Scottish Gaelic

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Introduction

Scottish Gaelic is a minority language of Scotland spoken by approximately 58,000 people, or 1% of the Scottish population (Census 2011). Here, we refer to the language as 'Gaelic', pronounced in British English as /galɪk/, as is customary within the Gaelic-speaking community. In Gaelic, the language is referred to as *Gàidhlig* /kaːlɪc/. Gaelic is a Celtic language, closely related to Irish (MacAulay 1992, Ní Chasaide 1999, Gillies 2009). Although Gaelic was widely spoken across much of Scotland in medieval times (Withers 1984, Clancy 2009), the language has recently declined in traditional areas such as the western seaboard and western islands of Scotland and is now considered 'definitely endangered' by UNESCO classification (Moseley 2010). Analysis of the location of Gaelic speakers in Scotland and maps from the most recent Census in 2011 can be found in National Records of Scotland (2015). Figure 1 shows the location of Gaelic speakers in Scotland as a percentage of the inhabitants aged over three in each Civil Parish who reported being able to speak Gaelic in the 2011 Census.

<INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE>

A dialect of Gaelic in East Sutherland was once described as a prototypical case of language obsolescence (Dorian 1981) but the language is now undergoing significant revitalisation measures (e.g. McLeod 2006). These include the introduction of nursery, primary and secondary immersion schooling in Gaelic, as well as adult learning classes, more university degree courses, and many other public and private initiatives. Many of these activities are coordinated by the Gaelic Language Board (Bòrd na Gàidhlig), which was

created as a result of the 2005 Gaelic Language Act (Scotland). The language act states that Gaelic holds the same legal status as English in Scotland.

The speaker in the speech samples associated with this contribution is a male in his fifties. He was born and raised in Ness, a Gaelic-speaking community in the north of the Isle of Lewis, and is currently working at the University of Glasgow. Lewis is the most northerly island in the chain of islands known as the Outer Hebrides, or the Western Isles. It is the part of Scotland where the densest concentration of Gaelic speakers resides (52% Gaelic-speaking, 2011 Census). His speech can be considered representative of the middle-aged generation of fluent traditional Lewis Gaelic speakers, with some more levelled features due to his time in Glasgow among speakers of other dialects. We have noted where his Lewis dialect diverges significantly from other Hebridean dialects. The recordings were made onto a laptop computer in the noise-attenuated sound studio at the University of Glasgow using a Beyerdynamic Opus 55 headset and a Sound Devices USBPre2 pre-amplifier and analogue-to-digital converter.

Consonants

'Broad' and 'Slender'

Similar to Irish, Gaelic consonants have a palatalised and a non-palatalised series. These are often referred to as 'slender' and 'broad' consonants respectively in the Gaelic literature and teaching materials (e.g. MacAulay 1992, Gillies 2009, Ó Maolalaigh & MacAonghais 2008, Bauer 2011). Several consonants do not take part in this alternation: /m v h/. Borgstrøm (1940:17) suggests that no labial(-dental) consonants have the alternation in Scottish Gaelic but recent articulatory work on Irish confirms that in Irish /p^h p f/ do have palatalised counterparts (Ní Chiosáin & Padgett 2012), so we follow their work and Ladefoged et al. (1998). See also Oftedal (1965) and MacAulay (1968) for further comments on this topic. In

Table 1 we have shown the non-palatalised series on the top row of each cell, and the palatalised series below where possible. Laterals, rhotics and alveolar/dental nasals are discussed separately below. Sample words are shown in Table 2.

<INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE>

<INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE>

The only sounds with actively velarised counterparts are laterals and dental/alveolar nasals, which are discussed separately below. Some accounts of Irish have suggested that some other non-palatalised sounds are velarised, specifically /pˠ bˠ fˠ mˠ t̪ˠ d̪ˠ sˠ/ (Ní Chasaide 1999:35). This has not been reported for Gaelic, see Borgstrøm (1940:17), Gillies (2009:239), Ladefoged et al. (1998:3), Ternes (2006:18), Bosch (2010:268–269). Ní Chiosáin & Padgett (2012:174) state that in Irish, the contrast is manifested as palatalised vs. non-palatalised before back vowels and palatalised vs. velarised before front vowels. In Irish, the example most commonly used is the contrast between *buí* 'yellow' /bˠi/ and *bí* 'be!' /bʲi/ (see Ní Chasaide 1999 for audio recordings). The analogous context in Gaelic is not produced with velarisation e.g. *puing* 'point' [pʰəin̠ʲc]; *buidhe* 'yellow' [pui.ə]; *tuigsinn* 'understanding' [t̪ʰikʃĩ]; *duine* 'anyone' [t̪in̠ʲə]; *muinntir* 'people' [məin̠ʲt͡ʃʰəð]; *suidhe* 'sit' [sui.ə].

The broad/slender distinction manifests in a change of primary place of articulation for sounds produced further back than those discussed so far. For example, the palatalised dental/coronal stops are most commonly post-alveolar affricates, although some speakers produce alveolo-palatal affricates. Similarly, /ʃ/ is the palatalised counterpart to /s/. The

palatalised counterparts to /kʰ/ and /k/ are produced as palatal stops /cʰ/ and /c/ respectively

(e.g. Borgstrøm 1940:17). /x/ and /ç/ are a broad and slender pair respectively, as are /ɣ/ and

/j/.

Initial consonant mutations

A feature common to all the Celtic languages is the existence of initial consonant mutations, a

system of consonantal alternations under certain morphophonological conditions. The most

common mutation in Gaelic, and the only one recognised in orthography, is lenition. This

mutation occurs in contexts such as feminine singular nominative nouns after the definite

article, feminine attributive adjectives, the dative case with the definite article, and the

vocative of proper nouns. For full details about the contexts where lenition occurs see Ó

Maolalaigh (1996) and Byrne (2002). Examples of lenition are show in Table 3. This table

shows the broad transcription of lenited consonants; Archangeli et al. (2014) note there may

be phonetic differences between lenited and 'underlying' consonants i.e. incomplete

neutralisation (see also Welby et al. 2017 for incomplete neutralisation in Irish).

A second initial consonant mutation, not shown in orthography, and not realised in all

dialects, is known as nasalisation or eclipsis. The phenomenon in Gaelic is somewhat

different from the Irish phenomenon of eclipsis, which is recognised in orthography (Ó

Maolalaigh 1996). In Gaelic, there is some dialectal variation in the realisation of eclipsis and

its realisation is not obligatory. For details see Gillies (2009:251–252) and Ó Maolalaigh

(1996). Eclipsis occurs after closely grammatically related items such as the definite article

and noun or adjectives ending in a nasal consonant and noun.

<INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE>

Aspiration

In word initial position, stops are either voiceless unaspirated or voiceless post-aspirated. In word-medial and word-final position, the stop series are either voiceless unaspirated or voiceless pre-aspirated (Borgstrøm 1940, Oftedal 1956, Ladefoged et al. 1998, Ó Maolalaigh 2010, Nance & Stuart-Smith 2013). Pre-aspiration is typically longest in velar/palatal stops and shortest in bilabials. The realisation of preaspiration varies from dialect to dialect. In Lewis it is typically a voiceless [h], but preaspiration can be more [x]-like especially preceding velar stops in dialects such as Barra (see Ó Murchú 1985). Instrumental evidence in Nance & Stuart-Smith (2013) suggest very little or no closure voicing even in word-medial stops which are orthographically *b d g*. For this reason we follow Ladefoged et al. (1998) in stating that the contrast is one of aspiration rather than voicing and use the transcriptions /pʰ/ and /p/ etc.

