

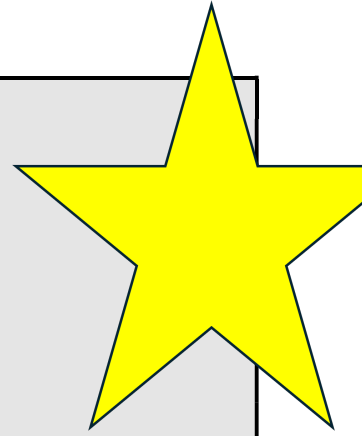
Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Studies¹

Vol. 06: *Na Hearadh* (Harris)

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3rd Edition

June 2024



Executive Summary

This publication is part of a series dealing with local communities which were predominantly Gaelic speaking at the end of the 19th century. Based mainly (but not exclusively) on local population census information the reports strive to examine the state of the language through the ages from 1881 until today. The most relevant information is gathered comprehensively for the smallest geographical unit possible and provided area by area – a very useful reference for people with interest in their own community. Furthermore, the impact of recent developments in education (namely teaching in Gaelic medium and Gaelic as a second language) is analysed for primary school catchments.

Volume 6 is concerned with the southern part of the largest island of the Western Isles. Harris and its neighbouring island of Scalpay are traditionally considered as major strongholds of Gaelic in Scotland. This fact was underlined by impressively high percentages of Gaelic speakers in census counts right until 1981. However, the last three census dates saw a considerable weakening of the language community especially in the pre-school population. Currently language maintenance based solely on intergenerational transmission is not completely assured on Harris as in many other rural parts of the Outer Hebrides. Only in a few locations like the island of Scalpay the language remains remarkably strong in contrast to the population centres of Tarbert and Leverburgh. But still a very high proportion of islanders could at least understand spoken Gaelic in 2022.

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Foreword to the First Edition

Since 1881 every decennial population census in Scotland included a question about the “Gaelic-speaking” population. Despite some difficulty in interpreting this data (what really means to tick a box being able to speak Gaelic) this long-term data set holds a wealth of sociological and historical information. The series highlights the circumstances in which people speaking this Celtic language have lived and still live today. In most cases this data has been used only either for very problem-specific socio-linguistic studies or they were the basis of regional or Scotland wide analysis. However, it proved very difficult for people who were interested in their own local area to have a comprehensive overview of the number and distribution of Gaelic-speaking people right on their doorstep. This series is planned to cover all regions of Scotland where Scottish Gaelic (*A’Ghàidhlig* to be correct in its own words) was still spoken by a substantial part of the population at the start of the 20th century. Accordingly, besides the main “Highland counties” of Sutherland, Ross & Cromarty, Inverness and Argyll the fringe areas of Bute (including the Isle of Arran), western Caithness, Nairn, North Dunbartonshire and more particularly Highland Perthshire will be covered. It is hoped that these small reports will be of interest not only to science people but also to those who have to cope with opinions like “Gaelic was never spoken here” in their own local community.

Foreword to the Second Edition

Almost two years have passed since the publication of the first volume of this series. In the meantime, a lot of “new” material has surfaced which merits to be publicised to a wider audience. In addition, two years are sometimes a very long time when looking at the actual state of a dynamic process: the re-animation of Scottish Gaelic in a number of places. Therefore, a second edition of the series is now being elaborated. Hopefully it will prove to be as popular as its predecessor.

Foreword to the Extended Second Edition

I am very glad to present an extended and actualized edition of the *Gàidhlig* Local Studies after more than two decades since the first publication. Of course, new data and information had been waiting to be incorporated in this compendium of language development in Scotland. Maybe rather unexpectedly, many additional figures from the past became available, too – especially from the 1881, 1911 and 1981 censuses. As always, I wish happy reading – a few surprises wait to be discovered!!!!

Foreword to the Third Edition

Perhaps fittingly the third edition of this popular series is published right after the 2022 census data are available with some silver lining on the horizon for *Gàidhlig*. We have strived to add new figures and tables to the reports, making them even more attractive and informative. Enjoy!!!

Important note: Although this text is written in the modern lingua franca for the purpose of maximum readership the object has to take its rightful place. Therefore, *Gàidhlig* placenames or expressions are preferred, and the so-called English version is mentioned in brackets where appropriate. For those unfamiliar with the language: Every Gaelic expression is written in *italics* and the other place names are mainly examples of anglicisation efforts of early cartographers.



Acknowledgements

The author is indebted to many organisations which have been very kind in providing information about the subject. I am very grateful for this active encouragement. Very special thanks go of course to the General Register Office for Scotland for the opportunity to use the census material in this study. The team at the Demographic Dissemination Branch has been very supportive. Crown Copyright on the census data is acknowledged gratefully. Very worthwhile was also the relentless assistance of Mrs. Melissa Barlow of the University of Texas and Mrs. Liz Mackie of the University of Aberdeen who both proved to be very successful in unearthing rare material of more than a century ago. And last but not least thank is also due to the many individuals with whom I spent endless hours of discussion witnessing true Highland hospitality. *Tapadh leibh a h-uile duine!*

Wedel, *An Dàmhar* 2003
Hamburg, *An t-Sultain* 2005
Hamburg, *An t-Og-mhios* 2024

Kurt C. Duwe



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1 Introduction

Geographically it is by far the largest island of the Outer Hebrides, but it never really had a name of its own. The northern part is called *Leòdhas* (Lewis) and is separated from its southern neighbour *Na Hearadh* (Harris) by vast tracks of hill and moorland. For centuries this natural barrier was an effective hindrance to contacts between these communities, but it led also to the development of two very distinct dialects of *Gàidhlig*. In addition, both parts of the island were separated by the administrative county boundary between Inverness-shire and Ross & Cromarty. This volume of the study is concerned with the less populated part of the island: *Na Hearadh* with its well-known ferry port of *An Tairbeart* (Tarbert). *Leòdhas* with the “island capital” of *Steòrnabhagh* (Stornoway) is dealt with in five separate volumes of this series.

The parish of *Na Hearadh* comprised quite a few adjacent islands with residential populations well into the 20th century. The most famous examples of course were the islanders of far away *Hiort* (St. Kilda) who were evacuated at last in the 1930s. The thriving fishing community of *Scalpaigh* (Scalpay) is today connected to the main island by a causeway and has thereby secured an economic lifeline. The other smaller islands were all deserted decades ago, notably *Scarp* and *Tarasaigh* (Taransay). Although traditionally part of the civil parish of *Na Hearadh* the other inhabited island *Beàrnaraigh* (Berneray) is dealt with in vol. 5 of this series describing the situation in *Uibhist a Tuath* (North Uist).

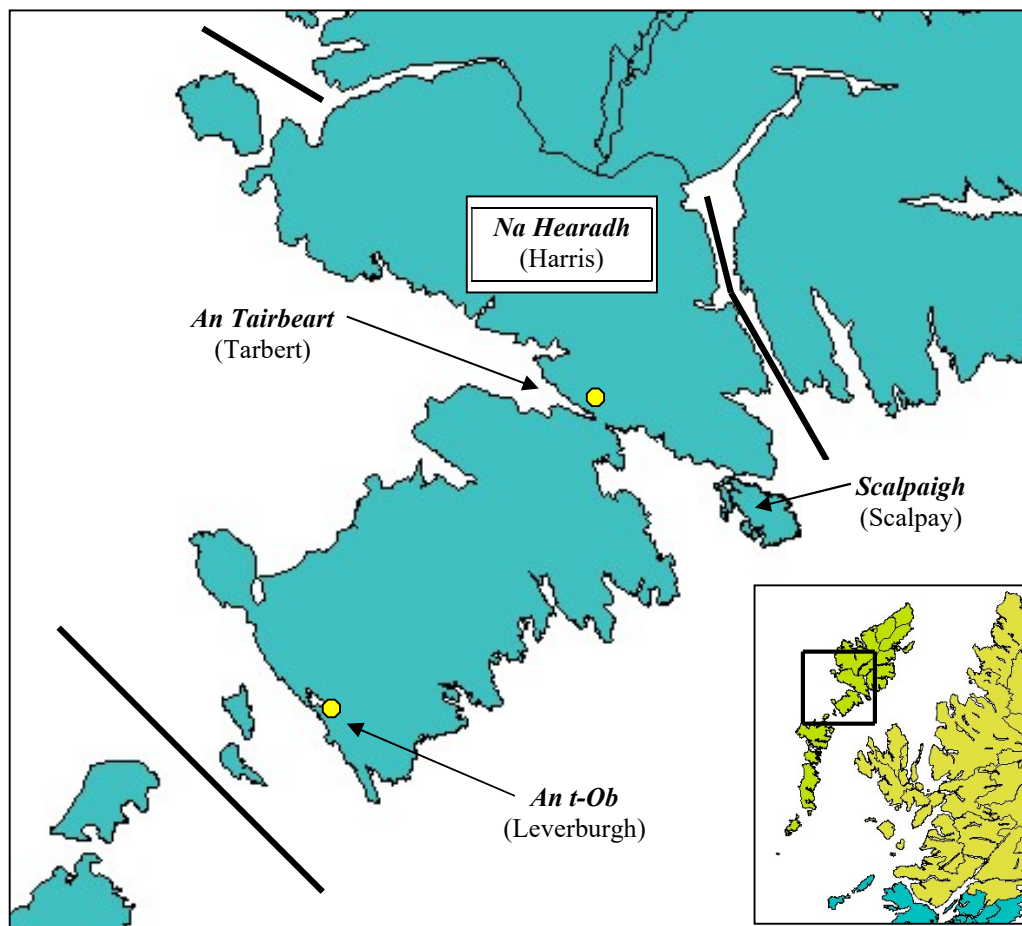
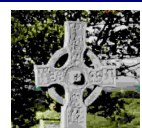


Fig. 1: Overview map of area under investigation²

² Digital boundaries courtesy of Ordnance Survey as part of the Geography Products provided by GROS.



