

Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Studies¹

Vol. 02: *Eilean Bharraigh* (Isle of Barra)

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Extended² 2nd Edition

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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.

Barra has been overwhelmingly Gaelic speaking for many centuries. The downward trend of Gaelic-speaking in this part of the Hebrides set in shortly after the Second World War. This decline seems now to have slowed down a little and Gaelic is still important as a community language on Barra although on a slightly lower level than in previous decades. Intergenerational language maintenance seems to be even stronger around Castlebay than in the north of the island. The decrease of Gaelic-speaking in younger age groups since 1981 has almost come to a standstill because of Gaelic medium education in the primary school of Castlebay and the introduction of Gaelic pre-school education. The overall decrease of Gaelic-speaking on Barra with around 4 % between 2001 and 2011 was one of the smallest recorded on all the islands of the Outer Hebrides.

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² Table 1 was extended with more census results of enumeration districts provided for 1881 and 1911.



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 have been waiting to be incorporated in this compendium of language development in Scotland. Maybe rather unexpectedly, many additional figures from the past became available – especially from the 1881, 1911 and 1981 censuses. As always, I wish happy reading – a few surprises wait to be discovered!!!!

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, *Am Màirt* 2024

Kurt C. Duwe

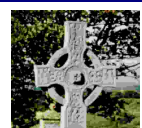


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1 Introduction

The island group around *Eilean Bharraigh* (Isle of Barra) forms the southernmost part of the island chain of the Outer Hebrides (or Western Isles). *Barraigh* (as it is usually referred to in short) is therefore part of the so-called last stronghold of *Gàidhlig* in Scotland. However, during recent decades the language has also lost ground as day-to-day language especially amongst the young. *Gàidhlig* nevertheless has still a substantial part to play in community life. *Barraigh* is for example the birthplace of the *fèisean* movement; the first *Fèis Bharraigh* was introduced as early as 1975. Recent developments in the provision of *cròileagan* and *Gàidhlig*-medium education (GME) point also in a positive direction.

Barraigh was part of the large county of Inverness-shire prior to local government reorganisation in 1975. Thereafter the Outer Hebrides were administered by its own inter-island authority: *Comhairle nan Eilean*, later renamed as *Comhairle nan Eilean Siar* (“Council of the Western Isles”). The majority of the 1,000+ population is of Roman Catholic faith. Main occupations of the inhabitants are concerned with crofting, inshore fisheries, tourism and public services.

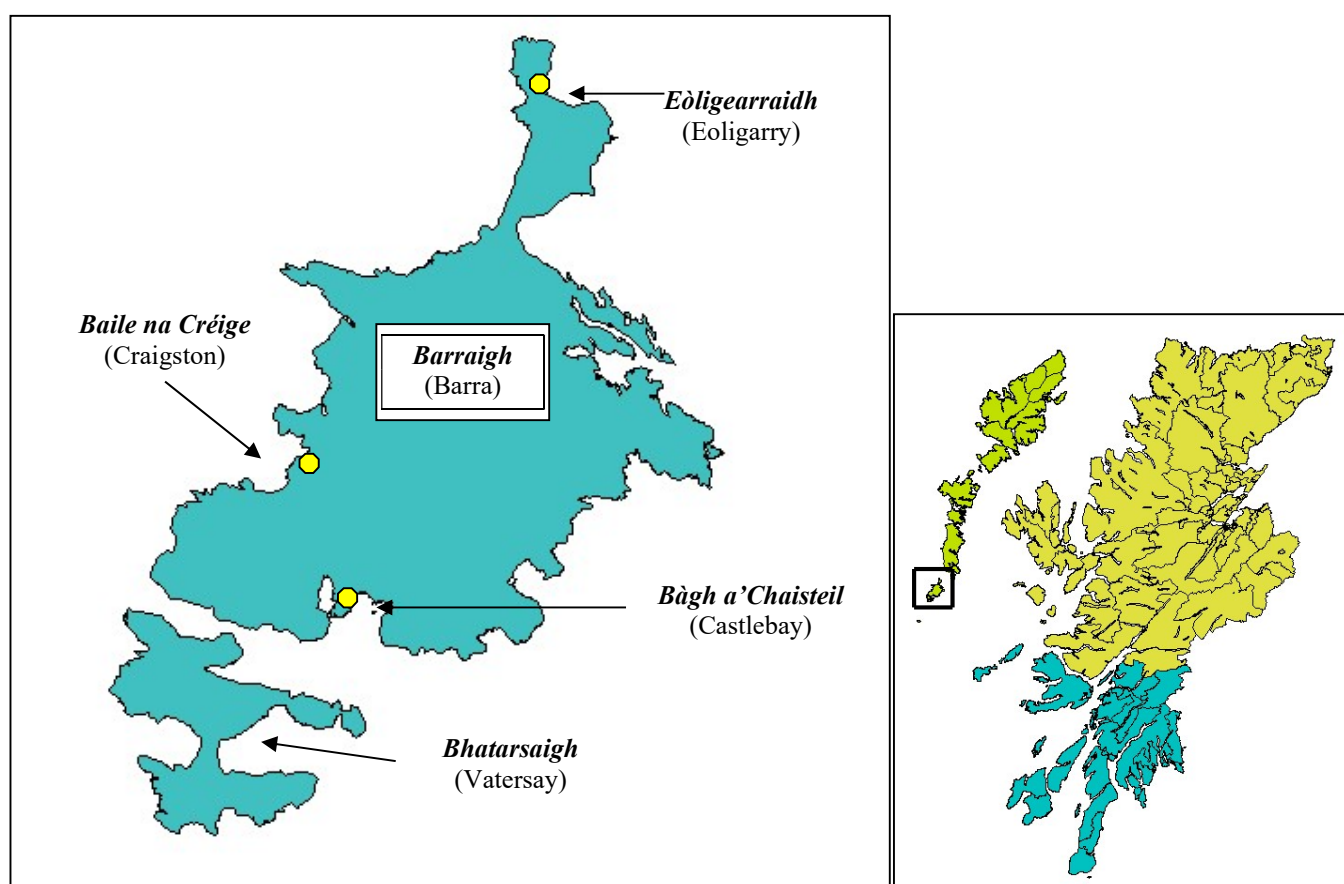


Fig. 1: Overview map of area under investigation³

Major township of the island is *Bhàgh a' Chaisteil* (Castlebay). The only other remaining inhabited island in the group *Bhatarsaigh* (Vatersay) is now connected to *Barraigh* via a causeway. The following short chapters will look into the historical development of the use of *Gàidhlig* in the area from the end of the 19th century until today – mainly highlighted by references to and analysis of population census results in local detail.

³ Digital boundaries courtesy of Ordnance Survey as part of the Geography Products by GROS for the 2001 census.



2 The Historical Background

The population of the Outer Hebrides maintained *Gàidhlig* as predominant community language until the end of the 20th century. In fig. 2 the official census results regarding *Gàidhlig*-speaking intensity are compared between *Barraigh* (Barra) and the adjacent island parish of *Uibhist a Deas* (South Uist) for the period 1881 to 2011. The latter parish is dealt with in detail in Vol. 03 of this series.