Laterals, Nasals and Rhotics

This subheading is shorthand to refer to laterals, dental/alveolar nasals and rhotics. Previous reports state that these sounds participate in a three-way contrast (Borgstrøm 1940, Oftedal 1956, Ní Chasaide 1979, Shuken 1980, Ladefoged et al. 1998, Ternes 2006, Nance 2013, 2014). In earlier forms of Gaelic, it is hypothesised that there was a four-way distinction between these sounds. The alleged distinction was as follows: palatalised and velarised dental variants contrasted with palatalised and velarised alveolar variants i.e. /l̪ʲ l̪ˠ lʲ lˠ/ (see, for example, Russell 1997:76). This previous four-way distinction has reduced to the three-way distinction, or two-way distinction in the case of rhotics, in most varieties of modern Gaelic

(see Ternes 2006:19 for details). We refer to the three sounds as 'palatalised', 'velarised' and 'alveolar' as shorthand for their full descriptions.

Laterals

The laterals in modern Gaelic are a velarised dental lateral, a palatalised dental lateral, and an alveolar lateral. Following static palatographic work in Shuken (1980) and Ladefoged et al. (1998), and descriptions in Borgstrøm (1940) and Oftedal (1956), we consider the palatalised lateral as palatalised, rather than palatal. Acoustically, the velarised lateral is characterised by low F2 and high F1, the palatalised lateral by high F2 and low F1, and the alveolar lateral lies in between these two extremes (Shuken 1980, Ladefoged et al. 1998, Nance 2013, 2014).

In word-initial position, our speaker produces three laterals: the velarised and palatalised laterals differ substantially e.g. *loch* 'lake' /l̪ˠɔx/ and *leabaidh* 'bed' /l̪ʲapi/. Very few lexical items, excluding recent borrowings, begin with the alveolar lateral, but this can be derived through the lenition initial consonant mutation. Generally speaking, the velarised and palatalised laterals, nasals and rhotics lose their secondary articulations in lenition conditions. For example, the lenited palatalised lateral becomes alveolar e.g. *leabaidh*, 'bed' /l̪ʲapi/ but *mo leabaidh* 'my bed' /mo lapi/. It has been reported that a lenited velarised lateral will become alveolar, but our speaker did not make this distinction. In word-medial position, there is a straightforward three-way contrast e.g. *callaid* 'fence' /kʰal̪ˠatʃ/, *coileach* 'cockerel' /kʰalɔx/, *cailleach* 'old woman' /kʰal̪ʲɔx/. Similarly, there is a three-way contrast in word-final position e.g. *dall* 'blind' /t̪aul̪ˠ/, *dàil* 'delay' /t̪aːl/, *caill* 'lose' /kʰail̪ʲ/.

Nasals

Descriptions in Borgstrøm (1940) and static palatography in Shuken (1980) describe the articulation of the three (dental/alveolar) nasals as /n̪ˠ/, /n/ and /n̪ʲ/. Velar and palatal variants of these sounds occur in the context of /k/ and /c/, for example *long* 'ship' [l̪ˠãũŋk], and *taing* 'thanks' [t̪ʰãĩɲc]. As these are the only contexts where [ŋ] and [ɲ] occur we consider them as allophones of /n̪ˠ/ and /n̪ʲ/ respectively (see also Borgstrøm 1940:77).

In word-initial position, there is a contrast between velarised and palatalised nasals, e.g. *nach* 'not' /n̪ˠax/, and *neach* 'person' /n̪ʲax/. Very few lexical items begin with alveolar nasal, but this can be derived through lenition. The lenitied palatalised nasal becomes alveolar e.g. *nighean* 'daughter' /n̪ʲi.ən/, *mo nighean* 'my daughter' /mo ni.ən/. Theoretically, the lenited velarised also becomes alveolar, but our speaker did not make this distinction. In word-medial position, there is a three-way contrast e.g. *Anna* 'Anna' /an̪ˠə/, *banais* 'wedding' /bɛnɪʃ/, *bainne* 'milk' /bɔn̪ʲə/. In word-final position, there is a three-way contrast e.g. *seann* 'old' /ʃaun̪ˠ/ (produced here as [ʃãũn̪ˠ] with a very short final nasal), *sean* 'grandfather' /ʃɛn/, *seinn* 'singing' /ʃəin̪ʲ/.

Rhotics

The rhotics also historically participated in the three-way distinction between velarised, alveolar and palatalised phonemes (Borgstrøm 1940, Oftedal 1956). In modern Gaelic however, most speakers have merged the velarised and alveolar rhotics (Ladefoged et al. 1998). Traditional descriptions indicate that the velarised rhotic is produced as a velarised trill (Borgstrøm 1940, Oftedal 1956), but most speakers now produce the velarised/alveolar

rhorics as taps or approximants, and trills are very rare in contemporary production

(Ó Dochartaigh 1997, Nance et al. 2016). The palatalised rhotic is often produced as a dental

fricative [ð] in Lewis and in other dialects. There is, however, substantial variation across

dialects in the production of this sound, with many dialects and individuals producing some

kind of tap or fricated tap (Ó Dochartaigh 1997). We have represented the current two-way

contrast as a distinction between /ɾ/ and /ɾʲ/ but it should be noted that there is substantial

variation in the production of these sounds.

In word-initial position, the palatalised variant is almost non-existent so the contrast is

effectively neutralised. The preposition *ri* 'to' /ɾʲi/ is reported to use the palatalised variant,

but our speaker did not produce this rhotic substantially different to the rhotic in, for example,

ràdh 'saying' /ɾaː/. In word-medial position, there is a two-way contrast e.g. *aran* 'bread'

/aɾan/, *aire* 'attention' /aɾʲə/ (produced as [aðə]). In word-final position there is also a two-

way contrast e.g. *car* 'somewhat' /kʰaɾ/, *air* 'on' /ɛɾʲ/ (produced as [ɛð]).

In the dialect presented here, clusters with rhotics, dental/alveolar stops, laterals, and

nasals tend to be produced as retroflex, and the rhotic as a retroflex approximant; for example,

thuirt 'said' [hʉɻʈ]. In *-rs* clusters, the rhotic and sibilant are often produced as retroflex; e.g.

carson 'why' [kʰaɻʂɔn]. In the vast majority of other Gaelic dialects, an audible [ʃ] or [ʂ]

occurs in *-rt* clusters; e.g. *thuirt* 'said' [hʉɻʂʈ]; in some dialects this also occurs in *-rd* (Watson

1990).