The majority of the approximately 2,000 inhabitants are Protestants. This puts its mark on everyday life even today although the once very strictly obeyed Sunday is not as quiet as it used to be. *Gàidhlig* was used in these congregations very extensively as everyday church language and this fact helped to keep it in a central position as vernacular in the community in the past.

Although *Na Hearadh* has lent its name to the famous Harris Tweed the occupation of weaving is nowadays not a very significant economic factor anymore. Most inhabitants now live in the two major settlements *An Tairbeart* (Tarbert) and *An t-Ob* (Leverburgh) and on the island of *Scalpaigh*. The more rural parts have especially suffered from depopulation. Overall, the number of inhabitants now is far less than half of the figure in 1881 with more than 4,800 islanders. With this background in mind the following short chapters investigate the historical development of the use of *Gàidhlig* in the area from the end of the 19th century till today – mainly highlighted by references to and analysis of population census results in local detail. Information on additionally available studies of language use and especially educational provision to study *Gàidhlig* (or even being educated through the medium of the language) is used where considered as appropriate.

2 The Historical Background

On *Na Hearadh* like the other Hebridean islands *Gàidhlig* has been the dominant community language for centuries. The language was so much an integral part of island society that the *New Statistical Account of Scotland* (1831-45) stated rather simplistic under the respective heading: “*Language. – The Gaelic language is universally spoken.*”

In fig. 2 the development of *Gàidhlig*-speaking intensity is shown for *Na Hearadh* and its more southerly neighbour *Uibhist a Tuath* (North Uist). In both areas a considerable decrease since 1981 can clearly be depicted in this illustration. Within the following sections the temporal evolution of language incidence is described in more detail with special emphasis of course on decadal census results.

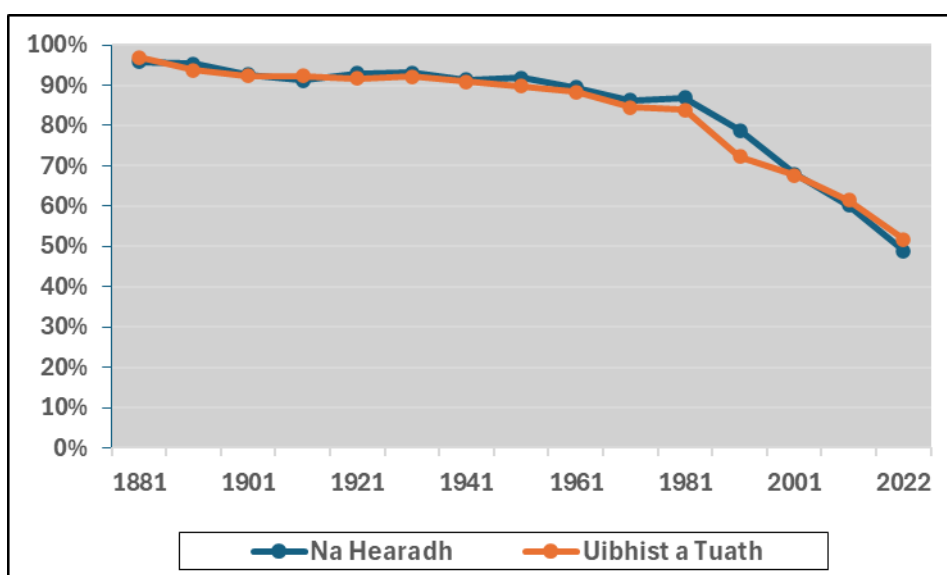


Fig. 2: *Gàidhlig*-speakers (3 years and over) as percentage of total population between 1881 and 2022 – civil parishes of *Na Hearadh* (Harris) and neighbouring *Uibhist a Tuath* (North Uist)³

³ There was no census taken in 1941 because of World War II – values are therefore interpolated between 1931 and 1951.



2.1 From Victorian times until the Second World War (Census 1881-1931)

Generally, Gàidhlig remained almost universally spoken on *Na Hearadh* in this period (see table 1). The first census enumeration exercises on “Gaelic-speakers” in 1881 and 1891 saw practically none of the locally born population unable to speak the language. Even one half of the population spoke no English according to the census 1891. At pre-school age most children in the Inverness-shire part of the Hebrides were returned as speaking no English at all even until 1931 (table 11) when the last census was taken before the war. Monolingual school education in English, however, effectively reduced overall the number of people who spoke only Gàidhlig (see fig. 3).

During the whole period Gàidhlig-speaking intensity was very high on the island, more to the contrary as in 1931 even the figures of 1901 were exceeded. Special strongholds of Gàidhlig were of course the remoter islands like *Scalpaigh* (Scalpay), *An Scarp*, *Hiort* (St. Kilda) and *Tarasaigh* (Taransay). All except *Scalpaigh* were sooner or later deserted by their inhabitants as a result of the harsh economic and of course natural climate.

<i>Na Hearadh</i>						
Subject \ Census	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931
Gàidhlig-speakers (3 years +)	4,616	4,795	4,879	4,970	4,901	4,160
% of total population	95.8 %	95.4 %	92.6 %	91.2 %	92.9 %	93.1 %

Table 1: Number of Gàidhlig-speakers (aged 3 years and over) in *Na Hearadh* (Harris) and percentage of total population speaking Gàidhlig during 1881-1931

Census information generally is very detailed for the years 1881, 1891 and 1901. Table 2 provides an overview of the individual strength of the language in different parts of the parish (see also tables 8 and 9 in the annex providing details of smaller islands and electoral areas). In all districts Gàidhlig speakers returned percentages well above the 90 % mark. Because visitors and very young children (aged below 3 years) were included in the population base it can easily be implied that almost all local people used the Celtic language. In some more remote townships Gàidhlig monolinguals even had a handsome majority. This was not only true in isolated places like the island of *Hiort* (St. Kilda) but also in coastal hamlets such as *Ceann Dibig* (Kendibig) and *Drinisiadair* (Drinishader). There was almost no change in the strength of the language between 1881 and 1901.

A closer look at the original census forms of 1891⁴ reveals that even the high figures in the census reports were essentially underestimates of the real strength of Gàidhlig. For example, looking at the results of the enumeration district of *Caolas Stocanais & Leac a'Li* (Kyles Stockinish & Leckalee) the difference is obvious. Whereas the official census returns reported 232 persons speaking Gàidhlig (93.2 % of the total population) the figures of the usually resident population (aged three years or over) reveal a share of 96.1 % (Duwe, 2006). Just a handful of residents (9 individuals) had no “G” (Gaelic only) or “G&E” (Gaelic and English speaking) marks on their registration sheets. These persons were the members of just two prominent households. “*The certified schoolmaster originated from Ayrshire and apparently looked back to a long service in Aberdeenshire because his children were born in this Lowland area. The second family “with no Gaelic” was headed by a widowed house carpenter whose Dunbartonshire-born children also claimed to be unable to speak the language of their neighbours*” (Duwe, 2006). All other households were entirely Gàidhlig-speaking with an equal share of monolingual and bilingual persons. Very pronounced, however, was the difference between women and men. Whereas most women did not speak English, most men were reported as speaking also the official language.

⁴ After a period of 100 years information provided on the original census forms is publicly available. At the time of writing this is already the case for census returns of 1881, 1891 and 1901.



