native English speakers. Despite this, outside of the central urban areas, the survey gives a broad indication of the strengths of each language in each given area.

c) Findings

¹J Menzies, 'An investigation of attitudes to Scots and Glasgow dialect among secondary school pupils' in J D McClure (ed.) *Scottish Language*, no.10, (Aberdeen, 1991)

The survey¹ highlighted 211 native English speakers, 202 native Scots speakers, and 35 native Gaelic speakers. Whenever a percentage for a finding is given, unless otherwise stated, then it will be as a percentage of those figures for each language group (with the number of individuals the percentage represents given after in brackets). 21 of the 56 individuals that could speak Gaelic were non-native speakers. It is also interesting to note that throughout the total survey group and ignoring those that answered ‘some’ or ‘passive knowledge’, 21% of the non native Scots speakers (53) said they could speak the language. When that figure for Scots is added to the number of native speakers it gives us a total of 255 individuals, 57% of the survey. When the targeted ‘Gaelic communities’ are eliminated, that figure rises to 67%. Given that the census does not distinguish between native and non-native speakers of a language, if these were census figures, that is the statistic that would be used to indicate the percentage of the population that are Scots speaking. The complete breakdown of the sample population group is given below by both native language and learned language ability.

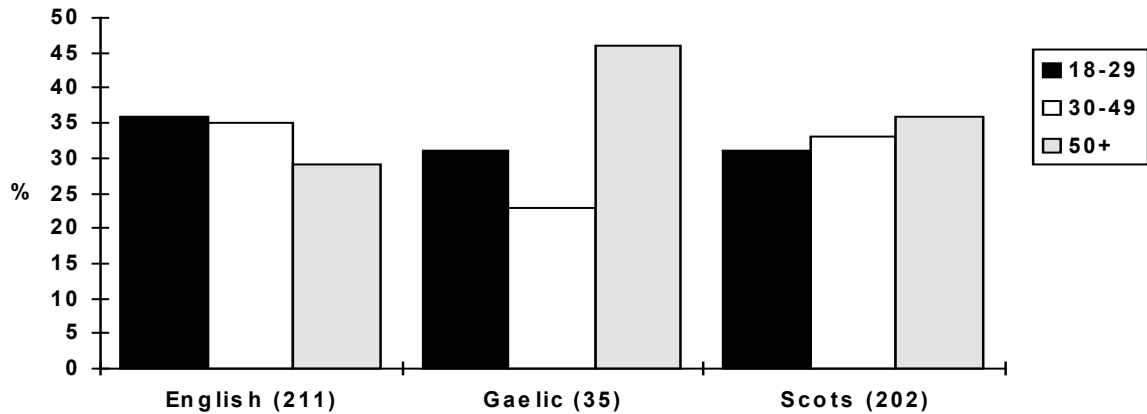
Fig. 1



The information provided by the age profiles of the communities is very informative. The Gaelic age profile shows most speakers were in the oldest age group, though the second largest component was in the youngest. It is difficult to avoid noticing the correlation’s between the gradual decline in the numbers of Scots speakers through the age groups and the almost parallel rise in the age profile of the native English speakers.

Fig. 2

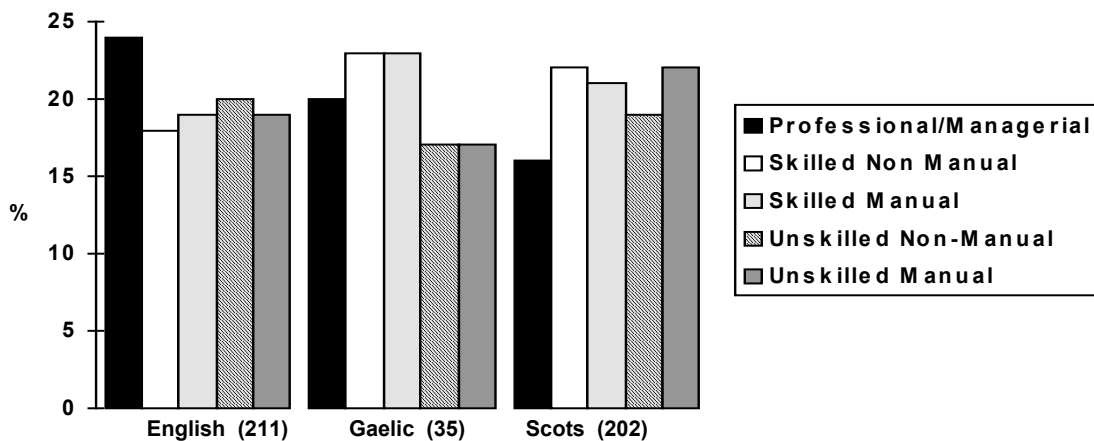
1995 L.I.P. Survey
Native Language Age Profile
 (no. of individuals concerned shown in brackets)