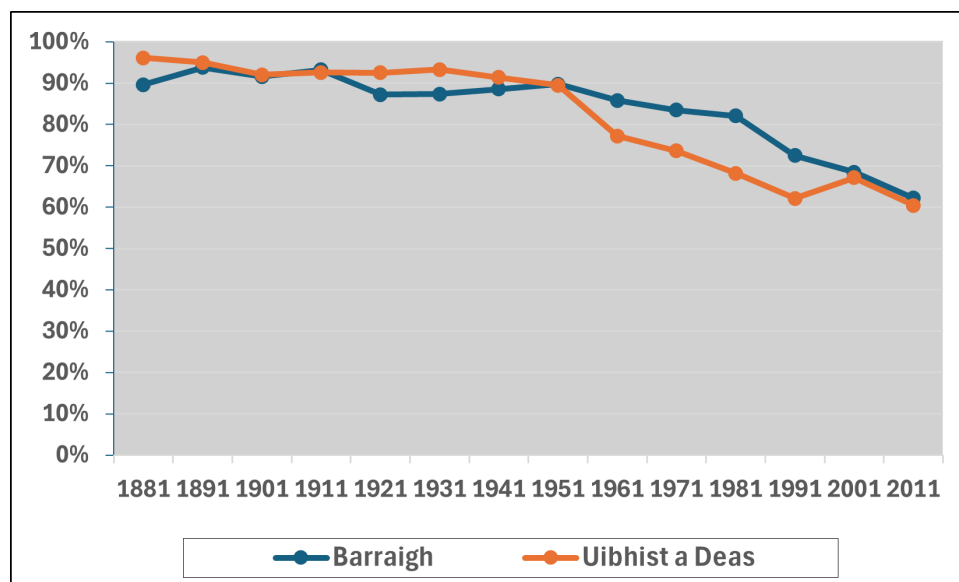


Fig. 2: *Gàidhlig*-speakers (3 years and over) as percentage of total population between 1881 and 2011 – civil parishes of *Barraigh* (Barra) and neighbouring *Uibhist a Deas* (South Uist)⁴

Prior to these census enumerations it had been widely known that almost nothing but *Gàidhlig* was spoken in these islands. According to the New Statistical Account of Scotland (1831-45) reports by the (Protestant) minister stressed also: “*The average of births, deaths, and marriages, cannot with accuracy be ascertained, for want of a parochial register, and from the great majority of the population being Roman Catholics.*” “*Gaelic is the language universally spoken, and it is very pure and still unmixed with many English words. The English language has made little or no progress, because schools have been wanting. The people of Barra have no games or amusements but what are common to the surrounding islands. Dancing, with music of the bagpipes, is a favourite pastime.*” In essence the “natives” did not bother very much about the principles of the “foreign” minister at all.

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

Gàidhlig-speaking was practically universal on *Barraigh* for the whole period between 1881 and 1931 (table 1). The incidence of “No Gaelic” remained substantially smaller than the proportion of the population recorded as speaking “Gaelic but no English”. In 1891 more than half of the enumerated persons were returned as speaking *Gàidhlig* (fig. 3) only. This was especially evident on the outlying islands like *Miùghalaigh* (Mingulay) and *Beàrnaraigh Cheann Bharraigh* (Berneray of Barra Head) where almost nobody (except the lighthouse keepers) spoke English (Duwe, 2005). The inhabitants were mainly self-supporting, and it was not necessary to know English to earn a living from fishing or crofting. This circumstance changed over time and bilingualism became the norm rather than the exception for the working age population in decades to come.

Before looking at the temporal development over the years, however, it is worthwhile to consult the original census forms of 1891 figures in detail⁵. For example, the usually resident population⁶ of the out-

⁴ There was no census taken in 1941 because of World War II – values are therefore interpolated between 1931 and 1951.



lying islands between *Bhatarsaigh* (Vatersay) and *Ceann Bharraigh* (Barra Head) was 97.2 % Gàidhlig speaking in 1891 (Duwe, 2005).

Number of persons and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers in districts of <i>Barraigh</i> – 1881 - 1911							
Area ⁷	All persons speaking Gàidhlig ⁸				Monolingual share of all Gàidhlig-speakers ⁹		
	1881	1891	1901	1911	1891	1901	1911
<i>An Gleann</i> (Glen)	199 99.5 %	309 89.3 %	308 96.0 %	268 93.4%	66 23.2 %	123 38.3 %	54 20.1%
<i>Bàgh a'Chaisteil</i> (Castlebay)	112 94.1 %	63 76.8 %	118 81.4 %	167 88.8%	6 9.5 %	36 30.5 %	16 9.6%
<i>Bruarnais & Eòligearraidh</i> (Bruernish & Eoligarry)	239 100 %	241 92.3 %	256 85.9 %	409 93.8%	167 69.3 %	135 52.7 %	111 27.1%
<i>Buaile nam Bodach & Earsaraidh</i> (Balnabodach & Ersary)	145 97.3 %	313 96.6 %	332 91.5 %	261 94.6%	206 65.8 %	186 56.0 %	82 31.4%
<i>Sgallairidh & Breibhig</i> (Skellary & Brevig)	386 96.3%	263 94.9 %	301 93.8 %	253 90.7%	142 54.0 %	143 47.5 %	47 18.6%
<i>Ceann Tangabhal & Tangasdal</i> (Kentangval & Tangusdale)	326 94.5 %	410 96.2 %	441 94.8 %	327 91.9%	252 61.5 %	203 46.0 %	83 25.4%
<i>Borgh</i> (Borve)	259 92.5 %	217 98.6 %	212 97.7 %	171 97.7%	193 88.9 %	129 60.8 %	60 35.1%
<i>Baile na Crèige</i> (Craigston)	115 94.3%	111 96.5 %	119 88.8 %	107 96.4%	69 62.2 %	68 57.1 %	39 36.4%
<i>Athalasdal & Grèin</i> (Allasdale & Green)	33 100 %	71 87.7 %	62 95.4 %	188 92.6%	26 36.6 %	33 53.2 %	54 28.7%
<i>Bhatarsaigh</i> (Vatersay)	19 95.0 %	30 93.8 %	12 92.3 %	275 95.5%	14 46.7 %	8 66.7 %	62 22.5%
<i>Pabaigh & Sanndraigh</i> ¹⁰ (Pabay & Sanderay)	50 98.0 %	24 100 %	17 94.4 %	5 100%	23 95.8 %	13 76.5 %	3 60.0%
<i>Miùghalaigh</i> (Mingulay)	146 97.3 %	140 98.6 %	112 83.0 %	11 100%	135 96.4 %	35 31.3 %	9 81.8%
<i>Beàrnaraigh Cheann Bharraigh</i> ¹¹ (Berneraigh of Barra Head)	48 84.2 %	30 83.3 %	12 70.6 %	6 60.0%	26 86.7 %	3 25.0 %	1 16.7%

Table 1: Number of persons speaking Gàidhlig and all Gàidhlig-speakers as share of population in *Barraigh* and nearby islands according to local census data from 1881 to 1911

The six persons reported as not speaking the Celtic tongue were lighthouse keepers and their families! The only “anglicised” part of *Barraigh* itself was the (then) tiny harbour of *Bàgh a'Chaisteil* (Castlebay)

⁵ 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, 1901 and 1911.

⁶ This figure excludes children below the age of three, dumb persons and those who were only temporarily living in the area. The “traditional” census figures include all these persons in the total population base – associated census percentages especially are therefore considerable under-estimates of the real situation!

⁷ Enumeration division, island or village.

⁸ Percentages of Gàidhlig-speakers above 50 % are marked by bold figures.

⁹ Percentages of monolingual Gàidhlig-speakers above 10 % are marked by bold figures.

¹⁰ Figures include the populations of the islands of *Fuideigh* (Fuda, 1881-1901) and *Heliasaigh* (Hellisay - 1881).

¹¹ Figures include the lighthouse keepers at Barra Head.



where merchants, hotel keepers and harbour masters dominated the sociological balance. Out of a population of 82 persons 11 confessed not to speak *Gàidhlig* – all of these inhabitants were born outside the *Gaidhealtachd*. They must have felt very isolated in a sea of *Gàidhlig* speaking fishermen and crofting families. In other more remote places the language was universally spoken apart from the odd elementary teacher who by definition did not speak the language of her scholars. Census information generally is very detailed for the years 1881, 1891 and 1901. Table 1 provides an overview of the individual strength of the language in different parts of the island (see also table 9 in the annex).

The apparent reduction in the number of *Gàidhlig*-speaking monoglots until 1931 was of course due to the education policy through exclusively English medium instruction at school. Nonetheless *Gàidhlig* remained the first and normal language of the islanders throughout the years. This is underlined by the fact that the pre-school age group of 3 to 4 showed no significant reduction of “Gaelic only” incidence. Table 10 certifies this for all island parishes in Inverness-shire (Scotland Census Office, 1932) of which *Barraigh* was part of. The associated percentages in 1891 (78.6 %) and 1931 (73.9 %) are proof of this fact.