Number of persons and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers in districts of Na Hearadh – 1881 - 1911							
Area ⁵	All persons speaking Gàidhlig ⁶				Monolingual share of all Gàidhlig-speakers ⁷		
	1881	1891	1901	1911	1891	1901	1911
<i>Beàrnaraigh & Pabaigh</i> (Berneraigh & Pabbay)	448 98.7 %	484 96.6 %	484 91.8 %	461 91.3 %	291 60.1 %	364 75.2 %	166 36.0 %
<i>Easaigh & Ceileagraigh</i> (Ensay & Killegray)	12 100 %	19 100 %	14 100 %	9 100 %	7 36.8 %	4 28.6 %	1 11.1 %
<i>An t-Ob, Srannda & Roghadal</i> (Leverburgh, Strond & Rodel)	437 95.0 %	466 97.1 %	420 95.9 %	338 94.7 %	138 29.6 %	143 34.0 %	91 26.9 %
<i>Cuidhtinis & Aird Mhighe</i> (Cuidinish & Ardvey)	349 97.5 %	370 95.6 %	365 91.7 %	333 90.2 %	153 41.4 %	232 63.6 %	127 38.1 %
<i>Geocrab & Manais</i> (Geocrab & Manish)	375 97.9 %	337 95.7 %	388 94.2 %	406 92.5 %	173 51.3 %	239 58.0 %	256 63.1 %
<i>Taobh Tuath, Sgarasta & Na Buirgh</i> (Northton, Scarista & Borve)	170 99.4 %	165 94.8 %	136 95.8 %	353 90.3 %	78 47.3 %	47 34.6 %	100 28.3 %
<i>Tarasaigh</i> (Taransay)	55 100 %	56 100 %	65 90.3 %	70 92.1 %	23 41.1 %	35 53.8 %	8 11.4 %
<i>Scalpaigh & Sgeotasaigh</i> (Scalpay & Scotasay)	498 92.2 %	496 92.7 %	553 91.9 %	557 91.5 %	241 48.6 %	245 44.3 %	221 39.7 %
<i>Caolas Stocanais & Leac a' Li</i> (Kyles Stockinish & Leckalie)	225 99.6 %	232 93.2 %	236 92.5 %	245 89.4 %	116 50.0 %	117 49.6 %	131 53.5 %
<i>Scadabhagh & Greosabhagh</i> (Scadabay & Grosebay)	367 100 %	301 95.6 %	275 77.9 %	352 91.9 %	168 55.8 %	121 44.0 %	107 30.4 %
<i>Drinisiadair, Miabhaig & Plocropol</i> (Drinishader, Meavag & Plocrapool)	271 98.5 %	219 97.3 %	209 91.7 %	179 96.8 %	172 78.5 %	52 24.9 %	49 27.4 %
<i>Ceann Dibig & Direcleit</i> (Kendibig & Diraclett)	66 98.5 %	129 98.5 %	120 96.8 %	157 94.0 %	120 93.0 %	26 21.7 %	26 16.6 %
<i>An Tairbeart & Aird Asaig</i> (Tarbert & Ardhasaig)	414 93.9 %	426 94.9 %	478 89.3 %	457 87.5 %	150 35.2 %	106 22.2 %	134 29.3 %
<i>Urgha & Caolas Scalpaigh</i> (Urgha & Kyles Scalpay)	406 97.8 %	422 96.8 %	455 92.5 %	450 92.6 %	203 48.1 %	86 18.9 %	103 22.9 %
<i>Aird a' Mhulaidh, Màraig & Reinigeadal</i> (Ardvourlie, Maruig & Rhenigidale)	184 91.5 %	260 96.3 %	218 92.4 %	249 92.6 %	123 47.3 %	88 40.4 %	111 44.6 %
<i>Abhainn Suidhe & Bun Abhainn Eadarra</i> (Amhuinnsuidhe & Bunavoneadar)	58 87.9 %	179 97.3 %	175 95.1 %	140 92.1 %	86 48.0 %	129 70.1 %	25 17.9 %
<i>An Scarp</i> (Scarp)	213 100 %	132 92.3 %	139 86.9 %	140 90.9 %	52 39.4 %	71 51.1 %	44 31.4 %
<i>Hiort</i> (St. Kilda)	77 100 %	71 100 %	73 94.8 %	76 95.0 %	56 78.9 %	41 56.2 %	25 32.9 %

Table 2: Number of persons speaking Gàidhlig and all Gàidhlig-speakers as share of population in Na Hearadh and nearby islands according to local census data from 1881 to 1911

⁵ Enumeration division or island.

⁶ Percentages of Gàidhlig-speakers above 50 % are marked by bold figures.

⁷ Percentages of monolingual Gàidhlig-speakers above 10 % are marked by bold figures.



The status of *Gàidhlig* in education on *Na Hearadh* did not differ from the one of the other Inverness-shire islands (see volumes 2, 3 and 5 for details). Therefore, specific comments are not necessary here; the language was simply ignored or even discouraged in primary schools.

Right through to the eve of the Second World War *Gàidhlig* remained a strong community language in all places of *Na Hearadh* (table 2) although the number of speakers declined with the general trend of depopulation in the Outer Hebrides at the time. The famous linguist Carl Hj. Borgstrøm stayed for three weeks in *Stocanais* (Stockinish) to study the local dialect during November and December 1937. He remarked: “...even in the smaller towns like *Tarbert*, Gaelic is still the language of everyday use, though some persons have the habit of changing frequently from Gaelic into English and back again.” (Borgstrøm ,1940). Linguistically the *Gàidhlig* spoken on *Na Hearadh* was considered to belong to the southern dialect of the Outer Hebrides and to differ significantly from the language of *Leòdhas* (Lewis).

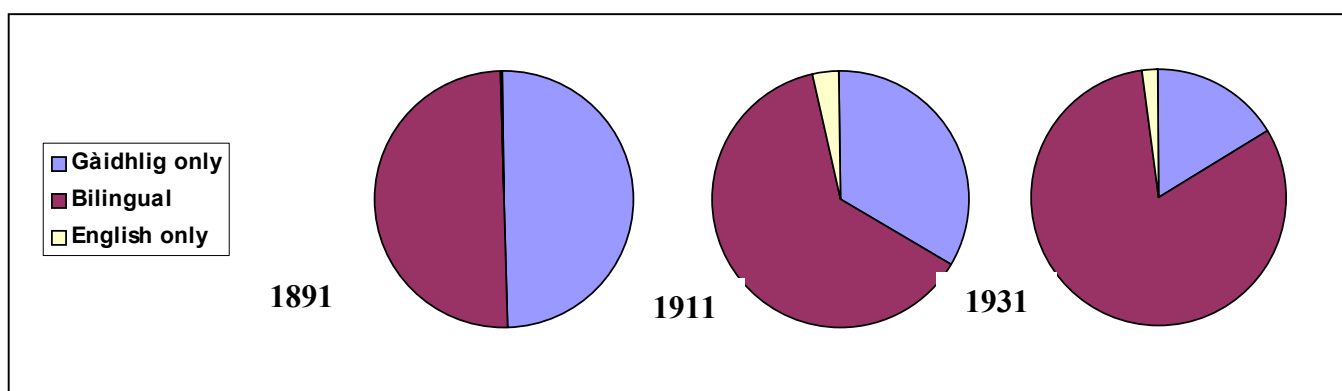


Fig. 3: Share of population speaking *Gàidhlig* and/or English in the study area according to census results in 1891, 1911 and 1931

2.2 More Recent Developments (Census 1951–2022)

Many of the islanders left *Na Hearadh* after the Second World War causing a severe reduction of the population through the decades. The ability of speaking *Gàidhlig*, however, remained very strong until 1981 (see table 3). All County Council Electoral Divisions (CCED) boasted more than 90 % of the population speaking *Gàidhlig* (table 11). There was even an under-estimation of *Gàidhlig*-speaking intensity in the census because the military personnel on *Hiort* (St. Kilda) was counted as part of the population of *Na Hearadh* (*Deas*) and this diluted the intensity artificially.

<i>Na Hearadh</i>								
Subject \ Census	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2022
<i>Gàidhlig</i> -speakers (3+)	3,666	2,940	2,485	2,282	1,861	1,447	1,212	945
Percentage of total population	91.9 %	89.5 %	86.9 %	86.9 %	78.8 %	68.2 %	60.5%	48.9%

Table 3: Number of *Gàidhlig*-speakers (aged 3 years and over) in *Na Hearadh* (Harris) and percentage of total population speaking *Gàidhlig* during 1951-2022

In the *Gàidhlig*-speaking schoolchildren report (Scottish Council for Research in Education, 1961) most children lived in *Gàidhlig*-speaking homes and could then be considered as “mother tongue”-speakers. 358 of 380 primary school pupils were found to be first language speakers in 1957. In the first two primary stages of P1 and P2 in total 106 of 110 children understood *Gàidhlig*. The Inverness-shire Educa-



tion Scheme started in 1960 (see Vol. 03 of this series) and probably had positive effects especially for those children who came to school without knowing any Gàidhlig. Within the coming years the effect of increased mobility of the population with the influx of more and more monolingual English speakers and the still widespread low self-esteem of Gàidhlig speakers had its effect also on the school population.

A comparable study by Mackinnon (1977) found only 190 of 286 primary school children (66.4 %) speaking Gàidhlig as first language in the 1972/1973 school year. This reduction then was mainly caused by the especially low figures (52.1 %) for first language speakers in *An Tairbeart*, whereas in the remaining rural schools the percentages still was very high at 86.9 %. Mackinnon concluded: “Fifteen years have considerably weakened the incidence of Gaelic as a mother tongue amongst Harris primary school children, but this is far less marked in rural areas. ... It would seem that there are indications that the deliberate choice of English as a home language amongst the non-crofting ‘working’ or ‘lower’ class may be made as the result of a belief that Gaelic may ‘hold back’ the children in terms of their life chances. As this phenomenon is most pronounced in Tarbert, the principal commercial centre of the Isle of Harris, it can be seen that taken together with the centralisation of educational facilities and the concomitant bussing and mixing of the school children there is a reinforcement of the pressures causing Gaelic to be shifted out of such domains of usage as communication with age-peers and recreational facilities.” These circumstances did not differ very much in *Na Hearadh* from those in other parts of the *Gaidhealtachd* at that time. Many Gàidhlig speakers considered the language as something second rate and useless outside their own homes. The author himself met a very nice landlady on the island in the 1970s who “could only laugh at the very thought of bilingual street signs in Tarbert.”

The cracks in the language front were slowly getting thicker but were not becoming apparent in the census of 1981. Language shift was occurring more between Gàidhlig as a first (or home) language or second language. An additional positive impact on the educational side was provided by the success of the bilingual project (Murray & Morrison, 1984) which is shown in figure 4 where at early primary school age pupils learned to read and write the language (see also Vol. 02 of this series). All primary schools except *An Tairbeart* and the tiny school at *Reinigeadail* were involved.