The social status of each linguistic grouping is informative, especially in the professional and managerial category where there are fewer Scots and Gaelic speakers and a significant native English language component. It is also interesting to note that both Scots and Gaelic speakers are strongly represented in the skilled workforce while Scots speakers form the largest component of the unskilled manual category.

Fig. 3

1995 L.I.P. Survey
Social Status by Occupation
 (numbers of native speakers is given in brackets)



In order to establish whether language is, or might be, a factor in politics, the subject was approached in a number of questions. In answer to the direct question “Does language policy contribute as a factor in your choice of candidate at elections”, only 11% (50) stated that it was. Additional questions were then asked enquiring how the voter would react to electoral candidates pursuing ‘pro’

and/or 'anti' Scots and Gaelic language policies. In answer to these less direct questions regarding language policy, 245 individuals indicated that language policy was a factor which could radically alter their candidate selection at an election, indicating that language policies have the potential to be a more significant political issue than is usually assumed. The numbers of people that indicated that they would vary their candidate selection in favour of a candidate advancing of pro-Scots or pro-Gaelic policies is significant. The numbers which were prepared to vary their candidate selection against candidates pursuing anti-Scots or anti-Gaelic policies are even more so, and particularly enlightening as to the way the Scots and Gaelic speaking communities might react to electoral candidates seeking to curb support for each others language.

Figs. 4 & 5

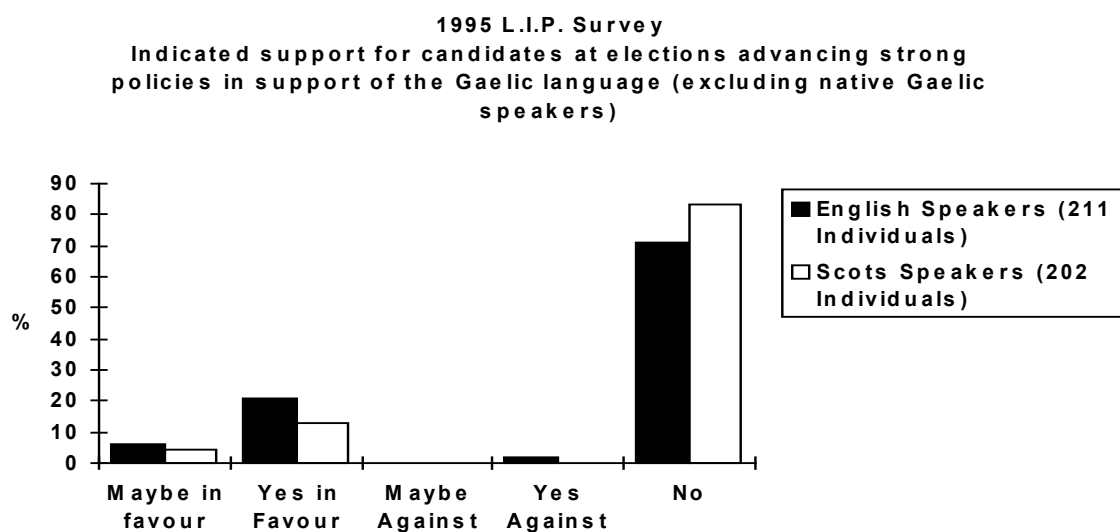
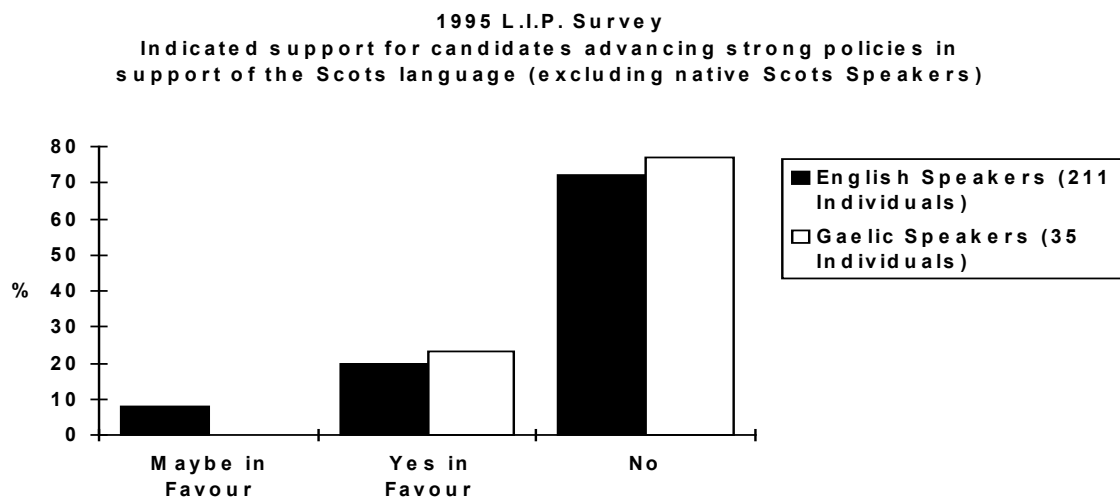