Overall, the vast majority of children entered school without speaking English. Carl Borgstrøm spent six months on *Barraigh* during his famous linguistic study on the dialects of the Outer Hebrides in the late 1930s. His account of the everyday use of the language pays tribute to the still vigorous *Gàidhlig*-speaking community just before the outbreak of the war: “... in the Catholic churches the sermon is usually preached in Gaelic. Many persons, especially the older ones, still remember a good deal of the old folklore. But the ancient custom of telling stories and singing songs in the evenings, when people come together for a “*céilidhe*” has fallen into desuetude nearly everywhere. It is therefore not always easy to find persons who are able to recite stories properly” (Borgstrøm, 1940).

<i>Eilean Bharraigh</i>						
Subject \ Census	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931
<i>Gàidhlig</i> -speakers (3 years +)	1,937	2,219	2,331	2,443	2,141	1,966
% of total population	89.6 %	93.8 %	91.6 %	93.2 %	87.2 %	87.4 %

Table 2: Number of *Gàidhlig*-speakers (3 years and over) in *Barraigh* (Barra) and percentage of total population speaking *Gàidhlig* during 1881-1931

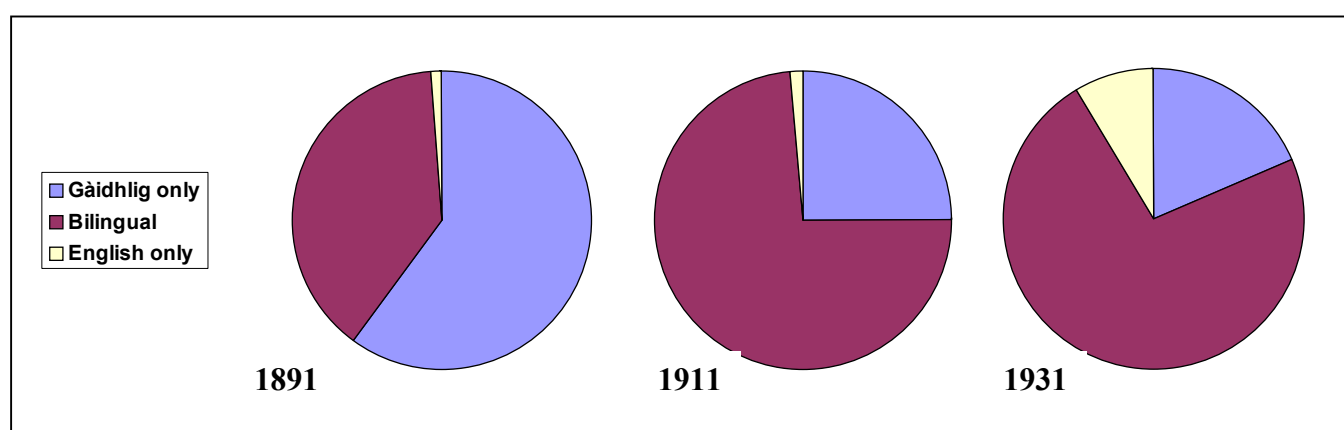


Fig. 3: Share of population speaking *Gàidhlig* and/or English in the study area according to census results in 1891, 1911 and 1931¹²

¹² Total population figures are modified here in order to omit children under 3 years of age who were not asked about their language abilities. Percentages in tables 1 and 2 provide figures of original census publications which regularly underestimated *Gàidhlig*-speaking intensity.



2.2 More recent developments (Census 1951–2011)

The population of *Barraigh* decreased substantially during the decades after World War II. The economic difficulties lead to a significant out-migration of people, but many “exiles” kept their links to the community although they had to work on the mainland to earn a living. In 1971 the total population was just half of the figure enumerated in 1931. The incidence of *Gàidhlig*-speaking, however, remained very high and predominant until 1981 at least.

<i>Eilean Bharraigh</i>							
Subject \ Census	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
<i>Gàidhlig</i> -speakers (3 years +)	1,692	1,259	910	1,125	954	778	761
Percentage of total population	89.8 %	85.8 %	83.5 %	82.1 %	72.5 %	66.4 %	62.3 %

Table 3: Number of *Gàidhlig*-speakers (3 years and over) in *Barraigh* (Barra) and percentage of total population speaking *Gàidhlig* during 1951-2011

Bilingualism became almost universal on *Barraigh* except for a few children from *Gàidhlig*-speaking homes. During the first decades after the war the official attitude towards the language in education became more sympathetic (or less hostile to be precise). Inverness-shire County Council was the first authority to realise that a new approach was needed to remedy the situation of “*Gàidhlig* only” speaking children being educated by “English only” speaking teachers. The use of the mother tongue in the first primary years was actively encouraged rather than prohibited (or even sanctioned in the playground). The first appointment by an education authority of a fulltime Gaelic organiser was realised in 1959, and the Inverness-shire Gaelic Education Scheme came into being as a result of that appointment. In the late '50s both Inverness-shire and Ross-shire instituted policies for the use of *Gàidhlig* as an initial teaching medium up to about age 8 years in primary schools in the Gaelic areas (Mackinnon, 1974).

A report on *Gàidhlig*-speaking schoolchildren in Highland schools (Scottish Council for Research in Education, 1961) did show the school district of *Barraigh* still being a stronghold of the language: 228 of 270 primary school children were first or preferred language speakers (84.4 %). 35 of 37 secondary school children (first year) had *Gàidhlig* as first language (94.6 %). In the nursery stages of P1 and P2 there were 50 first language speakers of *Gàidhlig*, a further three children spoke *Gàidhlig* as second language. In total 56 out of 64 knew *Gàidhlig* (87.5 %). *Gàidhlig* was the language of home for all 53 first language speakers. On the other hand, only 3 children from English speaking homes knew some *Gàidhlig*. This fact points to the existence of two separate language communities on the island living socially quite separate lives. However, the dominance of English in school did show effects in practice. 20 of the young first language speakers used only English in conversation with their teacher. Nine children used exclusively English in conversation with other children in the playground.

A more enlightened education policy came into force in 1975 with the establishment of a separate local authority for the Outer Hebrides: *Comhairle nan Eilean*. The most outstanding initiative right from the start was the bilingual project designed for all primary schools (Murray & Morrison, 1984). Initially starting in 36 primary schools (including all establishments on *Barraigh*) this project was extended to all schools on the islands until 1981. The “Research and Development Project in English-Gaelic Bilingual Education in Primary Schools in the Gaelic-Speaking Areas” was sponsored by the then Scottish Education Department and *Comhairle nan Eilean* and it was carried out over two consecutive three-year phases. The aims of this initiative were summarised as follows: *It is proposed that a three-man team will work full-time for a period of 3 years on the production of teaching materials and of aids to teachers to facilitate the development of a Gaelic-English bilingual curriculum in a sample of primary schools where the children are mainly from Gaelic-speaking homes. Initially, the work of the project will be directed at P1-3 level but will later*



be concerned with the middle and upper primary stages. Teachers' working groups will provide support for the team" (Scottish Education Department, 1976).

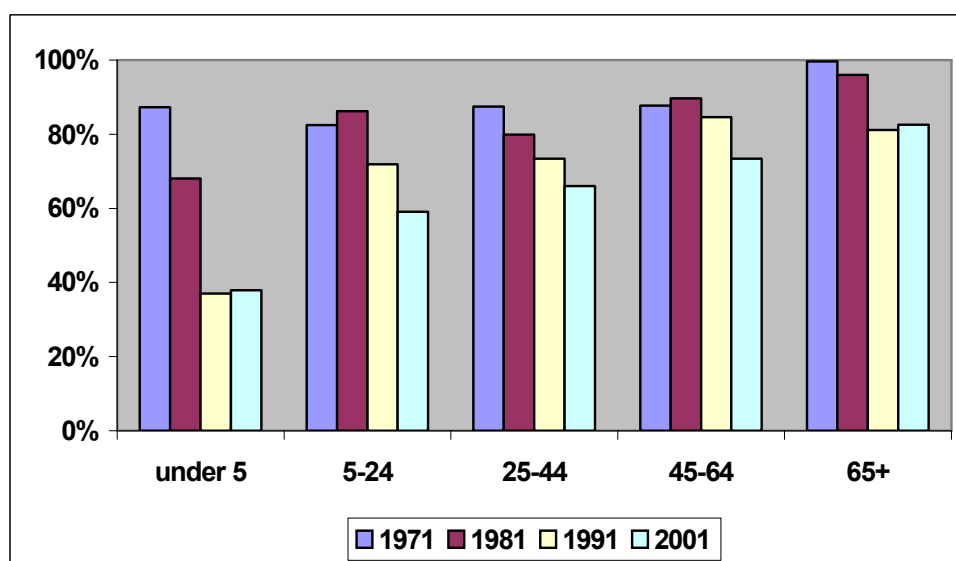


Fig. 4: Percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers in different age groups between 1971 and 2001 – Area of Barraigh (Barra)¹³