Vowels

Monophthongs

Gaelic has nine oral monophthongs, which can be long or short, these are shown in Figure 2 (acoustic data from the recording samples in this illustration). For acoustic analysis of a larger dataset focussing on the high back vowels, see Nance (2011). Sample words are given in Table 4. Long vowels are indicated by an accent grave in orthography. Generally, the long vowels are of similar acoustic quality to the short vowels, although they tend to be slightly more peripheral. The 'high back' vowels /ɤ ɯ/ are acoustically more central, or even front in the dialect represented here (Nance 2011). Borgstrøm (1940:11) describes these vowels as phonologically, rather than phonetically, back. The two previous dialect descriptions of Lewis Gaelic, Borgstrøm and Oftedal, do not use the modern IPA. We follow Ladefoged et al. (1998) in interpreting their symbols as /ɤ/ and /ɯ/. The vowel /u/ has two allophones, back [u̠] occurring in the environment of velarised sonorants, and central [ʉ] occurring elsewhere; for example *sùil* 'eye' [sʉːl], but *ubhal* 'apple' [u̠.əl̪ˠ]. The formant distribution of these two allophones is strikingly different; see Ladefoged et al. (1998) and Nance (2011). Similarly, /a/ is auditorily [ɑ] in the environment of velarised sonorants; for example *latha* 'day' [l̪ˠɑ.ə], but *leat* 'at you' [laʰt]. Long /ɛː/ is not common and has merged with /eː/ for some speakers, including our participant. In Lewis, a group of words containing orthographic *ea* before *g* are pronounced with /ɤ/, but /ɛ/ or /e/ in other dialects; e.g. *beag* 'small', *eaglais* 'church'.

<INSERT VOWEL QUADRILATERAL ABOUT HERE>
<INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE>
<INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE>

Nasal monophthongs

There are disagreements in the literature with reference to the number of nasal vowels in

Gaelic, and their nature. Borgstrøm (1940:13) reports five short nasal vowel phonemes, and

six long nasal vowel phonemes. Oftedal (1956:40), who was reporting on a dialect on the

eastern side of Lewis, describes nine short and seven long nasal vowel phonemes. It is also

important to note that Borgstrøm and Oftedal recorded participants born in the 1880s and

before, and this may not represent the contemporary situation. Even from these recordings,

Oftedal notes that nasality in vowels in 'one of the most elusive features' of the phonemics of

the dialect under investigation (1956:40), and suggests that nasality has 'little distinctive

value', referring to its very low functional load. Similarly, Borgstrøm (1940:13) states that

nasality has 'not a great functional value'. The degree of nasality appears to vary from dialect

to dialect and is also to some extent speaker-specific. Oftedal (1956:41) notes that even

between two of his participants, who were from the same village and married, there was great

variation as to the degree of nasality among their vowels. One person, he claimed, had nasal

vowels perceptibly similar to nasal vowels in French, whereas the other speaker has nasal

vowels similar to a speaker of General American (see also Ó Curnáin 2009 for analysis of

individuals in Irish). When listening to our sample sound files, there appears to be variable

amounts of nasality on different words, shown in Table 5. See Warner et al. (2015) and

Morrison (2015) for analysis of nasal airflow data. The quality of the nasal vowels is similar

to that of their oral counterparts so they are not repeated in a figure here.

Nasal vowels in Gaelic generally arose due to coarticualtion with an original nasal

consonant; for example *tàmh* 'rest' /t̪ʰãːv/. In this word, the orthographic *m* suggests there

was a bilabial nasal consonant historically, which is no longer pronounced. See Ó Maolalaigh

(2003) for an account of nasalisation processes in Gaelic. Some accounts suggest that the final

fricative in words such as *tàmh* is also nasalised (Borgstrøm 1940, Ternes 2006), but aerodynamic work suggests that this is not the case phonetically (in Warner et al.'s 2015 work on Skye, but see also Morrison 2015), and it has been suggested that these are unlikely in articulatory terms (Ohala 1975:300).

<INSERT TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE>

Diphthongs

Gaelic has a rich diphthongal system. Borgstrøm (1940:37) describes 14 phonemic diphthongs /ai ɛi ei ui ɤi au ɛu ɔu iə ia iɛ uə ua uɛ/, and Oftedal (1956:44) describes 10 /ei ui əi ai ɔu au iə ia uə ua/. We find that Oftedal's account best describes contemporary Gaelic.

These two previous descriptions do not specifically mention whether nasality in diphthongs should be considered a phonemic aspect or not. However, both give examples of nasal diphthongs. We asked our speaker to produce a large number of words listed by Borgstrøm and Oftedal as containing nasal diphthongs, but these were not consistently audibly nasal. We consider the contemporary situation to be that some words contain diphthongs with nasalisation, but nasalised diphthongs are not phonemic in the language. Sample words are given in Table 6.

<INSERT DIPTHONG REPRESENTATION HERE>
<INSERT TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE>

Prosody

Syllables, svarabhakti and hiatus

Gaelic syllable structure has been described as typically VC rather than the typologically

much more common CV (Clements 1986, Bosch 1998, Smith 1999). See Ní Chiosáin et al.

(2012) for experimental work on syllabification in Irish and similar discussion. Two classes

of Gaelic words will be described in more detail here, as they behave unusually within Gaelic

phonology: words containing a svarabhakti vowel, and 'hiatus' words. Certain consonant

sequences in Gaelic are broken up by a svarabhakti vowel, which is not represented in the

orthography; for example, *arm* 'army' [aɾam], *ainm* 'name' [anam], *balg* 'belly' [pal̪ˠak],

dorcha 'dark' [t̪ɔrɔxə], *Alba* 'Scotland' [al̪ˠapə]. Usually the svarabhakti vowel is a copy of

the preceding vowel (Borgstrøm 1940, Clements 1986, Bosch & de Jong 1997, Hall 2006).

Svarabhakti vowels in Gaelic occur where (1) The consonant preceding the svarabhakti vowel

is a sonorant, (2) The preceding vowel is short, (3) The consonant cluster is non-homorganic,

and (4) The second consonant is not a pre-aspirated plosive. Previous descriptions state that

svarabhakti vowels do not contribute to the syllable count of a word; for example, *falbh*

'going' [fal̪ˠav] is monosyllabic, but *falamh* 'empty' [fal̪ˠ.u] is disyllabic (Borgstrøm 1940,

Oftedal 1956, Bosch 1998). Recent experimental work (Hammond et al. 2014) suggests that

speaker perceptions are more complex: they found that words such as *falbh* were perceived as

not quite monosyllabic, but not quite disyllabic either. The svarabhakti vowels are described

as stressed, which is unusual for stress-initial Gaelic and also typologically (Borgstrøm

1937:77; Bosch & de Jong 1997).

'Hiatus' words in most cases refer to a class of words in which historic intervocalic

consonants are no longer pronounced; for example, *leabhar* 'book' [l̠ʲɔ.əɾ] compared to *gu*

leòr 'enough' [kə l̠ʲɔːɾ]; *rathad* 'road' [ra.ət̪], compared to *ràdh* 'saying' [rˠaː]. In the word

accent system of (Lewis) Gaelic (see below), words with a svarabhakti vowel such as *falbh*
'going' [faᶅˠav] are produced with the accent for monosyllabic words and words with hiatus
such as *leabhar* 'book' [ᶅʲɔ.ər] are produced with the accent for polysyllabic words. In other
dialects, hiatus is produced with an inserted glide, a period of creaky voice or a glottal stop
(Holmer 1938, Jones 2000, Ternes 2006:138).

Tone, intonation and stress

The Lewis dialect of Gaelic, along with north-west mainland dialects such as Applecross, is
described as having contrastive word accents (Borgstrøm 1940, Oftedal 1956, Dorian 1978,
Bosch & de Jong 1997, Ladefoged et al. 1998, Ternes 2006, Iosad 2015, Nance 2015a,
Morrison forthcoming). Southern Hebridean and other mainland dialects are not reported to
use this prosodic feature (see Ternes 2006:138 for details). Ternes (2006) provides the most
complete extensive of the Lewis Gaelic system. In this account, word accents correspond to
differences in syllabicity: monosyllabic words have a rising or level low pitch, whereas
polysyllabic words have a level high pitch, falling pitch, rising-falling pitch. This is
schematised in Figure 3. In general, speakers are often not consciously aware that their dialect
uses pitch contrastively. When Gaelic is taught, the dialects of Skye or Uist are more often
used as models, so tone is rarely, if ever, explicitly taught. Example pairs of words illustrating
the contrast are in Table 7, and spectrograms of the contrast between *falbh* 'going' [faᶅˠav]
and *falamh* 'empty' [faᶅˠ.u] are shown in Figure 4. Analysis of the word accent system from a
corpus of spontaneous speech is presented in Nance (2013, 2015a).