Fig. 6

1995 L.I.P. Survey
Indicated support for candidates at elections advancing strong
policies aimed at curbing support for the Scots language
(excluding native Scots speakers)

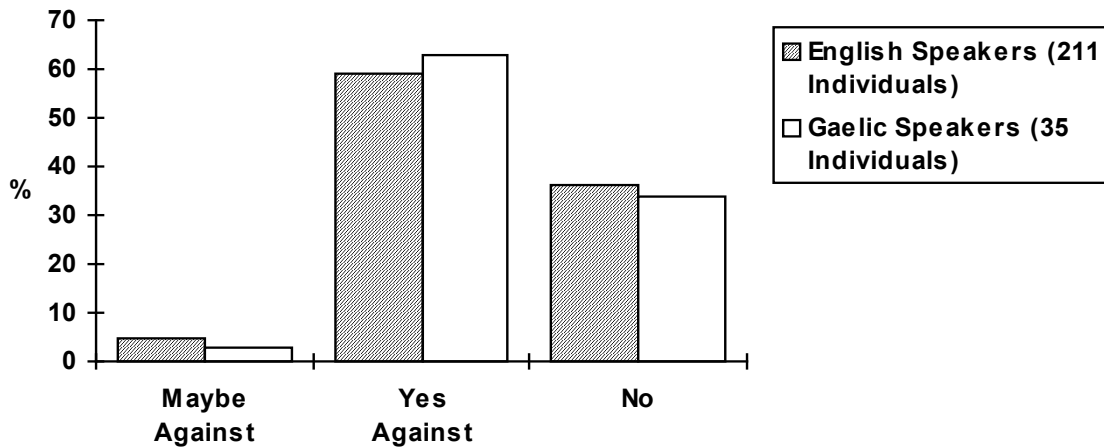
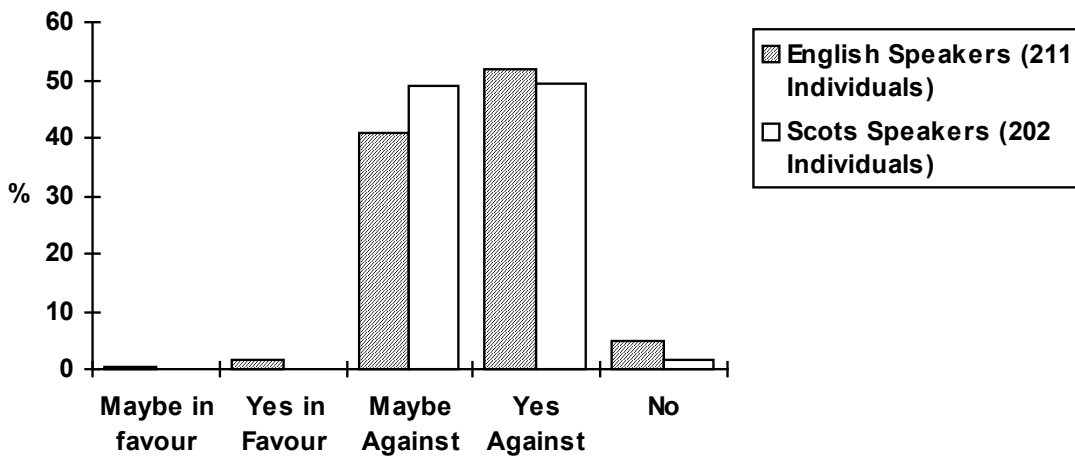