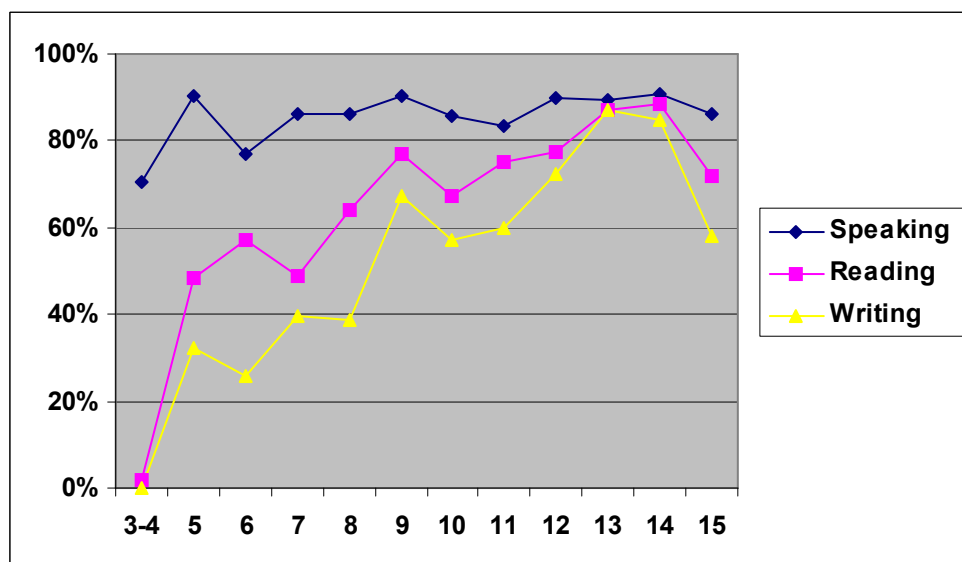


Fig. 4: Percentage of children able to speak, read or write Gàidhlig in different age groups in 1981 – *Na Hearadh* (Harris)



Between 1981 and 1991 a considerable reduction occurred in the Gàidhlig-speaking intensity in all groups (see fig. 5). The retreat of the language was most obvious of course around *An Tairbeart* whereas *Scalpaigh* remained as staunchly Gàidhlig as ever (table 13). During the following years the “Gaelic renaissance”, however, was at last also reaching *Na Hearadh* and enthusiasm amongst parents for Gàidhlig medium spread. *Cròileagan* were established on *Scalpaigh*, in *An t-Ob* and *An Tairbeart*. Two Gàidhlig medium units were opened in *An Tairbeart* (1991) and *An t-Ob* (1992) with *sradagan* groups at both locations. But despite all this another severe decrease in the Gàidhlig-speaking pre-school population was experienced in 2001.

The educational efforts were not sufficient to turn the tide and increase the number of fluent speakers in young age groups considerably. The uptake of Gàidhlig-medium education in the two larger primary schools was still comparatively low and comprised less than 20 % of the total intake (see fig. 7). This state may have been improved by increasing the number of children attending the existing *cròileagan* and by a far higher profile of the language in public life. In 2003/2004 for example 36 children at the age 3 or 4 were enrolled at the Gàidhlig-medium day nurseries in *Scalpaigh*, *An Tairbeart* and *An t-Ob*. According to public consultations for a Language Management Plan of the Outer Hebrides in 2005 “of the 16 pupils in *Seilibost School*, only 5 have Gaelic. Of the 24 pupils in *Scalpay School*, 10 are fluent speakers.” Perhaps not a heartening statement but at least there was still light at the end of the tunnel!

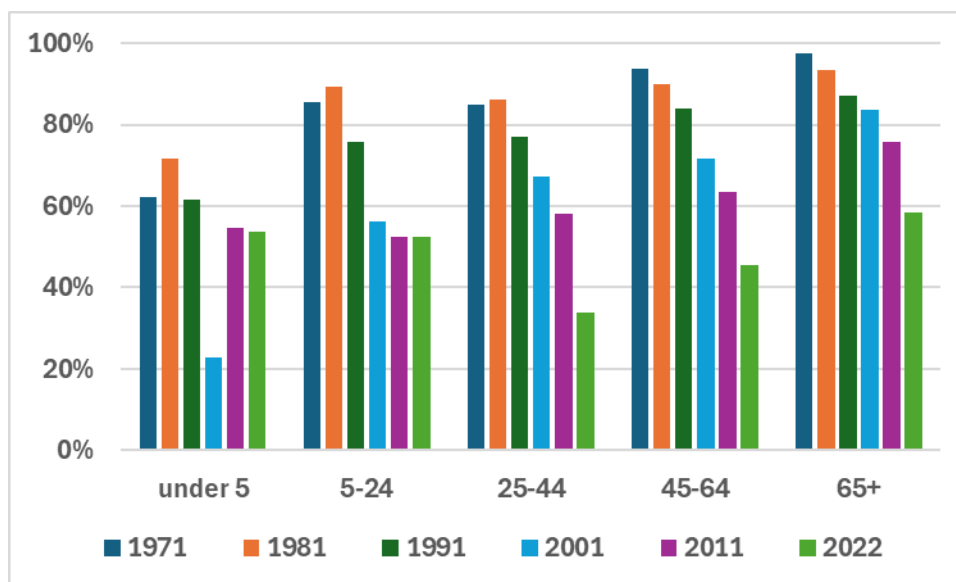
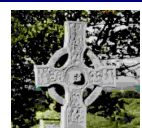


Fig. 5: Percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers in different age groups between 1971 and 2022 – Area of *Na Hearadh* (Harris)⁸

2011 saw generally a further decrease of Gàidhlig speaking on *Na Hearadh* (table 3). This was especially so in the southern portion of the island around *An t-Ob* (Leverburgh). The total population remained almost the same since 2001. 1.685 inhabitants were born in Scotland (82.0 %) compared with 1.865 (88.0 %) ten years before. Accordingly, the percentage of Gàidhlig speakers based on the total population may be an underestimate when thinking of a “local” community.

Unfortunately, the local data about the age structure of the language community were not as detailed in 2011 or 2022 as in previous censuses. In contrast to the previously used small output areas, from 2011 onwards the somewhat larger data zones were used as smallest geographical area for age distribution

⁸ Under 5: Gàidhlig abilities in the age group 3-4 until 1991, in 2001 in all age groups 0-4.



analysis. Accordingly, a direct comparison with 2001 data is not always possible. However, the 2022 figures of *Gàidhlig* knowledge for the 3-15 age group and the total population are provided in table 4 for local selected data zones. The intergenerational viability of these selected census data zones shows far more favourable conditions around *An Tairbeart* and *Scalpaigh* (table 15).

A new feature in the 2011 census was a question about the language (other than English) used at home. This saw in this area roughly 75 % of *Gàidhlig* speakers living in households where the language was used. This information is also provided in table 4, too. Unfortunately, this question was not included in the 2022 census form.

Census Data Zone	Na Hearadh					Gàidhlig as home language (% of speakers) Census 2011
	Knowledge of Gàidhlig Census 2022				Difference (Language viability indicator)	
	Young age (3-15)		All ages			
An t-Ob & Losgaintir (Leverburgh & Luskentyre)	47	62.7%	481	58.9%	+ 3.8 %	84.5 %
An Tairbeart & Scalpaigh (Tarbert & Scalpay)	90	73.2%	623	63.6%	+ 9.6 %	80.3 %
<i>In comparison:</i> Na h- Eileanan an Iar (Western Isles)	57.2 %		57.2 %		+ 0.0 %	76.8 %

Table 4: Intergenerational viability in 2022 and Gàidhlig as home language in 2011 for selected census data zones in comparison with the whole Na h-Eileanan an Iar (Western Isles)

2.3 Development of literacy in Gàidhlig between 1971 and 2022

Information on literacy became available from 1971 onwards: Census questions were introduced on the ability to read or write *Gàidhlig* (see tables 5 and 6 below). Generally, literacy in the language on *Na Hearadh* was higher than in pre-dominantly Catholic areas of the Outer Hebrides. Reading or writing abilities were comparable to those achieved on *Uibhist a Tuath* (North Uist), *Leòdhas* (Lewis) and the northern parts of *An t-Eilean Sgitheanach* (Isle of Skye). This high literacy was attained in all age groups (see figure 6). The only significant improvements between 1971 and 2001 could and were achieved in primary school age from about 50 % to almost 80 % of pupils being able to read the language.

	Number and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers with ability to read Gàidhlig					
	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2022
Na Hearadh (Harris)	2,085 84.8 %	1,887 87.1 %	1,436 82.7 %	1,131 82.9 %	926 81.7 %	760 80.4 %

Table 5: Persons able to read Gàidhlig and Gàidhlig readers as share of Gàidhlig-speakers (1971-2022)



	Number and percentage of <i>Gàidhlig</i> -speakers with ability to write <i>Gàidhlig</i>					
	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	2022
<i>Na Hearadh</i> (Harris)	1,215 49.4 %	1,413 65.2 %	1,016 58.5 %	894 65.5 %	737 65.0 %	640 67.7 %

Table 6: Persons able to write *Gàidhlig* and *Gàidhlig* writers as share of *Gàidhlig*-speakers (1971-2022)

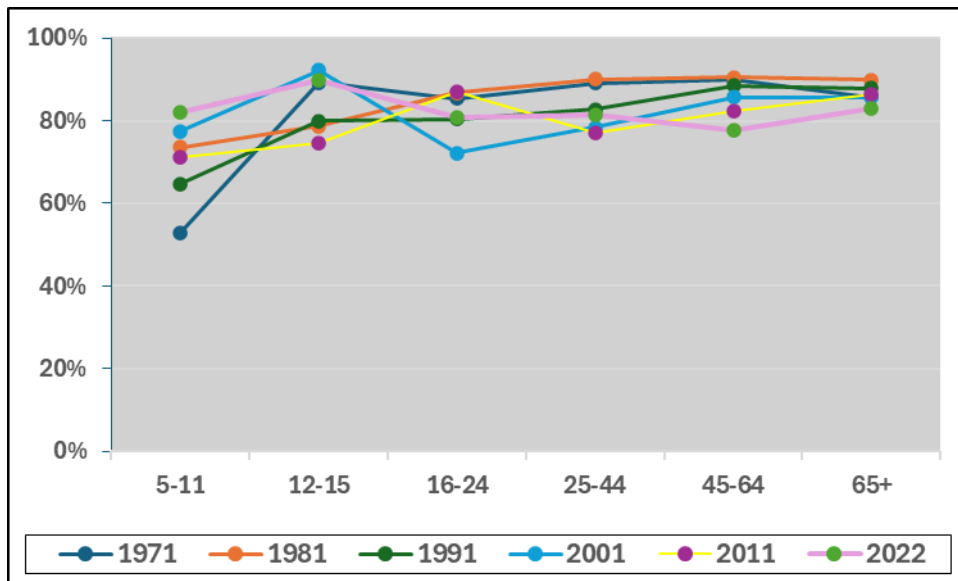
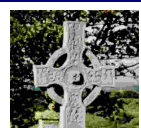


Fig. 6: Persons able to read *Gàidhlig* as a percentage of *Gàidhlig*-speakers on *Na Hearadh* (Harris) in different age groups (1971-2022)



3 Future Perspectives – 2022 and beyond

Census results of 2022 can also be interpreted in terms of future viability and prospects of *Gàidhlig* in this island community. The language viability indicator LVI⁹ is positive and more favourable than in the Outer Hebrides as a whole (table 7).