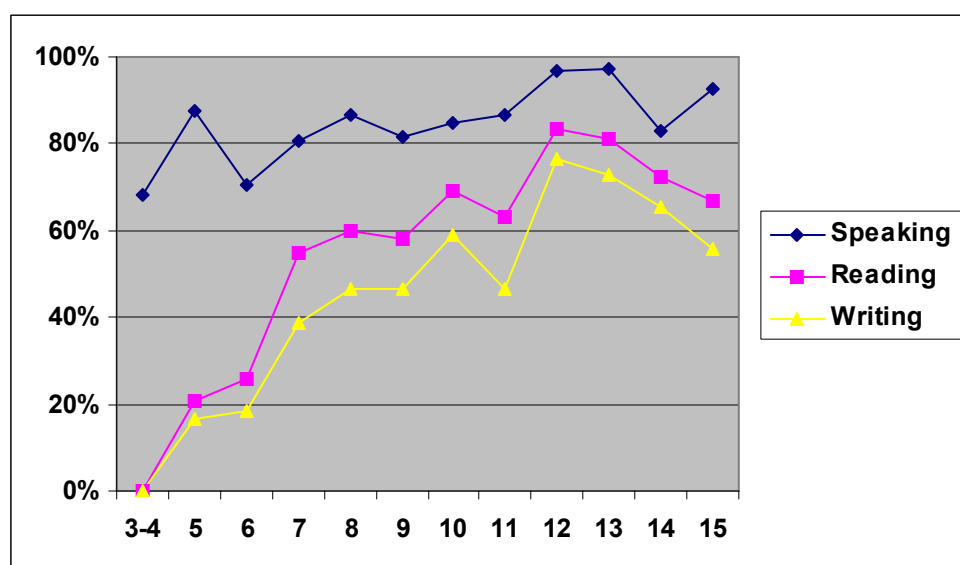


Fig. 5: Percentage of children able to speak, read or write Gàidhlig in different age groups in 1981 – Barraigh (Barra)

The initial impact of the project on the education of primary pupils was immense and commendable; results were also becoming clear in the 1981 census (fig. 5). The language held its terrain very effectively both in younger age-groups and in general (see tables 3 and 13). Thereafter, however, the impetus for bilingual education evaporated very fast. The problem of integrating the growing number of monoglot English-speakers complicated the provision of bilingual education in many schools. The results became very clear in the census of 1991 where only a minority of pre-school children in the Outer Hebrides

¹³ Under 5: Gàidhlig abilities in the age group 3-4 until 1991, in 2001 in all age groups 0-4.



were counted as Gàidhlig-speaking. Since then, the development of *cròileagan* and the introduction of GME in the primary school of *Bàgh a'Chaisteil* (Castlebay) in 1992 seems to have slowed down the decline (see fig. 4). Locally the decrease of Gàidhlig-speaking intensity in 2001 was almost uniform in the southwest: in *Bàgh a'Chaisteil* and *Bhatarsaigh* “English only” made especially progress. In the north-east on the contrary the language did not retreat at all. However, in 2011 language usage seemed to be roughly similar in the whole island.

The total population of the island rose since 2001. 1.139 inhabitants were born in Scotland (90.1 %) compared with 1.079 (92.1 %) ten years before. Accordingly, the percentage of Gàidhlig speakers based on the total population may be a slight 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 as in previous censuses. In contrast to the previously used small output areas, in 2011 the somewhat larger data zones were used as smallest geographical area for age distribution analysis. Accordingly, a direct comparison with 2001 data is not always possible. However, the figures of Gàidhlig knowledge for the 3-15 age group and the total population is provided in table 4 for local selected data zones. The intergenerational viability of these selected census data zones shows a slight bias towards the older generations.

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 70 % of Gàidhlig speakers living in households where the language was used. This information is also provided in table 4 below.

Census Data Zone	Barraigh – Census 2011					Gàidhlig as home language (% of speakers)
	Knowledge of Gàidhlig					
	Young age (3-15)		All ages		Difference (Language viability indicator)	
Eòligearraidh&Baile na Creige (Eoligarry & Craigston)	71	62.8%	460	73.7%	- 10.9 %	81.4 %
Bàgh a’Chaisteil&Bhatarsaigh (Castlebay & Vatersay)	66	65.3%	411	68.7%	- 3.4 %	80.4 %
In comparison: Na h- Eileanan an Iar (Western Isles)	48.8 %		61.2 %		- 12.4 %	76.8 %

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

2.3 Development of literacy in Gàidhlig between 1971 and 2011

Information on literacy in Gàidhlig language use became available from 1971 onwards: Census questions were introduced on the ability to read or write Gàidhlig (see tables 4 and 5). According to the census in 1971 literacy in the language was generally higher on *Barraigh* than on the mainland. But reading and writing capabilities were significantly lower than in the predominantly Protestant areas of the Outer Hebrides. Just half of the Gàidhlig-speaking population could read the language and only a third confessed writing ability!



	Number of Gàidhlig-speakers with ability to read Gàidhlig					Percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers with ability to read Gàidhlig				
	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Barraigh (Barra)	465	760	627	545	523	51.1%	68.0%	65.7%	68.6%	68.8%

Table 5: Number of people able to read Gàidhlig and Gàidhlig readers as a percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers (1971-2011)

	Number of Gàidhlig-speakers with ability to write Gàidhlig					Percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers with ability to write Gàidhlig				
	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Barraigh (Barra)	307	601	488	444	455	33.7%	53.4%	51.2%	55.9%	59.9%

Table 6: Number of people able to write Gàidhlig and Gàidhlig writers as a percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers (1971-2011)

School education played a leading role in the improvement of literacy in later decades. This can be seen quite clearly in fig. 6 for reading ability in the census results between 1971 and 2001. In 1971 only 95 of 175 children in the age group between 5 and 14 could read Gàidhlig (54.3 %). In 2001, however, the corresponding figure regarding pupils of 5 to 15 years of age was 102 of 122 (83.6 %)! A positive sign but it has to be stated that the latter figure constituted fewer than 50 % of the whole school roll. The majority of children was not able to read Gàidhlig although all schools on Barraigh nominally operated a bilingual school policy. There seemed to be much room for improvement on this issue.

The situation was not helped by the fact that only one of the two primary schools provided Gàidhlig medium education: *Bàgh a'Chaisteil* (Castlebay). The other school at *Eòilgearraidh* (Eoligarra) in the north of the island remained an entirely “bilingual” school. Since the 2001 census pre-school developments have been slightly improved by the establishment of a Gàidhlig-medium day nursery at *Bàgh a'Chaisteil*. In 2003/2004 6 children aged 3 or 4 were enrolled. But Gàidhlig-medium is still a minority affair on Barraigh (see fig. 9).