Fig. 7

1995 L.I.P. Survey
Indicated support for candidates at elections advancing strong
policies aimed at curbing support for the Gaelic language
(excluding native Gaelic speakers)



A breakdown of answers from the native English speakers showed that 20% (42) said they would vary their candidate selection in favour of a candidate advancing pro-Scots language policies while 21% (44) would do so for Gaelic. 59% (123) said that they would vary their candidate selection to

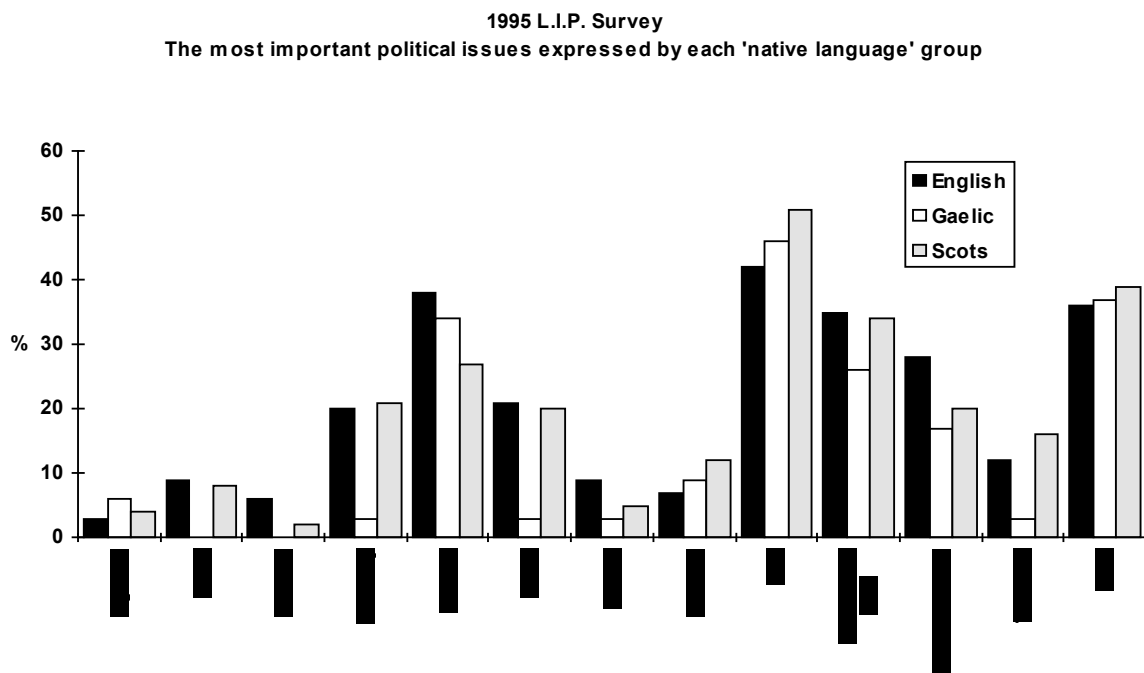
vote against a candidate pursuing anti-Scots language policies compared to 52% (110) for an anti Gaelic campaigner.

23% of native Gaelic speakers (8) indicated that they would vary their candidate selection in favour of an electoral candidate promoting pro-Scots policies while 13% of Scots speakers (27) would vary their selection to vote for a candidate advancing pro-Gaelic policies. 63% of Gaelic speakers (22) said that they would vary their candidate selection to vote against a candidate pursuing anti-Scots policies while 50% (100) native Scots speakers said they would do likewise in the case of an anti-Gaelic candidate standing for election.

Interestingly, while no native Gaelic speaker expressed an intention to vote for a candidate promoting anti-Scots policies and no native Scots speaker wishes to vote for an anti-Gaelic campaigner, 3 native English speakers said that they would vary their candidate selection in favour of an anti-Gaelic candidate. They did not indicate the same for Scots

To identify the priority political issues for the linguistic communities, the sample electorate were asked to indicate their three most important political concerns. They were not asked to give them in order, simply to name them, and 13 main areas emerged, as grouped by the author. The most important issue for every linguistic grouping was the National Health Service followed by employment. Indeed the top four issues were the same for each group, the other two issues being Scottish Home Rule and Education.