Area	Na Hearadh					Gàidhlig as home language (% of speakers) Census 2011
	Knowledge of Gàidhlig Census 2022					
	Young age (3-15)		All ages		Difference (Language viability indicator)	
Na Hearadh (Harris)	137	69.2%	1104	61.5%	+ 7.7 %	82.2 %
<i>In comparison:</i> Na h- Eileanan an Iar (Western Isles)	57.2 %		57.2 %		+ 0.0 %	76.8 %

Table 7: Intergenerational viability in 2022 and Gàidhlig as home language in 2011 on Na Hearadh (Harris) in comparison with the whole Na h-Eileanan an Iar (Western Isles)

The overall temporal evolution of *Gàidhlig*-medium primary education is depicted in fig. 7 for the period 1992-2023. For example, in the 2022-23 session 46 pupils (51.1 %) attended the GMU in *Bàgh a’Chaisteil* and 10 pupils (50.0 %) were recorded in the *An t-Ob* GMU (Gaelic medium unit).

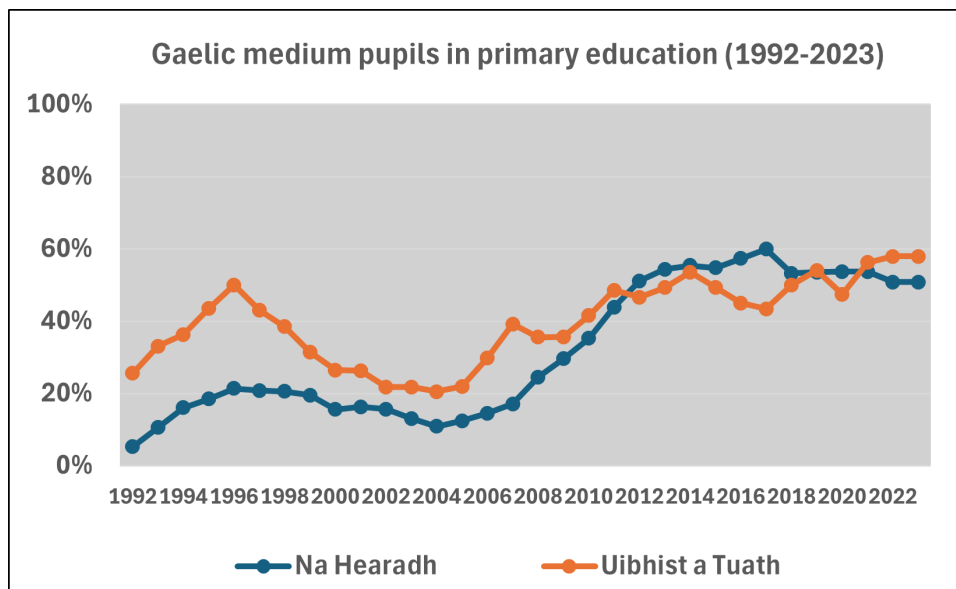
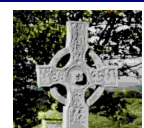


Fig. 7: Share of primary school children attending Gàidhlig-medium classes on Uibhist a Tuath (North Uist) and Na Hearadh (September 1992 – September 2023)¹⁰

⁹ LVI: The “Language Viability Indicator” is a measure of the prospective reproductivity of language speakers in a community. It is here defined based on knowledge of *Gàidhlig* in the census and is calculated by the difference of percentages between the age group below 16 years of age and the total population.

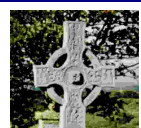
¹⁰ Gaelic Dept, University of Strathclyde.



In conclusion: Language maintenance on *Na Hearadh* based exclusively on intergenerational transmission is not completely assured. This fact is also experienced in most other rural parts of the Outer Hebrides. A few locations like the island of *Scalpaigh* keep the language far better than the population centres of *An Tairbeart* and *An t-Ob*. But still a very high proportion of islanders could at least understand *Gàidhlig* in 2022.



Bilingual road signs in the Outer Hebrides give priority to the traditional language (Duwe, 2017)



I. Supplementary Tables

Gaelic and Gaelic only in 1881 and 1891: <i>Na Hearadh</i> ¹¹	Total Popula- tion	<i>Gàidhlig</i> and Eng- lish	<i>Gàidhlig</i> but no English
Census/Selected Area			
1881 (Speaking “habitually” Gaelic)	4,814	4,616	
----- Inhabited island (included in the above) ---			
<i>Na Hearadh</i> (Harris) – island proper only	3,463	3,343	
<i>Scalpaigh</i> (Scalpay)	540	498	
<i>Beàrnaraigh</i> (Berneraigh)	452	416	
<i>An Scarp</i> (Scarp)	213	213	
<i>Hiort</i> (St. Kilda)	77	77	
<i>Tarasaigh</i> (Taransay)	55	55	
<i>Easaigh</i> (Ensay)	6	6	
<i>Ceileagraigh</i> (Killegray)	6	6	
<i>Pabaigh</i> (Pabbay)	2	2	
----- Census registration districts (included in the above) –			
<i>Na Hearadh a Tuath</i> (North Harris)	2,844	2,723	
<i>Na Hearadh a Deas</i> (South Harris)	1,439	1,398	
<i>Beàrnaraigh</i> (Berneraigh)	454	448	
<i>Hiort</i> (St. Kilda)	77	77	
1891	5,024	2,413	2,382
----- Inhabited island (included in the above) ---			
<i>Na Hearadh</i> (Harris) – island proper only	3,681	1,852	1,671
<i>Scalpaigh</i> (Scalpay)	517	226	253
<i>Beàrnaraigh</i> (Berneraigh)	501	291	193
<i>An Scarp</i> (Scarp)	143	52	80
<i>Hiort</i> (St. Kilda)	71	56	15
<i>Soaigh</i> (Soay)	15	-	14
<i>Tarasaigh</i> (Taransay)	56	23	33
<i>Easaigh</i> (Ensay)	11	5	6
<i>Ceileagraigh</i> (Killegray)	8	2	6
<i>Pabaigh</i> (Pabbay)	3	-	3
<i>Sgeotasaigh</i> (Scotasay)	18	15	2
----- Census registration districts (included in the above) –			
<i>Na Hearadh a Tuath</i> (North Harris)	2,981	1,364	1,459
<i>Na Hearadh a Deas</i> (South Harris)	1,468	841	576
<i>Beàrnaraigh</i> (Berneraigh)	504	193	291
<i>Hiort</i> (St. Kilda)	71	15	56

Table 8: Number of persons speaking *Gàidhlig* in 1881 and 1891 – selected areas (civil parish, census registration districts or inhabited islands) in *Na Hearadh*

¹¹ Civil parish of *Na Hearadh* (Harris) only. These figures therefore include the inhabitants of *Beàrnaraigh* which is commonly included in the statistics of *Uibhist a Tuath* (North Uist). Please see Vol. 05 of this series.