<INSERT FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE>

<INSERT TABLE 7 ABOUT HERE>

<INSERT FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE>

In terms of sentence intonation, the default pattern in declaratives is a fall in pitch (Oftedal 1956:36, Dorian 1978:37, MacAulay 1979). Borgstrøm (1940:53) additionally states that if the last syllable has a (lexical) rising word accent, the rise is often very reduced. MacAulay's descriptive account of common pitch patterns in Lewis intonation suggests that interrogatives may be realised with rising pitch.

In the vast majority of Gaelic words, the word-initial syllable is stressed. Exceptions are generally borrowings such as *buntàta* [punˈt̪ʰaːʰt̪] 'potatoes' and some adverbs such as *an-diugh* 'today' [ənˈt͡ʃʉ] and days of the week e.g. *Didòmhnaich* 'Sunday' [t͡ʃiˈt̪õː.niç]. Words containing a svarabhakti vowel (see above) are unusual in terms of stress and it has been claimed that both vowels bear stress (Bosch & de Jong 1997).

Airstream mechanisms

A final notable feature of Gaelic prosody is the extensive use of the ingressive airstream mechanism, especially in the last word of a phrase and discourse markers expressing agreement (Lamb 2003, Thom 2005, Eklund 2008). This use of ingressives is informally referred to as the 'Gaelic gasp'.

Sociolinguistic variation

Gaelic's endangered and minority status means that the language is susceptible to rapid and extensive change. This illustration discusses the phonetic and phonological characteristics of conservative Gaelic as spoken by older or middle-aged speakers from (at least formerly) Gaelic-dominant communities. Younger speakers may sound substantially different to the

variety of Gaelic described here. For example, nasal vowels are rare in the speech of younger speakers (see also Ó Curnáin 2009:333 for Irish). The word accent system described above is not used by younger speakers from any background (Nance 2015a, Nance 2015b). Some younger speakers do not produce the three-way lateral contrast (Nance 2014, Nance 2019).

Transcription of recorded passage

va ə ɣɯː ə t̪ʰuə akəs ə ɣɾʲiən ə tʃɛspət̪ kʰoː aʰkə ə pu t̪ʰɾɛsə n̪ˠuəɾʲ ə n̪ˠɔxk n̪ʲax ʃu.əl ə va ɛɾʲ ə xõːt̪əx aun̪ˠ ən kʰloːʰkə pl̪ˠaː ‖ ɣɯːn̪ˠt̪ʰɪç iət̪ kə pɾʲi kʰoː ə vɛɾʲəɣ ɛɾʲ ən n̪ʲax ʃu.əl ə xloːʰkə ə xuɾ je ən̪ˠ t̪ʰɔʃɔx kəɾ i ə viɣ ka mɛs na pə t̪ʰɾɛsə na ən tʃʰeː elə ‖ ən uəɾʲ ʃɪn heːtʃ ə ɣɯː ə t̪ʰuə xɔ l̪ˠaːtʃɪɾʲ s ə purɪn̪ʲ ji ax maɾ ə pə võ.ə ə heːtʃ i paun̪ˠ na pə tʃʰen̪ʲə ə façkəɣ ə n̪ʲax ʃu.əl ə xloːʰkə tʃʰimɪçəl̪ˠ ɛɾʲ heːn ʁkəs mu jɛɾʲəɣ lec ə ɣɯː ə t̪ʰuə ʃaxət̪ ən ʁɾʲʰpʲ ‖ ən uəɾʲ ʃɪn jaːrs ə ɣɾʲiən əmax kə pl̪ˠaː ʁkəs sə vat̪ xuɾʲ ə n̪ʲax ʃu.əl je ə xloːʰkə ‖ ʁkəs maɾ ʃɔn peːt̪ər t̪ɔn ɣɯːi ə t̪ʰuə atʃɔxəɣ kəm pi ə ɣɾʲian ə pə t̪ʰɾɛsə jɛn tʃi.iʃ aʰkə ‖

Orthographic version

Bha a' ghaoth a tuath agus a' ghrian a' deasbad cò aca a bu treasa nuair a nochd neach-siubhail a bha air a chòmhdach ann an cleòca blàth. Dh'aontaich iad ge brith cò a bheireadh air an neach-siubhail a chleòca a chur dheth an toiseach gur i a bhiodh ga meas na bu treasa na an tè eile. An uair sin shèid a' ghaoth a tuath cho làidir 's a b'urrainn dhi, ach mar a bu mhotha a shèid i b' ann na bu teinne a phaisgeadh an neach-siubhail a chleòca timcheall air fhèin agus mu dheireadh leig a' ghaoth a tuath seachad an oidhirp. An uair sin dheàrrs a'

ghrian a-mach gu blàth agus sa bhad chuir an neach-siubhail dheth a chleòca. Agus mar sin, b'fheudar don ghaoith a tuath aideachadh gum b' i a' ghrian a bu treasa den dithis aca.

Acknowledgements

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Footnotes

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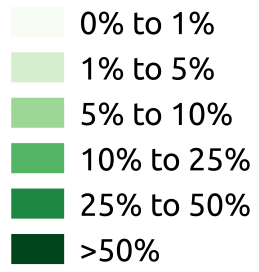The second footnote is in Table 1. This footnote is currently in the Tables document.