Fig. 8



Obviously the main indicators of the strength of Scots and Gaelic in each location can be highlighted by the number of individuals from each community that speak the traditional language of the

area. This information can be given in several ways, all of considerable value. If we examine the number of people that speak an older Scottish language we can get an indication of the Regions that produce the highest numbers of speakers of each language. This is more informative than looking at region of birth since somebody born in Germany might only have stayed there a few months while someone born in Scotland might well have spent their entire schooling abroad. The regions that produced the highest percentage of Scots speakers were Grampian, Aberdeen City, Fife and Shetland, all with over 90%. Unsurprisingly the lowest figures came from The Western Isles and Skye with less than 20%. These were the two regions which produced the highest numbers of Gaelic speakers.

This information can be contrasted against the numbers of Scots speakers as highlighted by their region of residence. This particular set of Data exposes the demographic movements within Scotland. We can follow the movement of Gaelic speakers to the non-Gaelic regions, Scots speakers to the Gaidhealtachd and predominantly English speaking areas while English speakers moved all over. **Fig. 9**

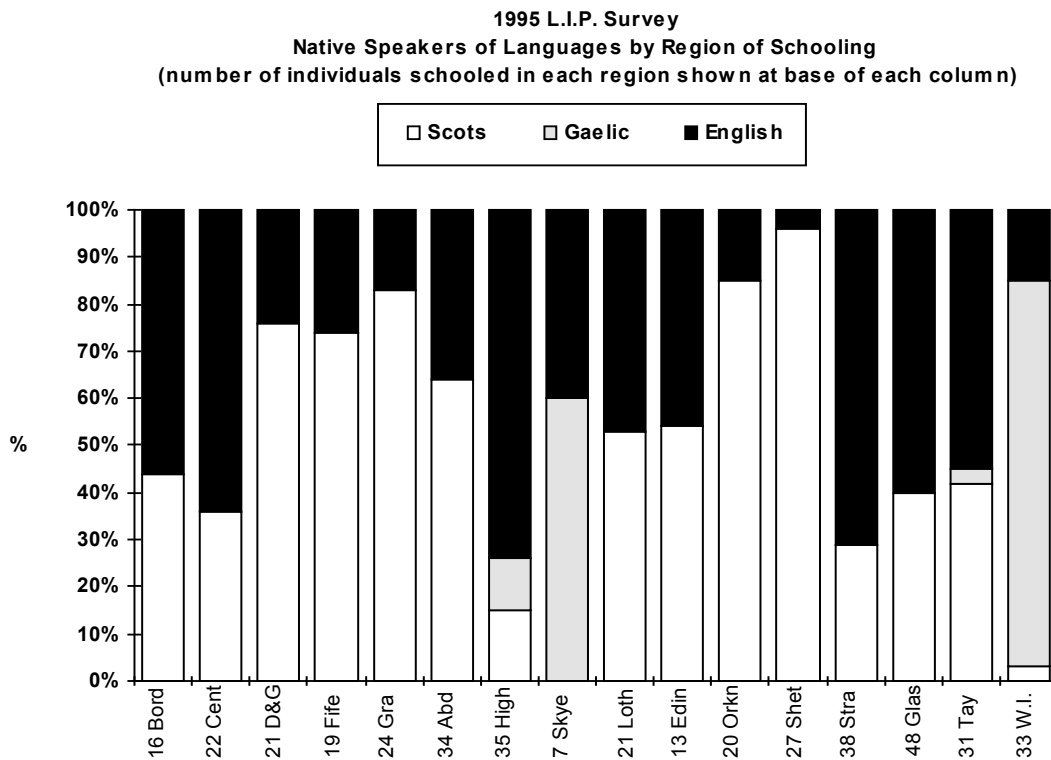
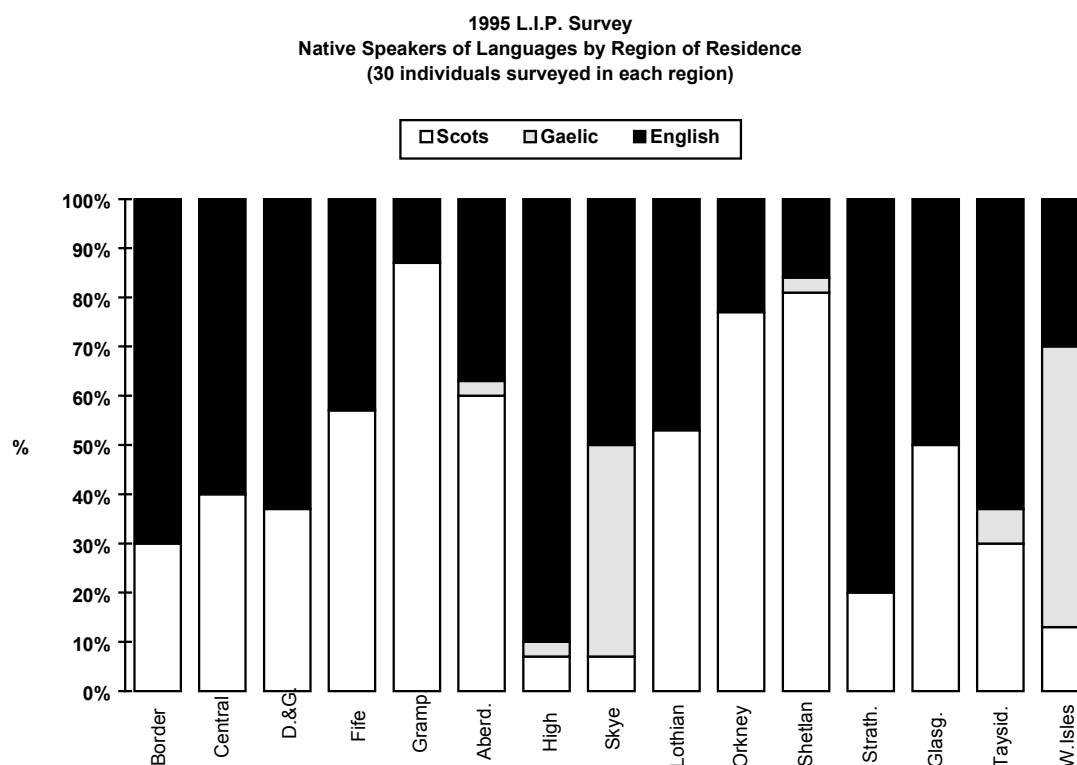