Gaelic and Gaelic only between 1901 and 1971: Na Hearadh¹²	Total Popula- tion	Gàidhlig and Eng- lish	Gàidhlig but no English
Census/Selected Area			
1901	5,271	2,662	2,217
----- Inhabited island (included in the above) ---			
<i>Na Hearadh</i> (Harris) – island proper only	3,803	2,094	1,442
<i>Scalpaigh</i> (Scalpay)	587	298	240
<i>Beàrnaraigh</i> (Berneray)	524	119	362
<i>An Scarp</i> (Scarp)	160	68	71
<i>Hiort</i> (St. Kilda)	77	32	41
<i>Soaigh</i> (Soay)	16	-	15
<i>Tarasaigh</i> (Taransay)	72	30	35
<i>Easaigh</i> (Ensay)	8	4	4
<i>Ceileagraigh</i> (Killegray)	6	6	-
<i>Pabaigh</i> (Pabbay)	3	1	2
<i>Sgeotasaigh</i> (Scotasay)	15	10	5
----- Census registration districts (included in the above) –			
<i>Na Hearadh a Tuath</i> (North Harris)	3,191	1,833	1,101
<i>Na Hearadh a Deas</i> (South Harris)	1,476	677	711
<i>Beàrnaraigh</i> (Berneray)	527	120	364
<i>Hiort</i> (St. Kilda)	77	32	41
----- Electoral areas (included in the above) –			
<i>Na Hearadh a Tuath</i> (Harris North)	3,169	1,817	1,101
<i>Na Hearadh a Deas</i> (Harris South)	2,080	829	1,116
1911 <i>Na Hearadh</i> (Harris) CP	5,449	3,247	1,723
1921 <i>Na Hearadh</i> (Harris) CP	5,276	3,940	961
1931 <i>Na Hearadh</i> (Harris) CP	4,468	3,466	694
1951 <i>Na Hearadh</i> (Harris) CP	3,991	3,370	296
1961	3,284	2,823	117
----- County council electoral divisions (included in the above) –			
<i>Na Hearadh - Tuath</i> (Harris North) CCED	1,239	1,061	40
<i>Na Hearadh - Meadhon</i> (Harris Middle) CCED	941	839	45
<i>Na Hearadh - Deas</i> (Harris South) CCED	1,104	923	32
----- Inhabited island (included in the above) ---			
<i>Hiort</i> (St. Kilda)	65	-	-
1971¹³ <i>Na Hearadh</i> (Harris) CP	2,885	2,460	25
----- County council electoral divisions (included in the above) –			
<i>Na Hearadh - Tuath</i> (Harris North) CCED	1,065	900	*
<i>Na Hearadh - Meadhon</i> (Harris Middle) CCED	935	860	*
<i>Na Hearadh - Deas</i> (Harris South) CCED	860	690	*
----- Inhabited island (included in the above) ---			
<i>Hiort</i> (St. Kilda)	65	-	-

Table 9: Number of persons speaking Gàidhlig between 1901 and 1971 – selected areas (civil parish, census registration districts, electoral areas or inhabited islands) in Na Hearadh

¹² Civil parish of *Na Hearadh* (Harris) only. These figures therefore include the inhabitants of *Beàrnaraigh* which is commonly included in the statistics of *Uibhist a Tuath* (North Uist). Please see Vol. 05 of this series.

¹³ Due to rounding of figures to the nearest 0 and 5 it is impossible to provide exact “Gaelic only” numbers in 1971. The figures in the table should be read as „between 2,458 and 2,462” and „between 21 and 29” respectively.



Percentage of population speaking Gàidhlig but no English in island parishes of former Inverness-shire ¹⁴					
Age group	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931
3-4	78.6 %	76.2 %	78.9 %	69.2 %	73.9 %
5-9	52.2 %	46.6 %	39.2 %	22.9 %	21.6 %
10-14	21.6 %	13.8 %	4.8 %	1.8 %	1.1 %
15-19	25.2 %	9.5 %	2.3 %	0.7 %	0.7 %
20-24	31.1 %	10.9 %	3.3 %	1.1 %	0.6 %
25-29	34.7 %	16.2 %	3.7 %	2.2 %	0.6 %
30-34	37.6 %	25.4 %	7.0 %	1.9 %	1.9 %
35-39	38.0 %	31.8 %	11.8 %	2.8 %	1.8 %
40-44	47.2 %	34.0 %	19.2 %	5.3 %	1.6 %
45-49	47.0 %	33.6 %	24.5 %	9.0 %	2.8 %
50-54	54.4 %	43.5 %	30.1 %	16.9 %	5.3 %
55-59	56.5 %	43.7 %	32.3 %	24.7 %	9.5 %
60-64	66.4 %	53.5 %	39.2 %	29.8 %	16.9 %
65-69	66.1 %	52.8 %	43.4 %	32.6 %	24.8 %
70-74	60.6 %	56.5 %	48.5 %	40.1 %	33.7 %
75-79	67.2 %	67.5 %	55.7 %	46.8 %	36.4 %
80 and over	74.1 %	71.5 %	65.4 %	58.7 %	47.2 %
Total “Gaelic only”	43.9 %	33.3 %	24.0 %	16.0 %	12.5 %

Table 10: Percentage of persons speaking Gàidhlig but no English (aged three years and over) for different age groups in island parishes of former Inverness-shire between 1891 and 1931

Number of persons and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers in former County Council Electoral Divisions (Inverness-shire) (Population aged 3 years and over)						
Area	1961/71 Code	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
<i>Na Hearadh (Tuath)</i> (Harris (North) CCED)	HN	1,101 92.8 %	911 90.3 %	789 93.0 %	605 83.4 %	451 64.8 %
<i>Na Hearadh (Meadhonach)</i> (Harris (Central) CCED)	HC	884 98.0 %	872 96.4 %	779 92.8 %	641 90.7 %	494 76.4 %
<i>Na Hearadh (Deas)</i> (Harris (South) CCED) - excluding <i>Hiort</i> (St. Kilda)	HS	955 96.4 % (65)	702 91.8 % (65)	713 83.1 % (1)	613 77.7 % (-)	502 69.1 % (-)

Table 11: Number of persons speaking Gàidhlig and all Gàidhlig-speakers as a percentage of the population (aged three years and over) for pre-1975 county council electoral divisions (CCED)

¹⁴ Islands of *Barraigh* (Barra), *Uibhist a Deas* (South Uist), *Beinn a’ Bhaoghla* (Benbecula), *Uibhist a Tuath* (North Uist), *Na Hearadh* (Harris), *An t-Eilean Sgitheanach* (Skye) and some smaller outlying islands (Scotland Census Office, 1932).



Gaelic knowledge according to age groups and whether born in Scotland <i>Census 1981: Na Hearadh</i> ¹⁵						
Map No	Census output area ¹⁶	Age groups				Born in Scotland ¹⁷
		3 - 24	25 - 44	45 - 64	65+	
01+02	<i>An t-Ob (Leverburgh), Hiort (St. Kilda) & Roghadal (Rodel)</i>	60 90.9%	30 76.9%	55 100.0%	38 90.5%	175 93.6%
03	<i>An t-Ob (Leverburgh)</i>	29 87.9%	19 82.6%	25 86.3%	19 76.0%	87 88.8%
04	<i>Sgarasta Mhór</i>	19 100.0%	13 100.0%	32 94.1%	25 92.6%	84 94.4%
04+05	<i>Taobh Tuath & Fionnsabhagh</i>	6 100.0%	3 75.0%	6 85.7%	6 85.7%	22 91.7%
06	<i>Manais (Manish)</i>	30 69.8%	32 76.2%	44 95.7%	58 96.7%	166 92.7%
07	<i>Horgabost & Na Buirgh</i>	18 78.3%	7 43.8%	20 95.2%	11 100.0%	57 87.7%
08	<i>Seilebost</i>	35 100.0%	21 91.3%	22 100.0%	20 95.2%	98 99.0%
09	<i>Stocanais & Àird Mhìghe</i>	33 86.8%	27 100.0%	22 81.5%	39 100.0%	117 95.9%
10	<i>Direcleit</i>	6 66.7%	5 71.4%	10 83.3%	8 72.7%	31 86.1%
10	<i>Ceann Dibig & Plocrapol</i>	45 84.9%	19 76.0%	47 90.4%	37 100.0%	149 91.4%
11	<i>Caolas Scalpaigh</i>	39 90.7%	14 58.3%	39 88.6%	47 90.4%	137 91.3%
12	<i>Aird Aiseig & Màraig</i>	22 84.6%	17 77.3%	32 94.1%	35 94.6%	105 95.5%
13	<i>Abhainnsuidhe</i>	26 92.9%	16 94.1%	29 100.0%	22 100.0%	92 100.0%
14-16	<i>An Tairbeart (Tarbert)</i>	104 88.1%	84 94.4%	55 93.2%	88 93.6%	320 92.5%
17	<i>Tairbeart Siar</i>	24 70.6%	16 72.7%	20 69.0%	22 81.5%	85 84.2%
18	<i>Eilean Scalpaigh a (Scalpay)</i>	31 86.1%	32 100.0%	37 100.0%	45 95.7%	141 93.4%
19+20	<i>Eilean Scalpaigh b (Scalpay)</i>	99 96.1%	57 93.4%	68 91.9%	56 100.0%	280 96.6%
Total	Na Hearadh (Harris)	643 88.1%	445 85.4%	595 91.5%	615 94.2%	2.259 93.2%

Table 12: Population with *Gàidhlig* knowledge in output areas of *Na Hearadh* (Harris) according to age group and birthplace in 1981

¹⁵ Figures may not add up exactly because of measures to keep returns anonymous.

¹⁶ A more detailed list of all locations in each output area is to be found in section IV.

¹⁷ Scottish born population aged 3 years and over.