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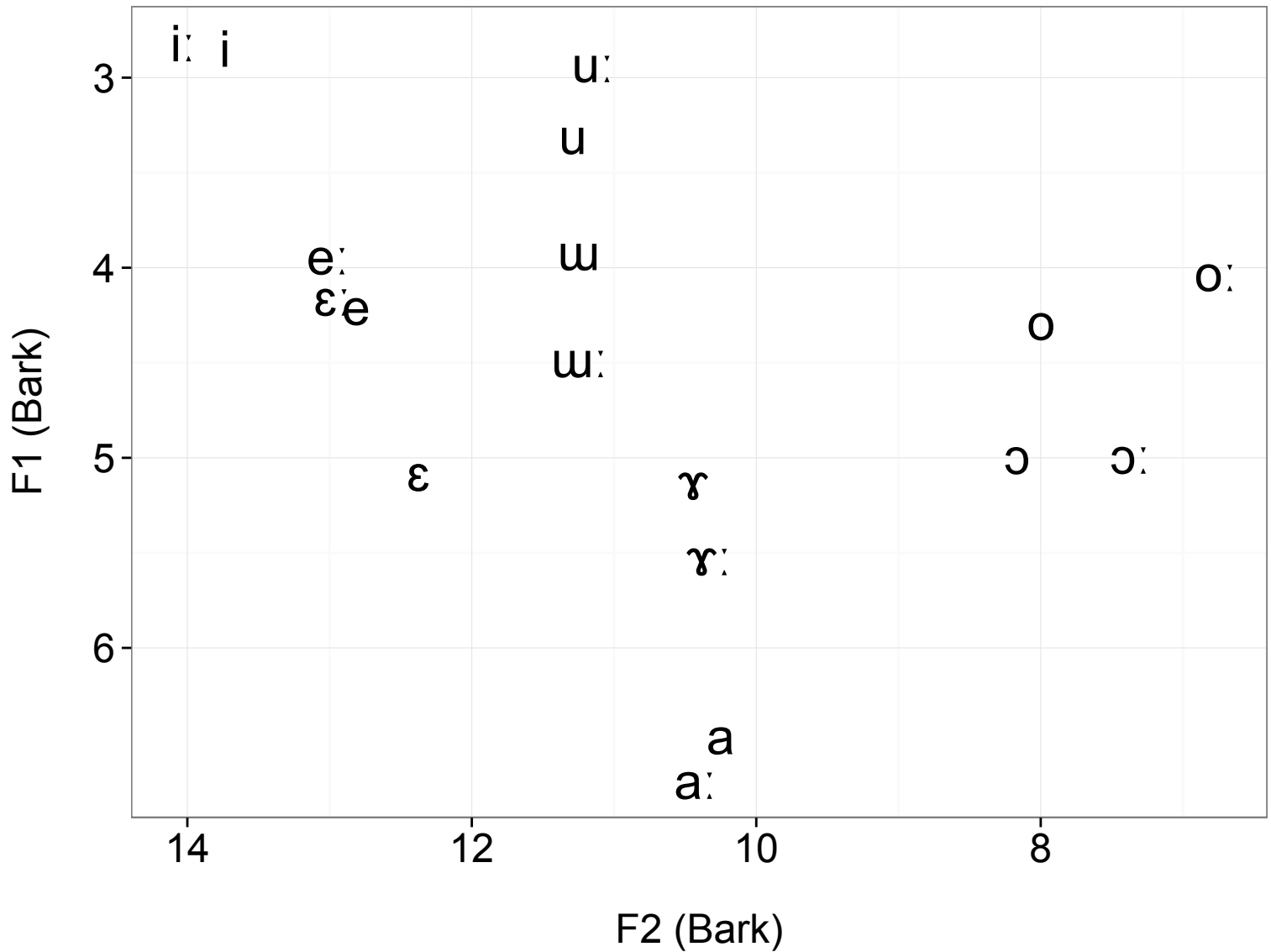
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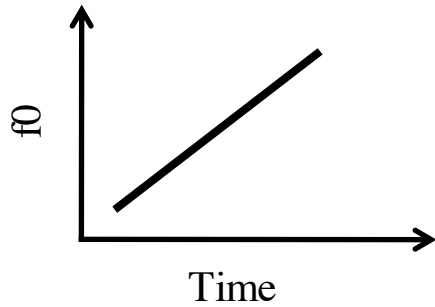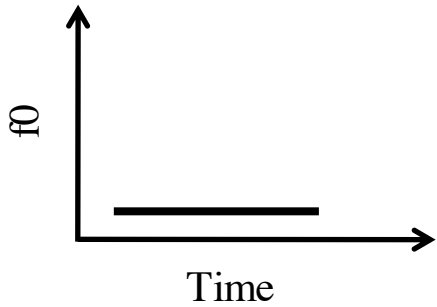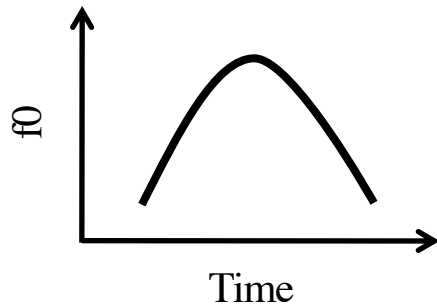
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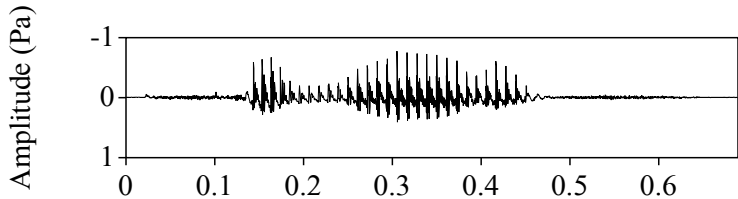- 1% to 5%
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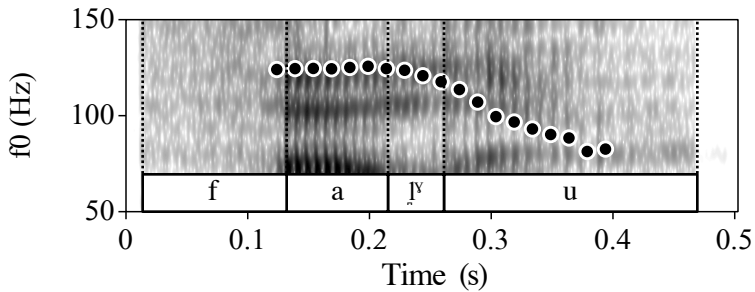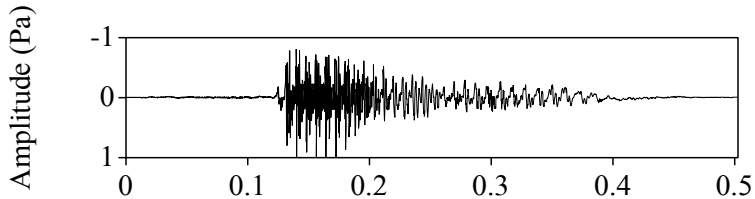- 