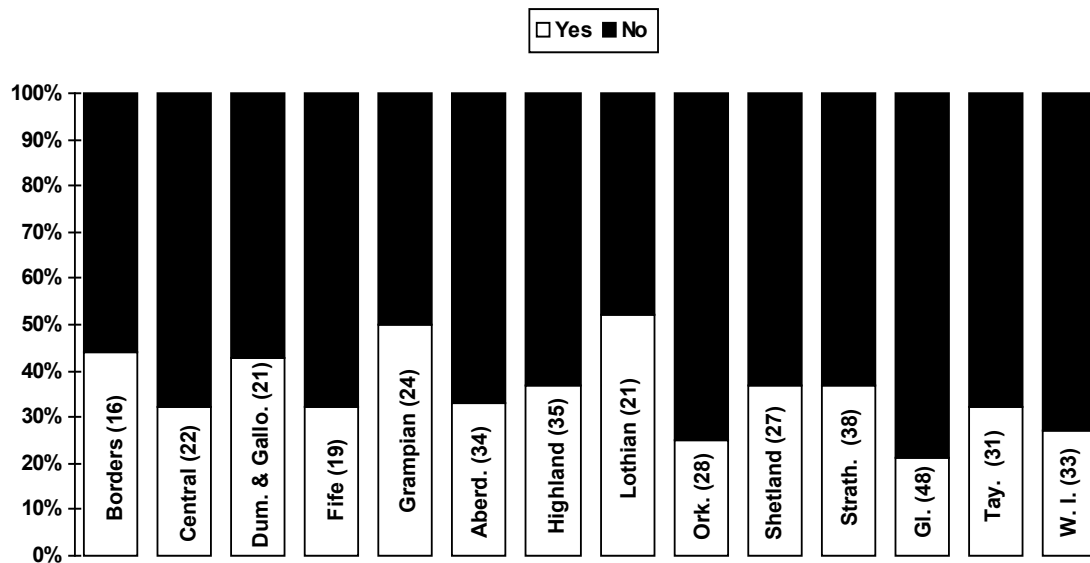
Fig.10



One factor which might be useful in explaining the strength of a language in a given area is the educational opportunities for the languages in the Region concerned. Much data in this field is available already for Gaelic. Little comparative information exists for Scots however. The L.I.P. survey asked whether people had ever studied any Scots. The results of that question showed that in Lothian and Grampian over 50% of people claimed to have studied the language. The lowest percentage of people was in Glasgow where only 21% said they had ever studied any Scots. Among some of the other points of interest raised were that nobody in the 18-29 age group in either Skye or the Western Isles had studied any Scots while over 40% of those in the older age groups in both areas had. Another interesting fact was that no-one in the 30-49 age group in the strongly Scots speaking islands of Orkney and Shetland ever studied Scots though some in the 50+ age group had and even more in the 18-29 group.