Number and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers ¹⁸							
<i>Na Hearadh</i>							
Map No	Census output area	1981		1991		2001	
01	<i>An t-Ob</i> (Leverburgh) a & <i>Hiort</i> (St. Kilda)	188	84.8 %	153	68.8 %	69	75.0 %
02	<i>Roghadal</i>					59	62.1 %
03	<i>An t-Ob</i> (Leverburgh) b	93	80.9 %	69	66.3 %	80	64.0 %
04	<i>Sgarasta Mhòr</i>	21	83.3 %	66	75.9 %	56	70.0 %
	<i>Taobh Tuath</i>	89	92.4 %				
05	<i>Fionnsabhagh</i>			64	85.3 %	45	61.6 %
06	<i>Manais</i>	61	100. %	67	73.6 %	39	68.4 %
07	<i>Horgabost</i>	65	87.3 %	53	74.6 %	36	58.1 %
08	<i>Seilebost</i>	106	100. %	84	89.2 %	73	91.3 %
09	<i>Stocanais</i>	126	92.3 %	86	89.5 %	61	63.5 %
10	<i>Direcleit</i>	163	92.8 %	141	89.7 %	129	65.2 %
	<i>Ceann Dibig</i>	29	71.8 %				
11	<i>Caolas Scalpaigh</i>	145	84.7 %	116	92.7 %	71	68.9 %
12	<i>Aird Aiseig</i>	111	89.1 %	99	89.1 %	61	57.0 %
13	<i>Abhainnsuidhe</i>	100	100. %	67	100. %	51	71.8 %
14	<i>An Tairbeart</i> (Tarbert) a	342	90.6 %	184	80.6 %	82	65.6 %
15	<i>An Tairbeart</i> (Tarbert) b					51	68.0 %
16	<i>Tairbeart an Ear</i>					78	70.3 %
17	<i>Tairbeart Siar</i>	91	77.7 %	61	73.5 %	64	65.3 %
18	<i>Eilean Scalpaigh: Taobh Deas</i>	148	93.4 %	142	97.2 %	102	87.9 %
19	<i>Eilean Scalpaigh: Taobh Meadhonach</i>	290	94.2 %	207	95.4 %	111	79.3 %
20	<i>Eilean Scalpaigh: Taobh Tuath</i>					57	86.4 %

Table 13: Number and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers for the census output areas in *Na Hearadh* (Harris) according to data from 1981 to 2001

<i>Na Hearadh: Gàidhlig-speaking in Age Groups (1971-2001)</i>								
Age group	1971 ¹⁹		1981		1991		2001	
0-2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	16.3 %
3-4	39 (+11)	58.1 %	33	71.7 %	40	61.5 %	9	34.6 %
5-24	540 (+5)	86.8 %	589	89.5 %	370	75.8 %	222	56.2 %
25-44	486 (+1)	85.6 %	424	86.2 %	349	77.1 %	278	67.3 %
45-64	658 (+2)	94.3 %	551	89.9 %	481	84.1 %	414	71.6 %
65 +	637 (+5)	97.1 %	571	93.3 %	497	87.1 %	438	83.7 %
Total (3 years +)	2,355 (+24)	90.0 %	2,168	89.5 %	1,737	78.8 %	1,361	70.3 %
Born in Scotland	n/a	n/a	2,138	92.7 %	1,726	87.4 %	1,340	78.4 %

Table 14: Gàidhlig-speakers in different age groups in *Na Hearadh* (Harris) from 1971 to 2001

¹⁸ Statistical base is the population aged 3 years and over in 1981 and 1991 and the total population in 2001.

¹⁹ Speakers of Gàidhlig but not English in 1971 are distributed in age groups according to general distribution for the counties of Inverness-shire and Ross & Cromarty (approximate numbers are given in brackets).



Map No.	Output Area	Knowledge of Gàidhlig Census 2022					Home language Gàidhlig (% of speakers) Census 2011
		Young age (3-15)		All ages		Difference (Language viability indicator)	
01 + 03	<i>An t-Ob</i> (Leverburgh)	16	57.1 %	108	61.4 %	- 4.3 %	84.6 %
02	<i>Roghadal</i>	1	33.3 %	32	45.1 %	- 11.8 %	93.5 %
04	<i>Sgarasta Mhòr</i>	3	75.0 %	36	53.7 %	+ 21.3 %	100.0 %
05	<i>Fionnsabhagh</i>	2	66.7 %	32	53.3 %	+ 13.4 %	78.4 %
06	<i>Manais</i>	4	80.0 %	25	39.1 %	+ 40.9 %	90.6 %
07 + 08	<i>Horgabost & Seilebost</i>	5	83.3 %	48	69.6 %	+ 13.7 %	88.3 %
09	<i>Caolas Stocanais</i>	3	75.0 %	54	71.1 %	+ 3.9 %	76.7 %
10	<i>Direcleit</i>	6	40.0 %	93	63.3 %	- 23.3 %	73.0 %
11	<i>Caolas Scalpaigh</i>	10	55.6 %	77	60.2 %	- 4.6 %	82.5 %
12 + 17	<i>Aird Aiseig & Tairbeart Siar</i> (West Tarbert)	10	100.0%	66	73.3 %	+ 26.7 %	87.5 %
13	<i>Abhainnsuidhe</i>	12	92.3 %	80	52.6 %	+ 39.7 %	80.4 %
14 - 16	<i>An Tairbeart</i> (Tarbert)	37	67.3 %	207	62.7 %	+ 4.6 %	77.0 %
18	<i>Scalpaigh: Taobh Deas</i> (South Scalpay)	7	77.8 %	46	71.9 %	+ 5.9 %	76.9 %
19	<i>Scalpaigh Meadhonach</i> (Mid Scalpay)	11	91.7 %	82	77.4 %	+ 14.3 %	76.8 %
20	<i>Scalpaigh: Taobh Tuath</i> (North Scalpay)	5	100.0%	66	62.9 %	+ 37.1 %	89.8 %

Table 15: Intergenerational viability in 2022 and Gàidhlig as home language in 2011 in selected output areas in Na Hearadh (Harris)



II. Literature and Data Sources

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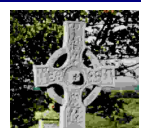
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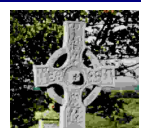
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III. Some Valuable Comments about Census Information

The interpretation of census figures (derived statistics in particular) is not as straightforward as the pure numbers might suggest. The author has taken great pains to compare like with like and the calculated tables with greatest geographical detail and age group information as possible. But the differences of census questions, enumeration districts and information details between years are quite substantial. It is therefore very important to notice the following facts:

1. Questions on *Gàidhlig* have been raised in census enumerations in Scotland since 1881. In this first instance, however, it was asked whether the person “speaks Gaelic habitually” and the information was provided by the enumerator. From 1891 onwards this wording was changed into “speaks Gaelic” and the information was given by the head of the household. Accordingly direct comparison of the results of 1881 and later years is not possible.
2. Until 1971 it was asked whether the person “speaks Gaelic and English” or “speaks Gaelic but not English” (Gaelic only). Due to the simple necessity to survive in an English dominated society and the considerable impact of the school system in fact all *Gàidhlig-speaking* people were forced to become bilingual – with the notable exceptions of pre-school children and very old people. **These “Gaelic only” persons did not, however, present those who had *Gàidhlig* as their natural and preferred language nor were they the only mother tongue speakers.** This was already highlighted after the census 1911 by comments given by the then registrar general and the superintendent of statistics in the county report on Inverness (Census Office, Scotland, 1912): “*When discussing the statistics of the Gaelic-speakers of Argyll we expressed an opinion that the reduction in the number of persons speaking Gaelic but unable to speak English should not be taken as a proof that the use of the language was being discontinued, and after making a similar study of statistics of the Gaelic-speakers of the islands of Inverness, we are in a position to repeat that opinion. One fact alone seems to justify such an expression, and that is that fully three-fourths of the children of less than school age, more than three but less than five, speak Gaelic exclusively. Such a condition seems possible only when Gaelic is the language habitually spoken in the homes, and this seems conclusive evidence of its wide and habitual use.*” Due to the ever-increasing presence of English in the *Gàidhlig* community (mixed language marriages, in-migration of English only speakers, radio and television) more and more children under the age of 5 became bilingual and the census question proved to be irrelevant after the 2nd World War. Because of the very small numbers involved and the ambiguity of the question no census enumeration took place after 1971 on persons who spoke *Gàidhlig* but no English.
3. No data are available on persons speaking *Gàidhlig* outside Scotland in the rest of the United Kingdom. Census returns are, however, recorded in Canada where the *Gàidhlig* language survived as a community language in a few locations of the province of *Alba Nuadh* (Nova Scotia) well into the 1940s.
4. During World War II no census was taken. Therefore, no figures are available for 1941.
5. In 1971 the wording was changed from “speaks Gaelic” into “is able to speak Gaelic”. This resulted in areas with low density of speakers in a substantial increase of *Gàidhlig*-speakers counted compared with 1961. These were essentially those who could speak *Gàidhlig* but did not have the opportunity to use it. In strongly *Gàidhlig-speaking* areas those who were able to speak *Gàidhlig* were also using the language. So, in the islands and on the western seaboard the figures should have remained comparable with previous censuses.
6. In 1981 the population basis was changed from persons present on census night to usually resident persons. In the light of increased mobility of the population this change was inevitable.
7. From 1971 onwards additional questions were asked on the ability of people to read *Gàidhlig* or to write *Gàidhlig*.



8. In 2001 another question was introduced on the ability of a person to understand spoken *Gàidhlig*. This may have had an influence on some people with only a small command of the language to record themselves as being able to understand rather than able to speak the language. Without this choice some of them might have enlisted themselves or their children as *Gàidhlig-speaking* to be counted at all. This may explain the small decrease of speakers in the age group of 3 to 4 despite the strong efforts by the *cròileagan* movement in the preceding decade.
9. Additionally in 2001 for the first time all children under the age of 3 were recorded with their knowledge of *Gàidhlig*. In previous enumerations these children were not counted or (in 1891 and 1901) only a few children were enumerated in this age group. In many census publications percentages were calculated by using the enumerated *Gàidhlig-speaking* population (aged 3 years and over) on the basis of the total population. This led to slightly lower percentages than existed.
10. Census counts are not strictly exact. Apart from inevitable small enumeration errors the census authorities have introduced measures to keep returns anonymous. For example, in 1971 figures in tables were rounded to the nearest 0 or 5. This fact represented a major obstacle in using small area statistics for further evaluation because of the small numbers involved. Comparable measures were taken in later censuses but with smaller overall “uncertainties” of +/- 1 in general.
11. All census material used and reproduced in this study is Crown Copyright. The use of this material in this study has been allowed under the licence no. C02W0003665.
12. Further information may be obtained by contacting the General Register Office for Scotland at <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk>.