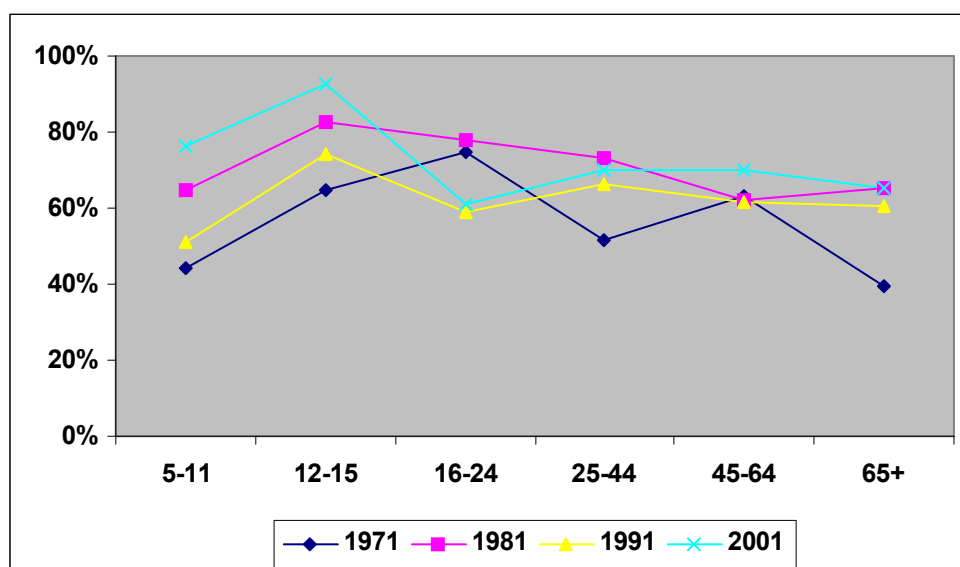


Fig. 6: Persons able to read *Gàidhlig* as a percentage of *Gàidhlig*-speakers on *Barraigh* in different age groups (1971-2001)



3 Digression: The Situation of 2001 in Focus

Census results for 2001 were the most comprehensive and detailed information base ever provided for Scotland. This was also true for the inclusion of questions on *Gàidhlig* language knowledge. Two new aspects were introduced:

1. Persons were asked whether they were “able to understand spoken Gaelic”.
2. Children under the age of 3 were enumerated regarding their language abilities.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: The more recent census data of 2011 were not as detailed as 2001 regarding generational differences in language use. Therefore 2001 is used here as baseline for research purposes. The following sections describe the distribution of language abilities in general terms (inter-generational and community by community) and the specific conditions of the younger age groups in local primary school catchments.

3.1 General overview: *Gàidhlig* language capabilities in 2001

The ability of speaking or understanding spoken *Gàidhlig* was still recorded by a majority of inhabitants of *Barraigh* in 2001. In general, the following conclusions may be drawn from the 2001 census information (special consideration of educational aspects are dealt with in section 3.2 concerning school catchments):

- There was a constant decrease in *Gàidhlig* language abilities (fig. 7) from older to younger generations. Roughly half of the pre-school children knew the language. It is not clear whether the higher percentages in the 0-2 age group (compared to the 3-4 age group) were signs of a turning point enabled by parent & child groups and a greater enthusiasm of the parents towards the language.
- A considerable decrease in *Gàidhlig*-speaking had occurred since 1991 (table 6) especially in younger age groups. In the age cohort of 3-24 the percentage of *Gàidhlig*-speakers was down by over 14 %.
- Results were not the same over the whole island. The north-eastern part around *Eòligearraidh* (Eoligarry), *Bruarnais* (Bruernish) and *Breibhig* (Brevig) withstood the downward trend very successfully. On the other hand, the main population centre of *Bàgh a'Chaisteil* (Castlebay) and the island of *Bhatarsaigh* (Vatersay) experienced the greatest losses (table 12).
- Literacy in the language was still improving with two thirds of speakers being able to read and over one half of speakers able to write the language. Here approximately the same level of knowledge was reached as in the other Catholic islands of *Uibhist a Deas* and *Beinn a'Bhaoghla* (see Vol. 03 of this series). This, however, is still far short of the literacy levels attained in the Protestant islands of *Uibhist a Tuath* (North Uist), *Na Hearadh* (Harris) or *Leòdhas* (Lewis) further north.
- In the new category of children aged less than 3 years *Barraigh* did show an encouraging sign with 43.2 % able to speak *Gàidhlig* and even 62.2 % understanding spoken *Gàidhlig*.
- In addition to those persons able to speak *Gàidhlig* (68.5 % of the population), 103 inhabitants (9.1 %) were at least able to understand, read or write the language.



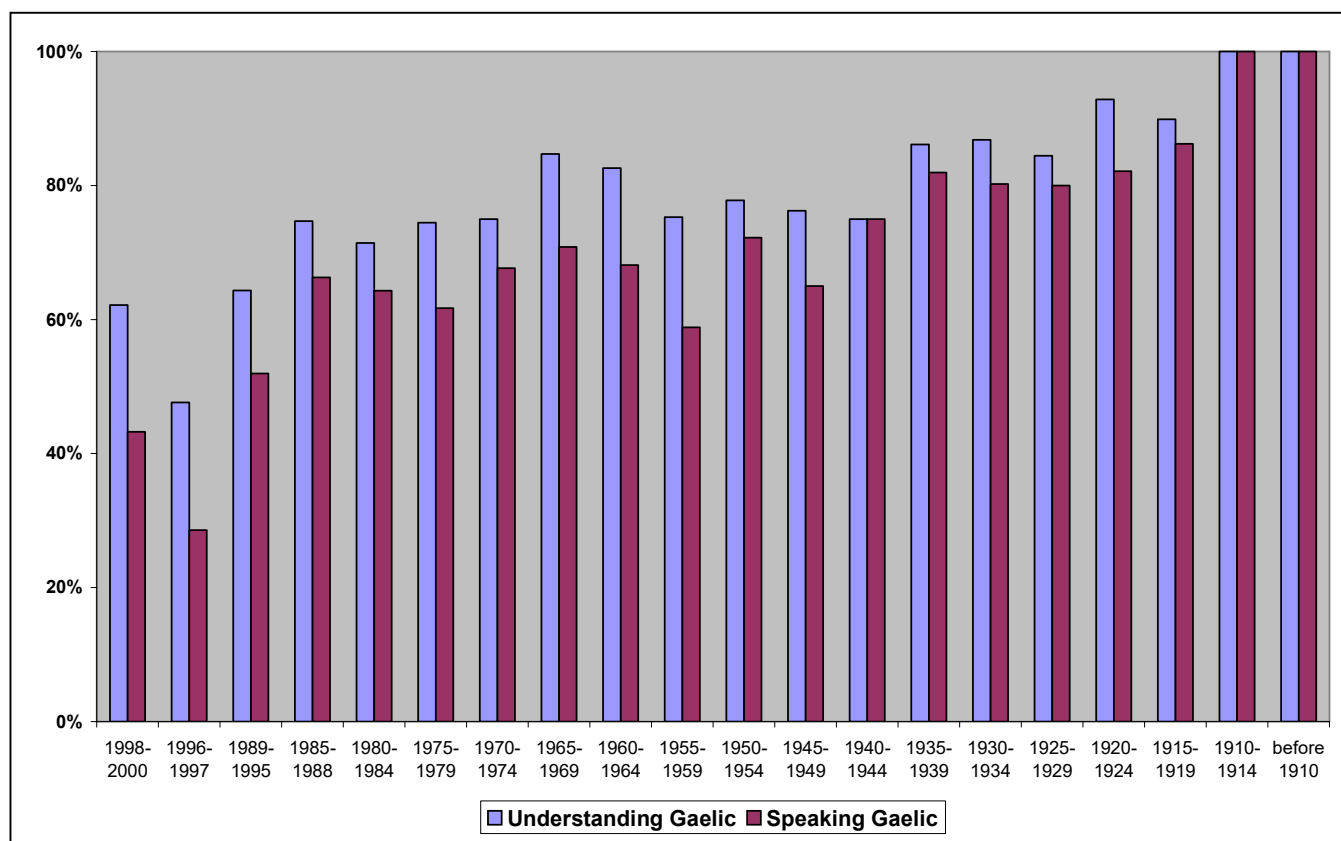


Fig. 7: Percentage of population able to understand or speak *Gàidhlig* and year of birth – area of *Barraigh* (Barra) according to Census 2001

Age group	2001						1991		Diff. 2001 – 1991
	Knowing ¹⁴ Gàidhlig		Able to speak & read Gàidhlig		Able to speak Gàidhlig		Able to speak Gàidhlig		
0-2	23	62.2 %	1	2.7 %	16	43.2 %	n/a	n/a	n/a
3-4	10	47.6 %	-	-	6	28.6 %	10	37.0 %	-8.4 %
5-11	83	64.3 %	51	39.5 %	67	51.9 %	90	67.7 %	-15.8 %
12-15	62	74.7 %	51	61.4 %	55	66.3 %	78	74.3 %	-9.0 %
16-24	65	73.0 %	34	38.2 %	56	62.9 %	150	72.8 %	-9.9 %
3-24	220	68.3 %	136	42.2 %	184	57.1 %	328	69.8 %	-12.7 %
All ages	904	77.1 %	545	46.5 %	794	67.7 %	954	72.5 %	- 4.8 %
Difference	-8.8 %		-4.3 %		-10.6 %		- 5.7 %		

Table 7: Knowledge of *Gàidhlig* in younger age groups in *Barraigh* (Barra) in 2001 and 1991

In conclusion: *Barraigh* still had a significant *Gàidhlig* community background in 2001. All islanders lived in neighbourhoods in which around 80 % of the population at least understood spoken *Gàidhlig* (fig. 8). But the difference of speaking ability between the younger age groups of 3 to 24 and the total population were generally significant and in the order of 10 % (table 6).