Fig. 11

1995 L.I.P. Survey
 Individuals that have studied the Scots language by Region of schooling
 (Numbers schooled in each region given in brackets)

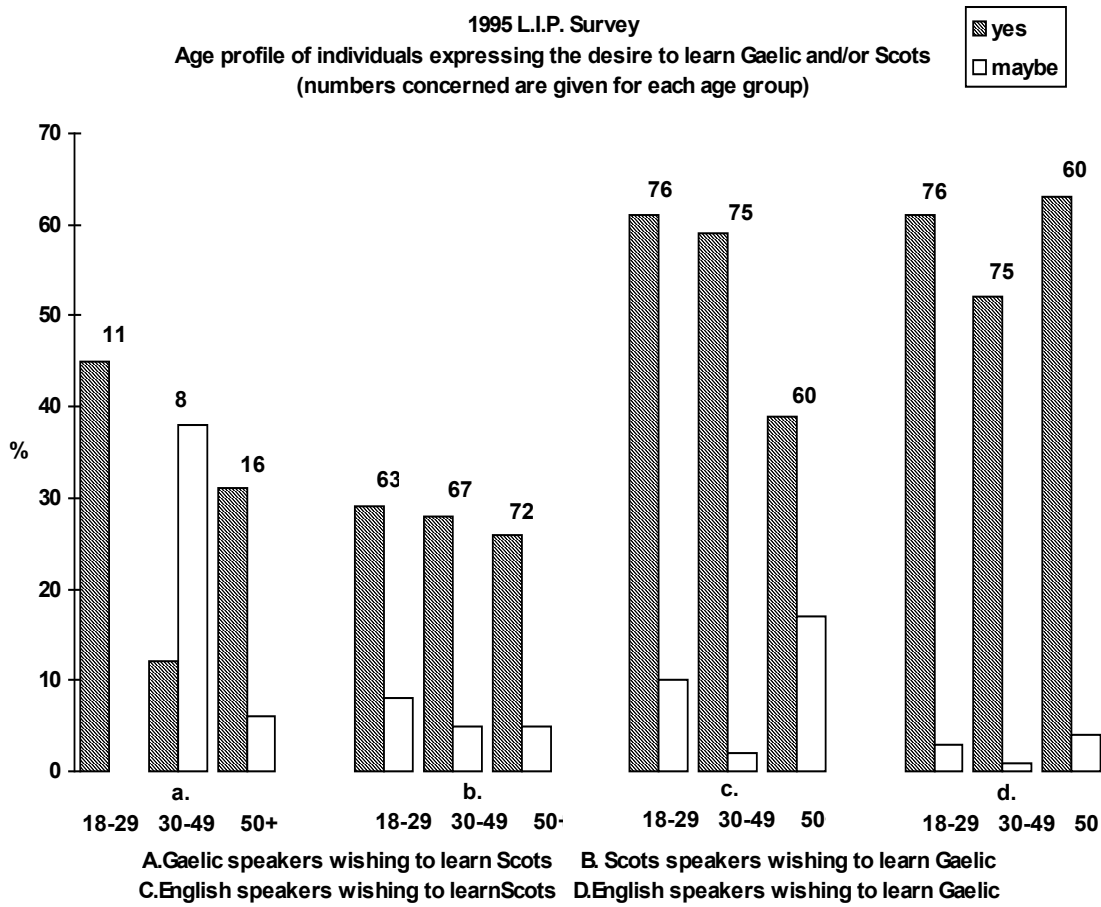


Another possible indicator of linguistic strength, or at least the importance of a language, in an area is shown where non native speakers of the traditional local language state a clear desire to learn it. Strong support was indicated in this way for the Scots language in Fife where 9 out of the 13 non-native Scots speakers wanted to learn it. In Central Region the figure was 9 out of 18 and in Tayside it was 10 out of 21. The least positive areas were Orkney, where none of the seven non-Scots speakers expressed a desire to learn the language at all, and in Strathclyde, where only 3 out of 15 non-Scots speakers were interested in learning it.