IV. List of Census Output Areas with Numbers and Placenames

The following list provides detailed information on all postcode names included in individual census output areas and shows the abbreviations/numbers defining output areas in census statistics between 1961 and 2001.

Census Output Areas in <i>Na Hearadh – Part A</i>				
Map No.	Census output area ²⁰	Area Codes		
		1961 1971	1981 1991	2001
01	<i>An t-Ob</i> (Leverburgh), <i>Easaigh</i> , <i>Ceileagraigh</i> (Killegray) & <i>Hiort</i> (St. Kilda)	HS	56AD01 56AD02 56AD03 56AF15	60RJ000228
02	<i>Srannda</i> , <i>Borghasdal</i> & <i>Roghadal</i> (Rodel)	HS	56AD01	60RJ000229
03	<i>An t-Ob</i> (Leverburgh)	HS	56AD04	60RJ000193
04	<i>Taobh Tuath</i>	HS	56AF03 56AD05	60RJ000038
05	<i>Fionnsabhagh</i> , <i>Cuidhtinis</i> , <i>Ceann a' Bhàigh</i> , <i>Aird Mhighe</i> & <i>Boirsearn</i>	HS	56AF04A	60RJ000039
06	<i>Geocrab</i> , <i>Manais</i> (Manish), <i>Fleòideabhagh</i> & <i>Beacrabhaic</i>	HC	56AF04B	60RJ000040
07	<i>Scarasta Mhòr</i> , <i>Horgabost</i> , <i>Na Buirgh</i> & <i>Tarasaigh</i>	HS	56AF05 56AF06	60RJ000041
08	<i>Seilebost</i> , <i>Losgaintir</i> & <i>Horsacleit</i>	HS	56AF07	60RJ000042
09	<i>Cliuthar</i> , <i>Leac a' Li</i> , <i>Stocainis</i> , <i>Caolas Stocainis</i> , <i>Liceasto</i> , <i>Grosa Cleit</i> & <i>Collam</i>	HC	56AF08	60RJ000043
10	<i>Dìreclait</i> , <i>Scadabhagh</i> , <i>Drinsiadair</i> , <i>Cadha</i> , <i>Greosabhagh</i> , <i>Miabhaig</i> , <i>Ceann Dibig</i> & <i>Plocrapol</i>	HC	56AF09 56AF10	60RJ000044
11	<i>Caolas Scalpaigh</i> , <i>Urgha Beag</i> , <i>Carragraich</i> , <i>Reinigeadal</i> & <i>Oban</i>	HN	56AF11	60RJ000045
12	<i>Aird Asaig</i> , <i>Bun Abhainn Eadarra</i> , <i>Màraig</i> , <i>Aird a' Mhulaidh</i> , <i>Scaladal</i> & <i>Bàgh Bhiogadail</i>	HN	56AF12	60RJ000046
13	<i>Miabhaig</i> , <i>Abhainn Suidhe</i> , <i>Gobhaig</i> , <i>Cliasmol</i> , <i>Huisinis</i> , <i>Beitearsaig</i> & <i>An Scarp</i>	HN	56AF13 56AF14	60RJ000195
14	<i>An Tairbeart</i> (Tarbert)	HN	56AF01A	60RJ000201

Table A-1: List of locations within individual census output areas and official numbers for different census dates for *Na Hearadh* (Harris) – 1961-2001 – Part A

²⁰ Placenames are given according to official information by the Ordnance Survey and used in modern maps. The placenames in the Outer Hebrides do have officially *Gàidhlig* names. “English” versions are only used in addition for major settlements. Therefore the old anglicised names are provided in table A-1 for a few prominent locations only.



Census Output Areas in Na Hearadh – Part B				
Map No.	Census output area	Area Codes		
		1961 1971	1981 1991	2001
15	An Tairbeart (Tarbert)	HN	56AF01A	60RJ000202
16	An Tairbeart an Ear	HN	56AF01B	60RJ000036
17	An Tairbeart Siar & Leacainn	HN	56AF02	60RJ000037
18	Scalpaigh bho Dheas	HC	56AE01	60RJ000035
19	Scalpaigh Meadhonach	HC	56AE02	60RJ000199
20	Scalpaigh bho Thuath	HC	56AE02	60RJ000200

Table A-2: List of locations within individual census output areas and official numbers for different census dates for Na Hearadh (Harris) – 1961-2001 – Part B

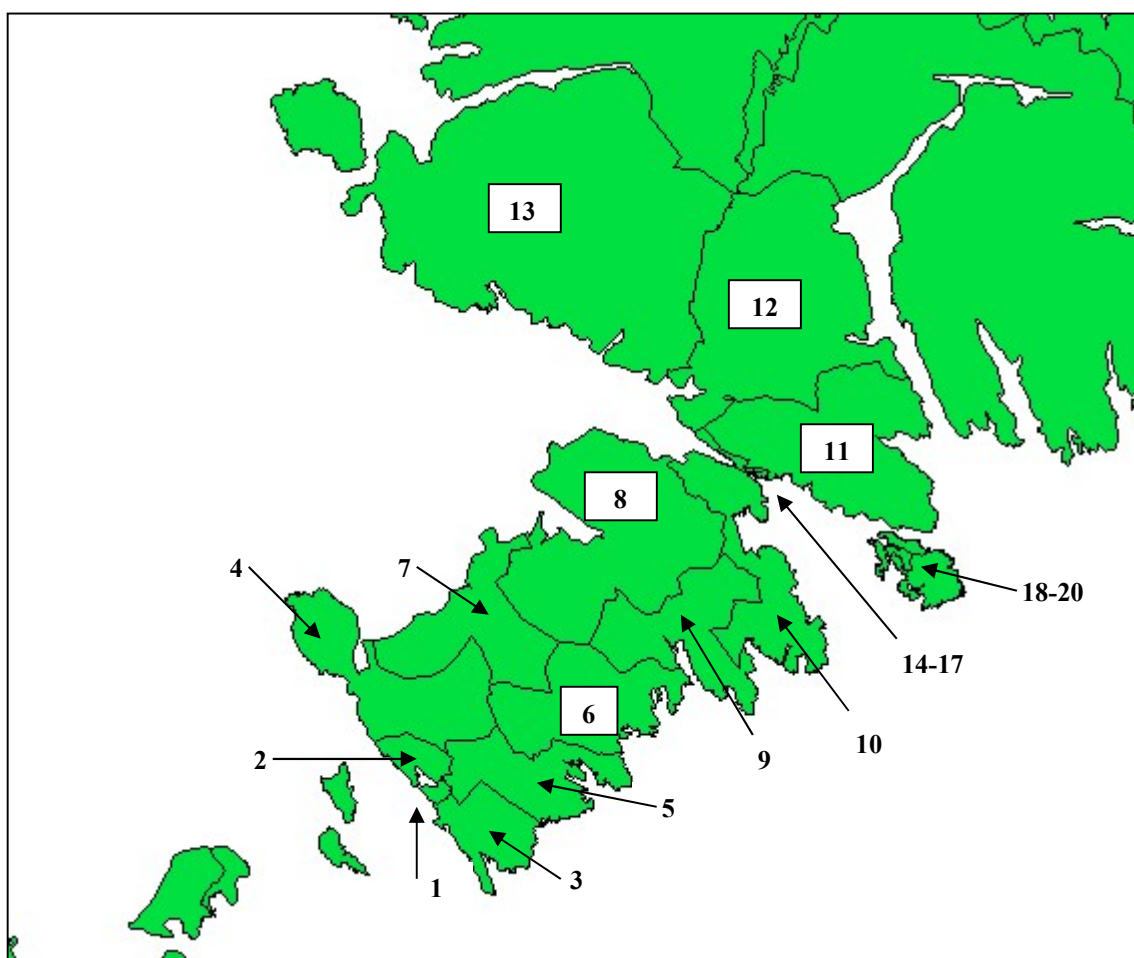


Fig. 8: Overview map of census output areas for Na Hearadh (Isle of Harris) - numbers are provided in tables A-1 and A-2²¹

²¹ Digital boundaries courtesy of Ordnance Survey as part of the Geography Products provided by GROS for the 2001 census



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VII. List of Abbreviations

There are several abbreviations used in the text which might not be known by every reader. Therefore, this short list intends to facilitate better understanding:

CCED	County council electoral division
CP	Civil parish
CNSA	<i>Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Araich</i> : Gaelic playgroup association
<i>Comhairle nan Eilean</i> (CNE) – later: <i>Comhairle nan Eilean Siar</i> (CNES)	Official name of the Western Isles Council, the local government body of the Outer Hebrides (with abbreviations)
<i>Cròileagan</i>	Gaelic speaking playgroup
Fèis	Local art festival with normally some Gaelic courses
GLPS	“Gaelic Language for the Primary School”: Course as introduction of Gaelic as second language
GME	<i>Gàidhlig</i> -medium education
GMU	<i>Gàidhlig</i> -medium unit: Class(es) with <i>Gàidhlig</i> -medium education but as part of an English medium school
GROS	General Register Office for Scotland
LVI	Language viability indicator
LCI	Language community indicator
<i>Mòd</i>	Gaelic language gathering (conversation, song and music) comparable to the Welsh Eisteddfod
n/a	Information is not available
OA	(Census) output area: the smallest enumeration unit on which census data are available
P1	Primary school year 1
P2	Primary school year 2
S1	Secondary school year 1
S2	Secondary school year 2
<i>Sgoil Araich</i>	Gaelic speaking nursery school
<i>Sràdagan</i>	Gaelic speaking clubs for primary school children



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