¹⁴ Persons able to understand spoken *Gàidhlig* and/or able to speak, read or write *Gàidhlig*.



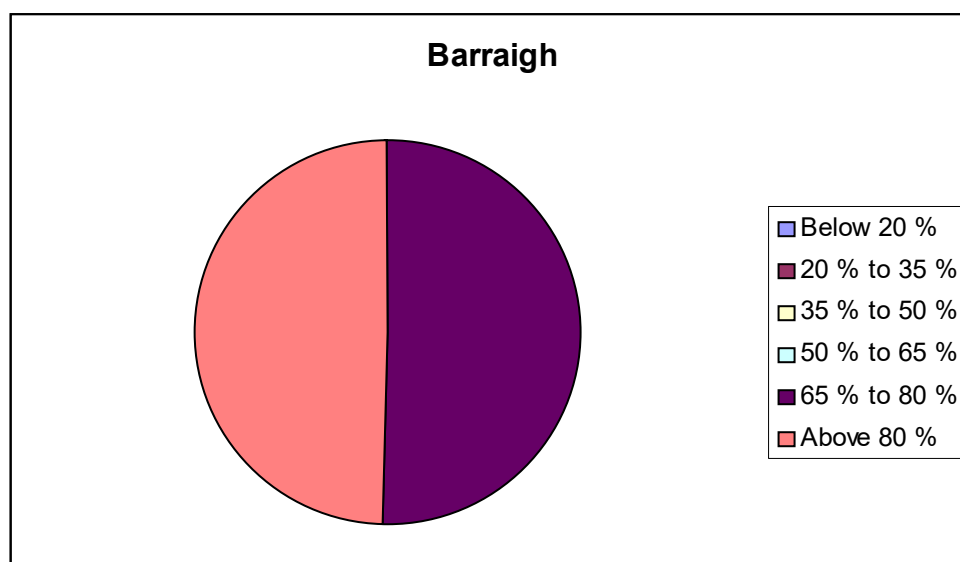


Fig. 8: Share of population living in neighbourhoods (census output areas) with different intensity of language knowledge in Barraigh (Barra) according to Census 2001

3.2 Children with knowledge of Gàidhlig in primary school catchments

The small area statistics for the catchment areas of local primary schools underlined the influence of local authority and parental attitudes towards *Gàidhlig*. It is possible to calculate numbers and percentages for different age groups for each individual school catchment area. For the purpose of this investigation, they have been attributed to pre-school age (0-4), primary school age (5-11) and secondary school age (12-15). As an additional indicator a column is provided in table 7 with the age group of 24-35 which is meant to represent the language abilities of possible parents.

Knowledge of <i>Gàidhlig</i> (Census 2001) in Primary School Catchment Areas <i>Barraigh</i>								
Primary School	“Pre-School” Age 0-4		“Primary” Age 5-11		“Secondary” Age 12-15		“Parents” Age 25-34	
<i>Eòligearraidh</i> (Eoligaray)	6	75.0 %	16	76.2 %	18	78.3 %	23	88.5 %
<i>Baile na Crèige</i> (Craigston)	6	60.0 %	20	74.1 %	8	61.5 %	17	81.0 %
<i>Bàgh a’Chaisteil</i> (Castlebay)	21	52.5 %	47	58.0 %	36	76.6 %	72	77.4 %

Table 8: Number and percentage of persons with knowledge of *Gàidhlig* in selected age groups for primary school catchment areas according to the census 2001

Looking at the various age groups the following statements can be provided:

- Pre-school children: The intensity of *Gàidhlig*-speaking children was highest in the north of the island. The impact of the existence of *Cròileagan Bàgh a’Chaisteil* cannot be deduced from the census figures but it is probable that a fair number of other “mother-tongue” speakers were recorded on the island. This is in itself a very positive sign of language maintenance.



- Primary school children: 28 children attended the GMU at *Bàgh a'Chaisteil* in the 2000-2001 school year (out of a total of 137 children), this means 20.4 % of all primary pupils on the island. The remaining pupils experienced “bilingual” mainstream education which especially in the two rural primary schools seemed to be working satisfactorily (table 7) with three quarters of the pupils at least knowing the language. The establishment of a *sràdagan* on the island might have had also a positive influence on the use of the language in primary school age.
- Secondary school children: In the secondary stages of S1 and S2 approximately one half of the children (18 out of 38 pupils) were learning *Gàidhlig* as “fluent speakers” in school year 2000-2001, the rest received language lessons as “learners”. Only 6 of these 18 “fluent speakers” had attended GME. It is therefore highly probable that the remaining speakers originated from *Gàidhlig*-speaking families whose children went through so-called mainstream education.
- Parents: Language maintenance was relatively successful in the two rural school catchments with over 80 % of parents knowing *Gàidhlig*. Parents in the *Bàgh a'Chaisteil* catchment did show comparable language proficiency but the pre-school and primary school population figures are substantially lower.

Generally, these figures did prove the still important role of the language in school life but figures are still less than those obtained during the heydays of the bilingual project around 1981.



4 Future Perspectives – 2011 and beyond

The 2011 census results can also be used to predict future developments because major underlying facts cannot be changed within a time span of a few years. *Barraigh* is still one of the strongest *Gàidhlig*-speaking communities in Scotland albeit on a lower level than in previous decades. There is, however, a certain bias in the age structure of the language community towards the older generation giving a negative language viability indicator (LVI¹⁵) of – 7.3 % (table 8). Compared with the language intensity for the whole island chain the conditions on *Barraigh* look nevertheless healthier.

Area	Barraigh – Census 2011					Gàidhlig as home language (% of speakers)
	Knowledge of Gàidhlig					
	Young age (3-15)		All ages		Difference (Language viability indicator)	
Barraigh (Barra)	137	64.0%	871	71.3%	- 7.3 %	80.9 %
In comparison: Na h- Eileanan an Iar (Western Isles)	48.8 %		61.2 %		- 12.4 %	76.8 %

Table 9: Intergenerational viability and *Gàidhlig* as home language in *Barraigh* (Barra) in comparison with the whole *Na h-Eileanan an Iar* (Western Isles) according to census data of 2011

The strength of the language in individual island communities varies considerably. Census output areas generally show strong LVI values but, however, still show negative numbers. Strongest language communities regarding *Gàidhlig* speakers are *Nasg* (Nast) with 75.8 % and *Eòiligearaidh* (Eoligaray) with 74.8 %. Intergenerational viability is especially healthy in the south of the island (table 4).

The overall temporal evolution of *Gàidhlig*-medium primary education on the island is depicted in fig. 9 for the period 1992-2023. For example, in the 2023-24 session 53 pupils (63.1 %) attended the GMU in *Bàgh a'Chaisteil*.

In conclusion: The *Gàidhlig* language on *Barraigh* is still important as a community language although on a slightly lower level than in previous decades. Intergenerational language maintenance was almost achieved in the south-eastern part of the island. The decrease of *Gàidhlig*-speaking in younger age groups since 1981 is still ongoing but it is slowing down because of GME and *Gàidhlig* pre-school education.

¹⁵ LVI: The “Language Viability Indicator” is a measure of the prospective reproductivity of language speakers in a community. It is here defined on the basis of 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.