10% to 25%
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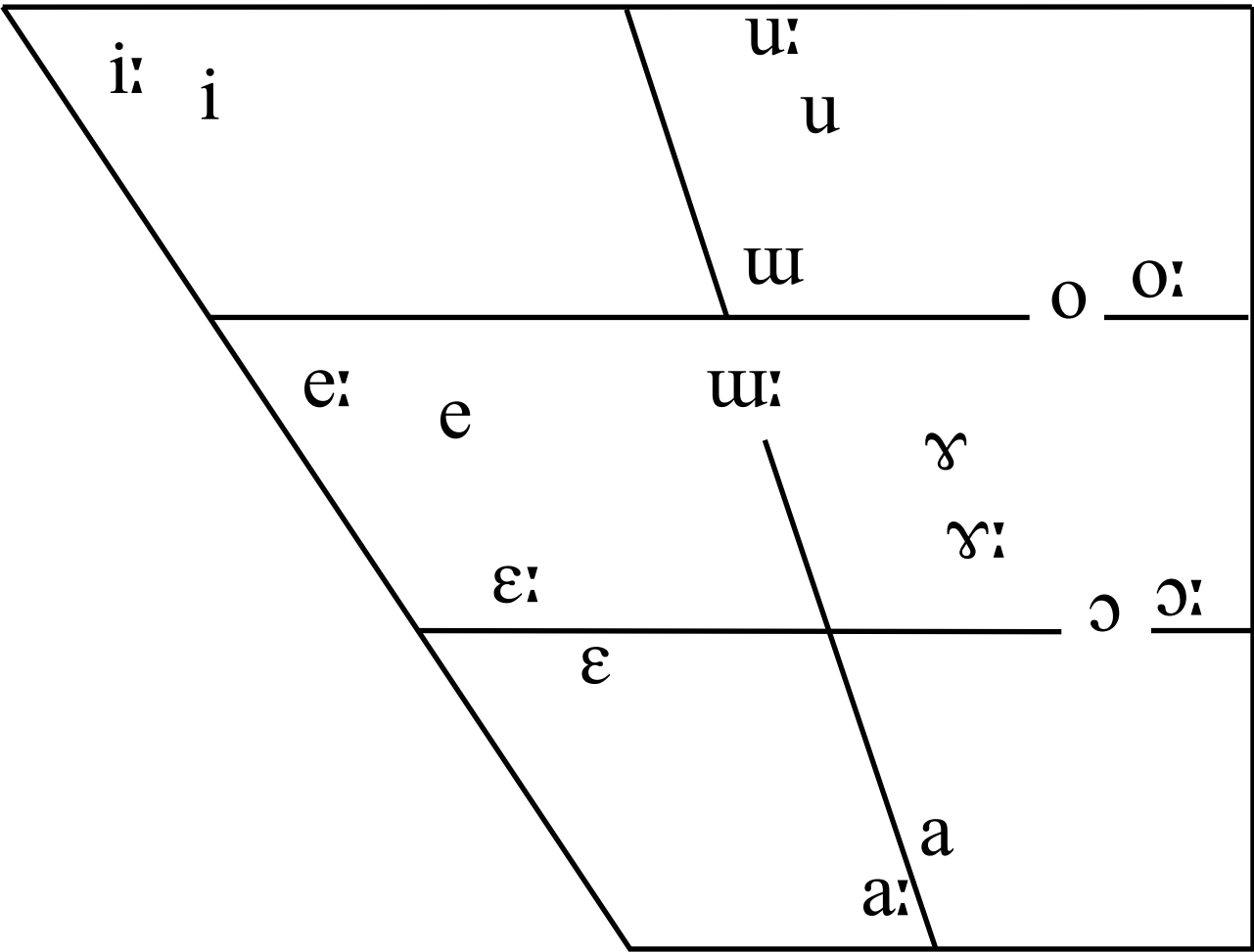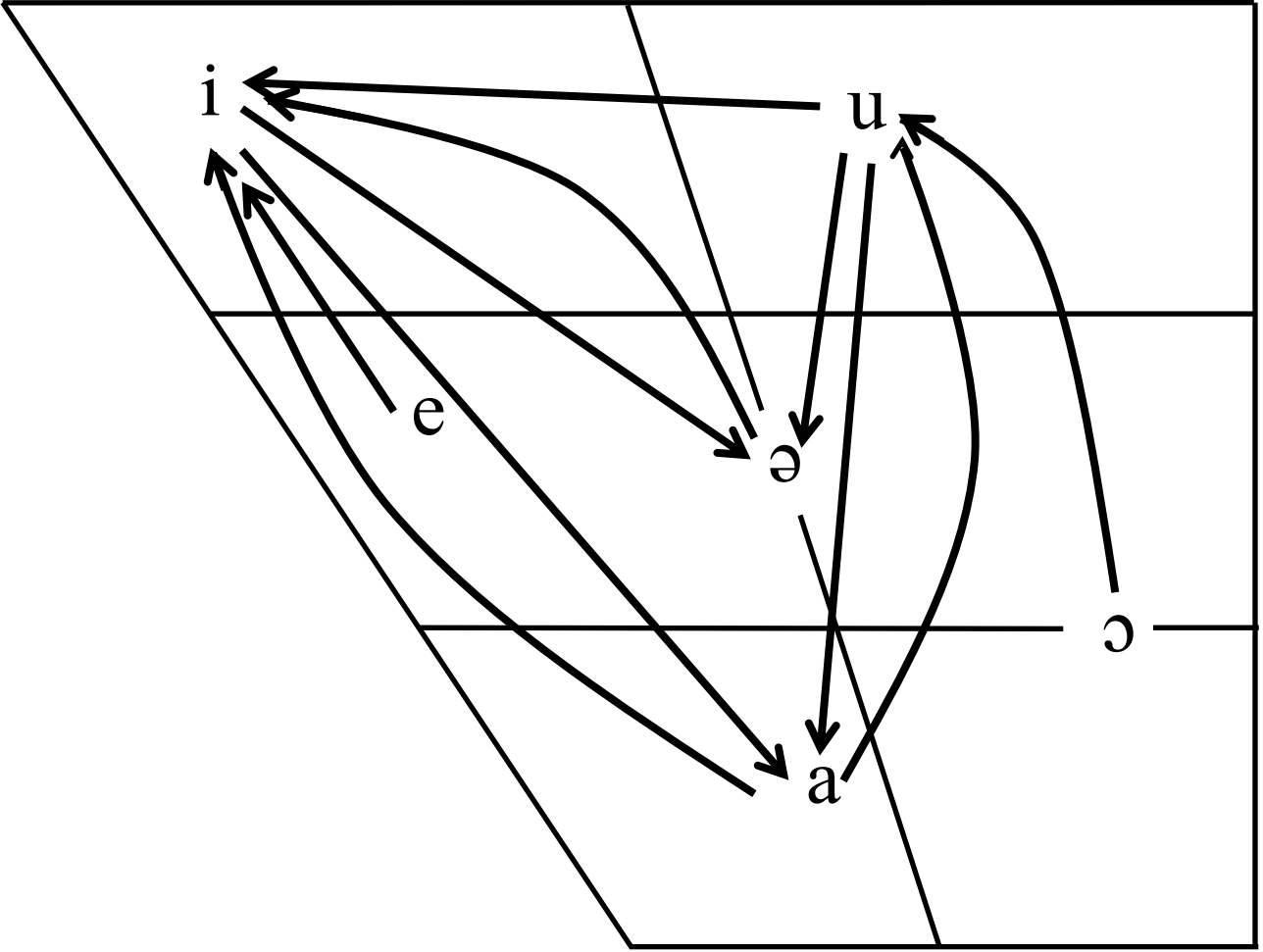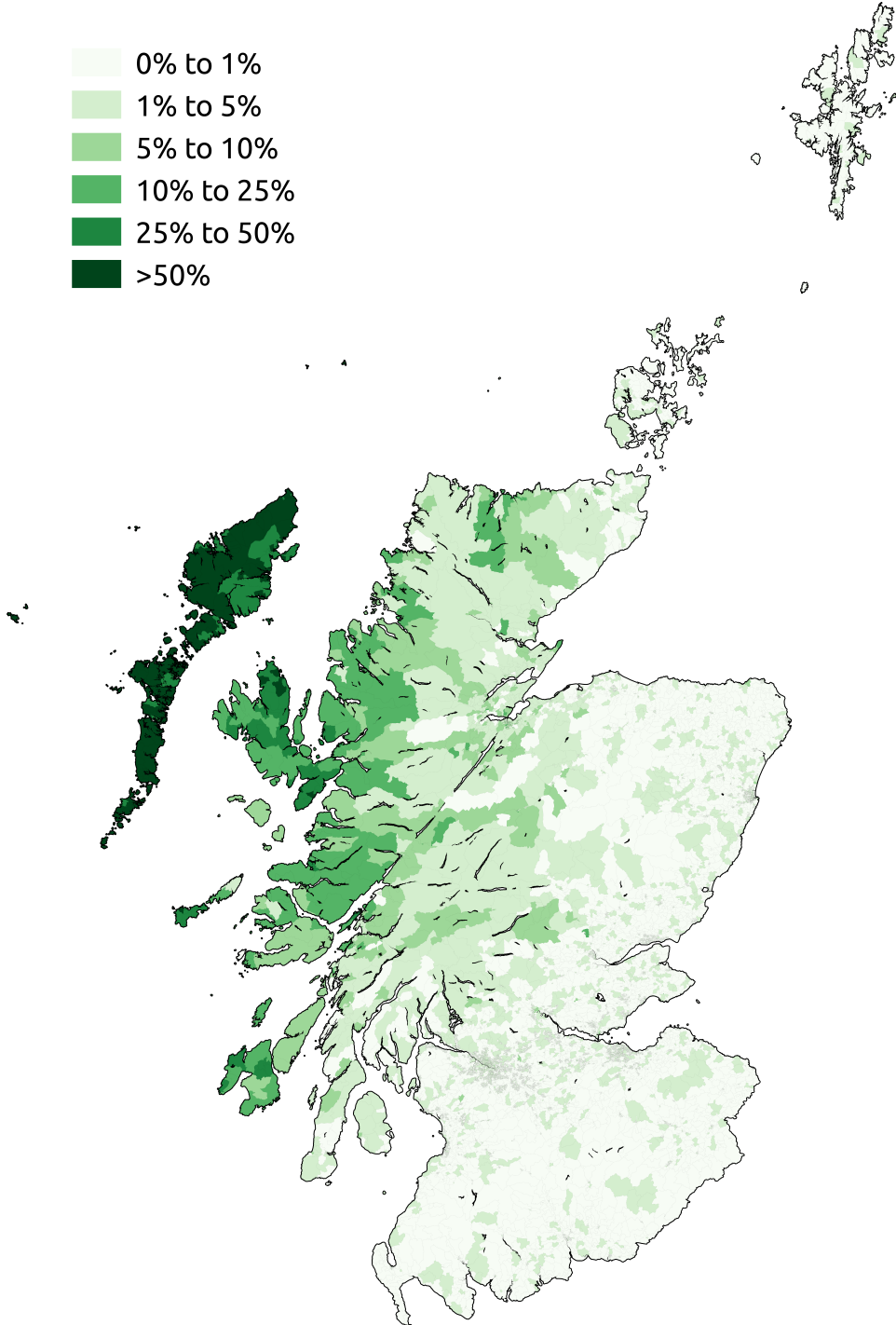
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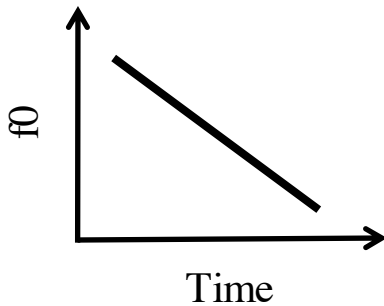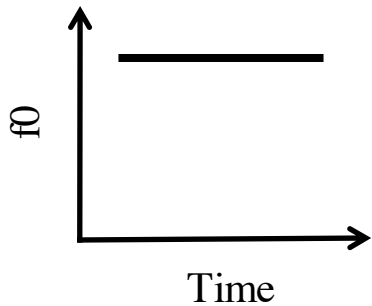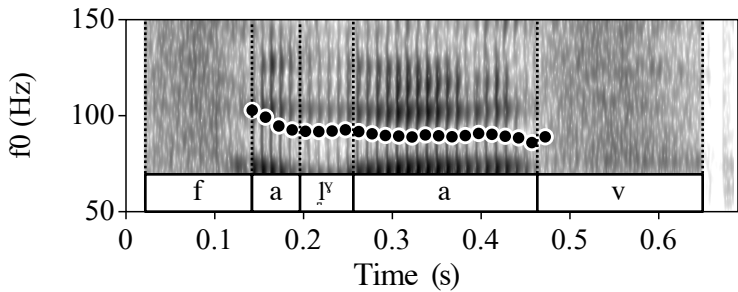
'going'   'empty'