The highest desire to learn Gaelic among non-Gaelic speakers was expressed in Highland Region where 18 out of 29 people wanted to learn Gaelic while in Skye, 7 out of 17 non-Gaelic speakers claimed a similar desire. The third highest desire, perhaps surprisingly, came from the City of Aberdeen where 13 out of 30 non-Gaelic speakers said they would like to learn the language. The least responsive areas for Gaelic were Lothian, Orkney and Shetland where only 5 out of 30 non-Gaelic speaking individuals in each area expressed a desire to learn the language.

Fig. 12

1995 L.I.P. Survey
 Age profile of individuals expressing the desire to learn Gaelic and/or Scots
 (numbers concerned are given for each age group)



The age profile chart also shows that the greatest interest in learning both Scots and Gaelic comes from the native English speaking component of the community.

6. Conclusion.

The information presented in this report represents only a portion of that available from the L.I.P. Database and is in itself still incomplete since the 'under 18' population was not surveyed. What should have become clear however is the need for further research into the topic which would be greatly facilitated by a comprehensive language question in the national census. Only once that is done can the indigenous language communities of Scotland be accurately identified and the condition of their languages assessed. Until then, these statistics may encourage further questions to be raised, and if nothing else, stimulate debate.

The return of self confidence to the Gaelic language community has led to employment opportunities and economic initiatives. This has not only been advantageous to the Gaels, many non-Gaelic speakers are also employed in Gaelic media and industry. The returns to the economy will hopefully soon far exceed the grants that the Gaelic language receives. Gaelic medium education is well established and its further development is expected.

The Scots language lobby has been shown the example to follow and is actively seeking to attain parity with the status reached by Gaelic. Given the far greater number of Scots speakers and reflecting on the controversy following government funding for Gaelic, the subject must surely be raised as a major political issue in the future. Language was not a major issue at the last general election, but at that time Scotland's older languages did not have the exposure through the media and education system that they are currently cultivating. At present literature is the only medium where Scotland's three languages are granted parity of status. Gaelic and Scots are now becoming available through an increased number of media where they are striving to attain a parity of status with English. Hopefully this survey will help to dispel the divisive myth that the Scots and Gaelic speakers form barriers to the development of each others languages. The findings show that large portions of every Scottish language group would like to learn another Scottish language. The response to the survey question regarding an anti-Gaelic or anti-Scots electoral candidate also highlights that many of those that have no such interest in the other language would not tolerate a campaigner that did not respect the right to flourish of both the older Scottish languages.

Language in Scotland has traditionally been regarded simply as a cultural issue. Research indicates that cultural issues become political issues where they form an important expression of national identity. The desire to use Scotland's older languages grows within her population as the opportunities to do so increase. This will surely mean that, as awareness of them grows, linguistic questions become more 'overt' as electoral factors to all of Scotland's electorate, regardless of their own particular mother tongue.

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APPENDIX

¹A List of the questions asked on the 1995 L.I.P. Survey:

1. Gender?
2. Occupation?
3. Age?
4. Place of Birth?
5. Place of Schooling?
6. Place of Residence?
7. What do you consider your native language? (Answers such as Doric, Shetlandic or Glaswegian will be taken to mean that dialect of Scots and not a dialect of English unless otherwise stated.)
8. Can you speak Scots?
9. Can you speak Gaelic?
10. Have you ever studied Scots?
11. Have you ever studied Gaelic?
12. Would you like to learn Scots?
13. Would you like to learn Gaelic?
14. Do you intend to vote at the next Local, National and European elections?
15. Have you decided yet which party you are likely to support?
16. Is your choice dependent on the kind of election?
17. Is language policy a factor in your choice of candidate?
18. What are the 3 most important political issues to you?
19. Do you know the language policies of the political parties in Scotland?
20. Would your candidate selection vary because a political party advanced policies supporting the Scots language, and if so would it be in favour or against that party?
21. As above but in relation to Gaelic
22. Would your candidate selection vary because a political party advanced policies aimed at curbing support for the Scots language, and if so would it be in favour or against that party?
23. As above but in relation to Gaelic.
24. Which political party do you believe is most supportive of a) Scots? and b) Gaelic?
25. Which political party do you believe is least supportive of a) Scots? and b) Gaelic?.