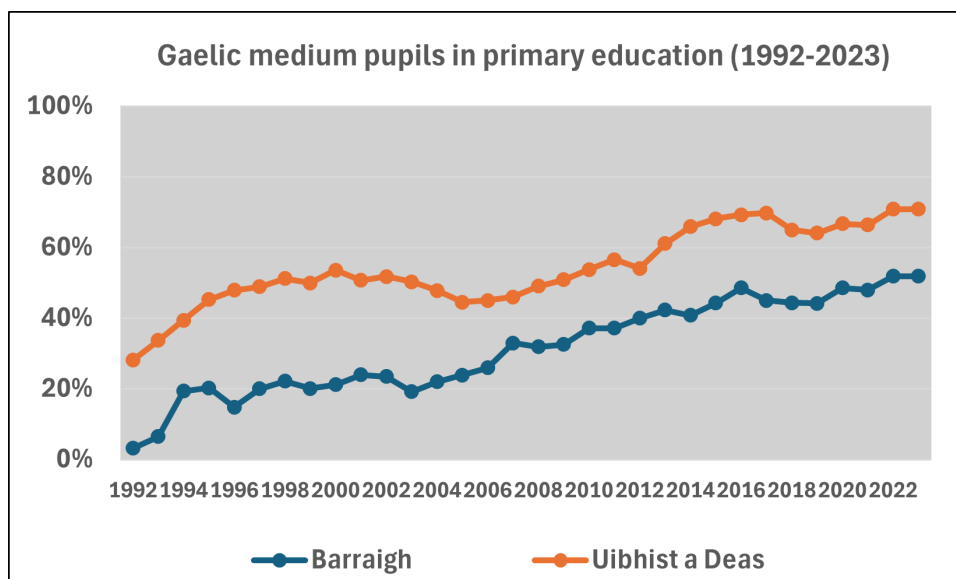


Fig. 9: Share of primary school children attending *Gàidhlig*-medium classes on *Barraigh* and neighbouring *Uibhist a Deas* (September 1992 – September 2023)¹⁶

¹⁶ Gaelic Dept, University of Strathclyde.



Supplementary Tables

Gaelic and Gaelic only between 1881 and 1971: <i>Barraigh</i>	Total Popula- tion	<i>Gàidhlig</i> and Eng- lish	<i>Gàidhlig</i> but no English
Census/Selected Area			
1881 (Speaking “habitually” Gaelic)	2,161	1,937	
<i>Barraigh</i> (Barra) – island proper only	1,834	1,675	
<i>Beàrnaraigh Cheann Bharraigh</i> (Berneray – Barra Head)	57	48	
<i>Fuideigh</i> (Fuda)	6	6	
<i>Heliassaigh</i> (Hellisay)	9	9	
<i>Miùghalaigh</i> (Mingulay)	150	146	
<i>Pabaigh</i> (Pabbay)	26	25	
<i>Sanndraigh</i> (Sanderay)	10	10	
<i>Bhatarsaigh</i> (Vatersay)	19	18	
1891	2,365	872	1,347
----- Villages and islands (included in the above) ---			
<i>Bàgh a’Chaisteil</i> (Castlebay) Vi	82	57	6
<i>Ceann Tangabhal</i> (Kentangaval) Vi	260	110	139
<i>Gleann & Gearraidh Gadhal</i> (Glen & Garrygall) Vi	346	220	89
<i>Barraigh</i> (Barra) – island proper only	2,125	846	1,143
<i>Beàrnaraigh Cheann Bharraigh</i> (Berneray – Barra Head)	36	4	26
<i>Fuideigh</i> (Fuda)	7	-	7
<i>Miùghalaigh</i> (Mingulay)	142	5	135
<i>Pabaigh</i> (Pabbay)	13	1	12
<i>Sanndraigh</i> (Sanderay)	4	-	4
<i>Bhatarsaigh</i> (Vatersay)	32	16	14
1901	2,545	1,195	1,136
----- Villages and islands (included in the above) ---			
<i>Bàgh a’Chaisteil</i> (Castlebay) Vi	145	81	36
<i>Ceann Tangabhal</i> (Kentangaval) Vi	334	180	129
<i>Gleann & Gearraidh Gadhal</i> (Glen & Garrygall) Vi	353	194	149
<i>Barraigh</i> (Barra) – island proper only	2,362	1,101	1,077
<i>Beàrnaraigh Cheann Bharraigh</i> (Berneray – Barra Head)	17	9	3
<i>Fuideigh</i> (Fuda)	4	-	3
<i>Miùghalaigh</i> (Mingulay)	135	77	35
<i>Pabaigh</i> (Pabbay)	11	2	9
<i>Sanndraigh</i> (Sanderay)	3	2	1
<i>Bhatarsaigh</i> (Vatersay)	13	4	8
1911 <i>Barraigh</i> (Barra) CP	2,620	1,822	621
1921 <i>Barraigh</i> (Barra) CP	2,456	1,667	464
1931 <i>Barraigh</i> (Barra) CP	2,250	1,565	401
1951 <i>Barraigh</i> (Barra) CP	1,884	1,574	118
1961	1,467	1,221	38
<i>Barraigh a Tuath</i> (Barra North) CCED	438	381	10
<i>Barraigh a Deas</i> (Barra South) CCED	1,029	840	28
1971 ¹⁷ <i>Barraigh</i> (Barra) CP	1,090	890	20

Table 10: Number of persons speaking *Gàidhlig* between 1881 and 1971 – selected areas (civil parish, villages, electoral divisions or inhabited islands) in *Barraigh*

¹⁷ 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 888 and 892” and “between 16 and 24” respectively.



Percentage of population speaking Gàidhlig but no English in island parishes of former Inverness-shire ¹⁸					
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 11: Percentage of persons speaking Gàidhlig but no English (aged three years and over) for different age groups in island parishes of former Inverness-shire according to census data from 1891 to 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
Barraigh (Tuath) (Barra (North) CCED)	BN	391 94.7 %	276 93.6 %	365 90.0 %	270 70.4 %	257 69.9 %
Barraigh (Deas) (Barra (South) CCED)	BS	868 89.0 %	634 87.4 %	760 84.0 %	684 78.2 %	521 64.8 %

Table 12: 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) according to census data from 1961 to 2001

¹⁸ 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: Barraigh</i> ¹⁹						
Map No	Census output area ²⁰	Age groups				Born in Scotland ²¹
		3 - 24	25 - 44	45 - 64	65+	
01	<i>Bhatarsaigh</i> (Vatersay)	42 87.5%	13 92.9%	12 80.0%	25 100%	90 94.7%
02	<i>Borgh & Tangasdal</i> (Borve & Tangasdal)	86 95.6%	49 89.1%	32 100%	34 97.1%	190 91.3%
03 + 04	<i>Bàgh a'Chaisteil</i> (Castlebay)	96 78.0%	55 64.0%	32 80.0%	48 96.0%	230 83.3%
05	<i>Bàgh a'Chaisteil & An Gleann</i> (Castlebay & Glen)	43 89.6%	26 78.8%	21 100%	22 100%	109 89.3%
06	<i>Bruarnais & Buaile nam Bodach</i> (Bruernish & Bualnabodach)	36 61.0%	33 94.3%	23 92.0%	23 92.0%	114 83.8%
07	<i>Baile na Crèige & Grèin</i> (Craigston)	29 100%	19 90.5%	17 100%	18 100%	80 100.0%
08	<i>Breibhig & Earsaraidh</i> (Brevig & Earsary)	70 84.3%	24 68.6%	21 72.4%	20 90.9%	133 77.3%
09	<i>Eòligearraidh</i> (Eoligarry)	64 97.0%	34 100%	29 93.5%	19 90.5%	140 99.3%
	<i>Bàgh a Tuath</i> (Northbay)	8 100%	4 66.7%	5 100%	8 80.0%	24 88.9%
Total	<i>Barraigh</i> (Barra)	474 86.7%	255 80.2%	192 89.7%	215 95.6%	1,109 85.3%

Table 13: Population with Gàidhlig knowledge in output areas of Barraigh (Barra) according to age group and birthplace in 1981.

¹⁹ Figures may not add up exactly because of measures to keep returns anonymous.

²⁰ A more detailed list of all locations in each output area is to be found in section IV.

²¹ Scottish born population aged 3 years and over.