Figure 1: Percentage of people over the age of three able to speak Gaelic according to the 2011 Census (colour online).[i]

Figure 2: Formant measurements of the Gaelic monophthongs (Bark).

Figure 3: Schematised pitch traces for Gaelic word accents.

Figure 4: Spectrograms and pitch traces illustrating the word accent contrast between *falbh* 'going' (monosyllabic) vs. *falamh* 'empty' (polysyllabic).

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[i] Attribution: SkateTier.

(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Scots_Gaelic_speakers_in_the_2011_census.png), "Scots Gaelic speakers in the 2011 census", https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/legalcode.

Table 1: Consonant table for Gaelic. Non-palatalised consonants are shown in the top of the cell, and palatalised below.

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosive	p^h p p^{jh} p^j		$t̪^h$ t̪		$tʃ^h$ tʃ	c^h c	k^h k	
Nasal	m		n̪ˠ n̪ʲ	n				
Tap/ trill				ɾ ɾʲ				
Fricative		f v fʲ		s	ʃ	ç	x ɣ	h
Approximant						j[a]		
Lateral approximant			l̪ˠ l̪ʲ	l				

[a]Oftedal (1956:113) additionally reports a distinction in some speakers from the east coast of Lewis between /j/ and /ʝ/, for example in ionnsaich 'teach, learn!' /jẽũsɪç/ and dh'ionnsaich 'taught, learned' /ʝẽũsɪç/. Our participant is from the north-west of Lewis so does not make this distinction.

Table 2: Consonant sample words (phonemic transcription).

Phoneme	Gaelic	IPA	Gloss	Phoneme	Gaelic	IPA	Gloss
pʰ	poll	pʰɔul̪ˠ	mud	pʲʰ	piuthar	pʰʲu.ər	sister
	puing	pʰəin̠ʲc	point		peann	pʰʲaun̪ˠ	pen
	capall	kʰaʰpəl̪ˠ	mare		cipean	kʰiʰpən	peg
p	bò	poː	cow	pʲ	beàrr	pʲaːɾ	cut
	buidhe	pui.ə	yellow		beò	pʲɔː	alive
	obair	opɪɾʲ	work		ribe	ripʲə	trap, snare
t̪ʰ	tog	t̪ʰok	lift	tʃʰ	teth	tʃʰe	hot
	tuigsinn	t̪ʰikʃin̠ʲ	understanding		teòclaid	tʃʰɔːʰkl̪ˠɪtʃ	chocolate
	bata	paʰt̪ə	stick		taitinn	t̪ʰaiʰtʃin̠ʲ	please (verb)
t̪	doras	t̪arəs	door	tʃ	dealbh	tʃal̪ˠav	picture
	duine	t̪in̠ʲə	anyone		deoch	tʃɔx	drink
	fada	fat̪ə	long		maide	matʃə	beam
kʰ	caol	kʰɯːl̪ˠ	thin	cʰ	ciall	cʰiəl̪ˠ	reason
	cuibhle	kʰəilə	wheel		ceòl	cʰɔːl̪ˠ	music
	aca	aʰkə	at them		aice	eʰcə	at her
k	gaol	kɯːl̪ˠ	love	c	geal	cal̪ˠ	white
	guidhe	kui.ə	wish		geòla	cɔːl̪ˠə	yawl
	agad	akət̪	at you		aige	ɛcə	at him
f	fuar	fuəɾ	cold	fʲ	fìon	fʲian	wine
v	bha	va	was				
s	sùil	suːl	eye	ʃ	seinn	ʃəin̠ʲ	singing
x	chaidh	xai	went	ç	chì	çiː	will see
ɣ	dhaibh	ɣaiv	for them	j	dh'ith	jiç	ate
h	fhuair	huəɾʲ	obtained				
m	math	mah	good				
n̪ˠ	nach	n̪ˠax	notª	n̠ʲ	neach	n̠ʲax	person
	Anna	an̪ˠə	Anna		nighean	n̠ʲi.ən	daughter
	seann	ʃaun̪ˠ	old		bainne	pɔn̠ʲə	milk
					seinn	ʃəin̠ʲ	singing
				n	mo nighean	mo ni.ən	my daughter
					banais	pɛnɪʃ	wedding
					sean	ʃɛn	grandfather
l̪ˠ	loch	l̪ˠɔx	lake	l̠ʲ	leabaidh	l̠ʲapi	bed
	callaid	kal̪ˠatʃ	fence		cailleach	kʰal̠ʲɔx	old woman
	dall	t̪aul̪ˠ	blind		caill	kʰail̠ʲ	lose
				l	mo	mo lapi	my bed
					leabaidh	kʰalɔx	cockerel
					coileach	t̪aːl	delay
					dàil		
ɾ	ràdh	ɾaː	saying	ɾʲ	ri	ɾʲi	to
	aran	aɾan	bread		aire	aɾʲə	attention
	car	kaɾ	somewhat		air	ɛɾʲ	on