Number and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers ²² <i>Barraigh</i>							
Map No	Census output area ²³	1981		1991		2001	
01	<i>Bhatarsaigh</i> (Vatersay)	90	88.3 %	56	82.3 %	53	56.4 %
02	<i>Borgh</i> (Borve)	194	91.5 %	191	88.0 %	128	74.4 %
03	<i>Bàgh a'Chaisteil</i> (Castlebay) a	234	78.2 %	100	69.4 %	72	52.9 %
04	<i>Bàgh a'Chaisteil</i> (Castlebay) b			111	75.5 %	103	64.4 %
05	<i>Bàgh a'Chaisteil</i> (Castlebay) c	112	91.0 %	85	78.7 %	70	72.2 %
06	<i>Bruarnais</i> (Bruernish)	114	80.3 %	86	59.7 %	91	76.5 %
07	<i>Baile na Crèige</i> (Craigston)	79	93.0 %	58	70.8 %	63	61.7 %
08	<i>Breibhig</i> (Brevig)	130	76.9 %	141	73.8 %	105	72.4 %
09	<i>Eòlìgearraidh</i> (Eoligaray)	144	95.4 %	126	80.3 %	109	74.2 %
	<i>Bàgh a Tuath</i> (Northbay)	28	100. %				

Table 14: Number and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers for the census output areas in *Barraigh* (Barra) according to data from 1981 to 2001

<i>Barraigh: Gàidhlig-speaking in Age Groups (1971-2001)</i>								
Age group	1971 ²⁴		1981		1991		2001	
0-2²⁵	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	16	43.2 %
3-4	35 (+10)	81.8 %	32	68.1 %	10	37.0 %	6	28.6 %
5-24	235 (+4)	83.9 %	433	86.6 %	318	71.9 %	178	59.1 %
25-44	175	87.5 %	256	80.5 %	215	73.9 %	194	66.0 %
45-64	190 (+2)	87.3 %	194	90.6 %	265	84.9 %	229	73.4 %
65 +	255 (+4)	99.6 %	218	96.9 %	146	81.1 %	171	82.6 %
Total (3 years and over)	890 (+20)	89.2 %	1,125	82.1 %	954	76.3 %	778	68.5 %
Born in Scotland	n/a	n/a	1,098	84.5 %	924	79.2 %	762	76.0 %

Table 15: Number and percentage of Gàidhlig-speakers in different age groups in *Barraigh* (Barra) according to data from 1971 to 2001

²² Statistical base is the population aged 3 years and over for 1981 and 1991 and the total population in 2001.

²³ Information on data for individual census output areas may not be available for every census to prevent the disclosure of individuals. A more detailed list of locations for each output area is to be found in Annex D.

²⁴ 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).

²⁵ Information only available since 2001.



Map No.	Output Area	Knowledge of Gàidhlig in 2001					
		Young age (0-24)		All ages		Difference (Language viability indicator)	Born in Scotland (Language community indicator)
01	<i>Bhatarsaigh</i> (Vatersay)	20	57.1 %	62	66.0 %	- 8.9 %	73.8 %
02	<i>Borgh</i> (Borve)	29	80.6 %	145	84.3 %	- 3.7 %	88.1 %
03	<i>Bàgh a'Chaisteil a</i> (Castlebay a)	35	54.7 %	89	65.4 %	- 10.7 %	65.9 %
04	<i>Bàgh a'Chaisteil b</i> (Castlebay b)	38	67.9 %	123	76.9 %	- 9.0 %	80.3 %
05	<i>Bàgh a'Chaisteil c</i> (Castlebay c)	8	53.3 %	76	78.4 %	- 25.0 %	81.7 %
06	<i>Bruarnais</i> (Bruernish)	26	74.3 %	98	82.4 %	- 8.1 %	86.2 %
07	<i>Baile na Crèige</i> (Craigston)	22	56.4 %	74	72.6 %	- 16.2 %	81.4 %
08	<i>Breibhig</i> (Brevig)	36	83.7 %	120	82.8 %	+ 0.9 %	86.6 %
09	<i>Eòligearraidh</i> (Eoligaray)	29	80.6 %	117	79.6 %	+ 1.0 %	83.0 %

Table 16: Intergenerational viability and Gàidhlig-speakers born in Scotland in Barraigh (Barra) according to census data of 2001



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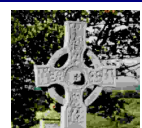
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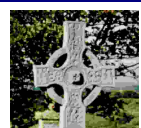
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III. Some Valuable Comments about Census Information

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 being able to speak the language. Without this choice some of them might have enlisted themselves or their children as *Gàidhlig*-speaking in order 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 actually 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>Barraigh</i>				
Map No.	Census output area ²⁶	Area Codes		
		1961 1971	1981 1991	2001
01	<i>Eilean Bhatarsaigh</i> (Isle of Vatersay)	BS	56AA03	60RJ000188
02	<i>Borgh</i> (Borve), <i>Nasg</i> , <i>Ceann Tangabhal & Tangasdal</i>		56AA04	60RJ000001
03	<i>Bàgh a'Chaisteil</i> (Castlebay)		56AA05A	60RJ000002
04	<i>Bàgh a'Chaisteil</i> (Castlebay) & <i>Caisteal Chiosmuil</i>		56AA05B	60RJ000194
05	<i>Bàgh a'Chaisteil</i> (Castlebay), <i>Gleann & Gearraidh Gadhal</i>		56AA06	60RJ000003
06	<i>Bruarnais</i> (Bruernish), <i>Bàgh Shiarabhagh</i> , <i>Buaile nam Boddach</i> , <i>Bogach & Rubha Lios</i>	BN	56AA07	60RJ000004
07	<i>Baile na Crèige</i> (Craigston), <i>Cliaid</i> , <i>Grèin</i> , <i>Allathasdal & Cuidhir</i>		56AA08	60RJ000005
08	<i>Breibhig</i> (Brevig), <i>Earsaraidh</i> (Earsary), <i>Sgallairidh & Leinis</i>	BS	56AA11	60RJ000007
09	<i>Eòligearraidh</i> (Eoligarry), <i>Aird Mhòr</i> , <i>Aird Mhidhinis & Bàgh Shiarabhagh</i>	BN	56AA09 56AA10	60RJ000006

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

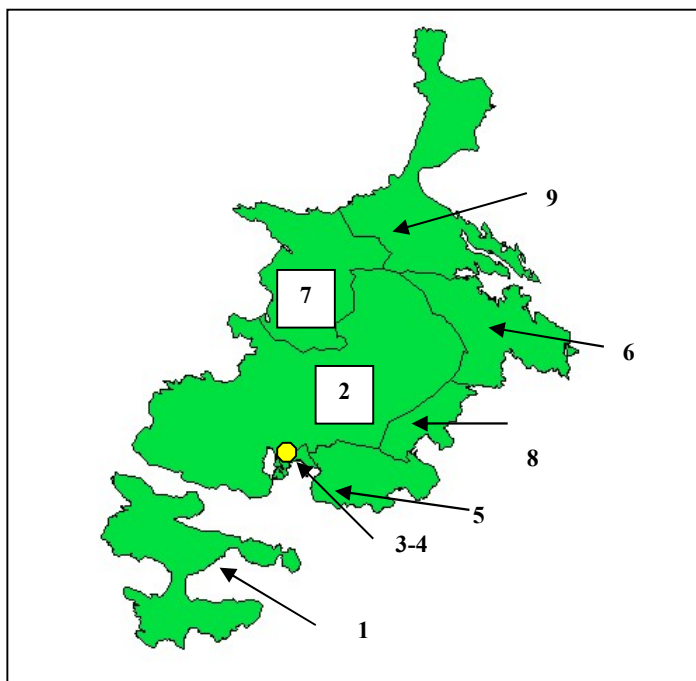


Fig. 10: Overview map of census output areas on *Eilean Bharraigh* (Isle of Barra) - numbers are provided in table A-1 above (Digital boundaries courtesy of Ordnance Survey as part of the Geography Products provided by GROS for the 2001 census).

²⁶ Placenames are given according to official information by the Ordnance Survey as they are used in modern maps. The placenames in the Outer Hebrides do have officially *Gàidhlig* names and the „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.



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VII. List of Abbreviations

There are a number of 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
Vi	Village according to census definition in 1881, 1891 and 1901



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