ªThe velar fricative /x/ is realised as [χ] following back vowels (including /a/ in a velarised environment). So

nach /n̪ˠax/ is realised as [n̪ˠaχ].

Table 3: Lenition mutations (phonemic transcription). Where there are differences between broad and slender consonants, these are shown. Where not, the mutated variants are the same as those shown. The prefix *mo* means 'my' and causes lenition.

Phoneme	Lenited	Gaelic unlenited	IPA	Gaelic lenited	IPA	Gloss
pʰ	f	p̪òg	pʰok	mo p̪hòg	mo foːk	(my) kiss
p	v	b̪ò	poː	mo b̪hò	mo voː	(my) cow
t̪ʰ	h	t̪aigh	t̪ʰəi	mo t̪haigh	mo həi	(my) house
tʃʰ	h	t̪ìde	tʃʰiːtʃə	mo t̪hìde	mo hiːtʃə	(my) time
t̪	ɣ	d̪achaigh	t̪axi	mo d̪hachaigh	mo ɣaxi	(my) home
tʃ	j	d̪ealbh	tʃalav	mo d̪healbh	mo jalav	(my) picture
kʰ	x	c̪at	kʰaʰt̪	mo c̪hat	mo xaʰt	(my) cat
cʰ	ç	c̪eòl	cʰoːl̪ˠ	mo c̪heòl	mo çoːl̪ˠ	(my) music
k	ɣ	g̪aol	kɯːl̪ˠ	mo g̪haol	mo ɣɯːl̪ˠ	(my) love
c	j	g̪eòla	coːl̪ˠə	mo g̪heòla	mo joːl̪ˠə	(my) yawl
m	v	m̪uc	mũʰk	mo m̪huc	mo vũʰk	(my) pig
f	Ø	f̪acal	faʰkəl̪ˠ	mo f̪hacal	m aʰkəl̪ˠ	(my) word
s	h	s̪ùil	suːl	mo s̪hùil	mo huːl	(my) eye
ʃ	ç	s̪eòmar	ʃoːmər	mo s̪heòmar	mo çoːmər	(my) room
l̪ʲ	l	l̪eabaidh	l̪ʲapi	mo l̪eabaidh	mo lapi	(my) bed
n̪ʲ	n	n̪ighean	n̪ʲi.ən	mo n̪ighean	mo ni.ən	(my) daughter

Table 4: Gaelic oral monophthongs (phonemic transcription).

Phoneme	Gaelic	IPA	Gloss	Phoneme	Gaelic	IPA	Gloss
i	r<u>i</u>	rʲi	to	iː	ch<u>ì</u>	çiː	will see
e	t<u>e</u>th	tʃʰe	hot	eː	t<u>è</u>	tʃʰeː	woman
ɛ	b<u>ea</u>n	pɛn	wife	ɛː	G<u>à</u>idheal	kɛː.əl̪ˠ	Gael
a	b<u>a</u>ta	paʰt̪ə	stick	aː	b<u>à</u>ta	paːʰt̪ə	boat
ɔ	b<u>o</u>c	pɔʰk	goat	ɔː	b<u>ò</u>c	pɔːʰk	swell
o	b<u>o</u>g	pok	soft	oː	b<u>ò</u>	poː	cow
u	c<u>u</u>r	kuɾ	put	uː	<u>ù</u>r	uːɾ	new
ɯ	t<u>u</u>radh	t̪ʰɯɾəɣ	dry weather	ɯː	c<u>ao</u>l	kʰɯːl̪ˠ	thin
ɤ	t<u>ag</u>h	t̪ɤ	choose	ɤː	<u>a</u>dhbhar	ɤːvər	cause

Table 5: Gaelic nasal monophthongs (phonemic transcription).

Phoneme	Gaelic	IPA	Gloss	Phoneme	Gaelic	IPA	Gloss
ĩ	ceangal	kʰĩ.al̪ˠ	connection	ĩː	innse	ĩːʃə	telling
ẽ	am faic	əm fẽʰk	will see	ẽː	chan e	xan̠ʲ ẽː	it is not
ɛ̃	teanga	tʃʰɛ̃kə	tongue	ɛ̃ː	sèimh	ʃɛ̃ːv	gentle
ã	abhainn	ãvin̠ʲ	river	ãː	tàmh	t̪ʰãːv	rest, quiet
ɔ̃	cnoc	krɔ̃ʰk	hill	ɔ̃ː	Dòmhnall	t̪ɔ̃ː.əl̪ˠ	Donald
õ	mothachadh	mõ.əxəɣ	perceiving	õː	Didòmhnaich	tʃiˈtõː.niç	Sunday
ũ	muc	mũʰk	pig	ũː	unnsa	ũːsə	ounce
ũ̯	cruinneachadh	kʰrũ̯m̠ʲəxəɣ	gathering	ũ̯ː	naomh	n̠ˠũ̯ːv	saint
ɤ̃	eanchainn	ɤ̃nəxin̠ʲ	brain	ɤ̃ː	faoin	fɤ̃ːn̠ʲ	mad

Table 6: Gaelic diphthongs (phonemic transcription).

Phoneme	Gaelic	IPA	Gloss	Phoneme	Gaelic	IPA	Gloss
iə	biadh	piəɣ	food	ei	till	tʃeil̥ʲ	return
	ciall	cʰiəl̥ˠ	reason		cinnteach	cʰein̥ʲtʃʰɔx	certain
	fìon	fʲiən	wine		grinn	kɾʲein̥ʲ	elegant
ia	beul	pial̥ˠ	face	əi	soillse	səil̥ʲʃə	light
	brèagha	pɾʲia.a	beautiful		cuibhle	kʰəilə	wheel
	feuch	fʲiax	try		muinntir	məin̥ʲtʃʰəɾʲ	people
uə	tuath	t̥ʰuə	north	ui	suidhe	sui.ə	sit
	fuar	fuəɾ	cold		buidhe	pui.ə	yellow
	ruadh	ɾuəɣ	red		guidhe	kui.ə	wish
ua	cuan	kʰuan	ocean	au	call	kʰaul̥ˠ	loss
	a-nuas	ən̥ˠuas	down		samhradh	sauɾəɣ	summer
	duan	t̥uan	song		ceann	cʰaun̥ˠ	head
ai	dhaibh	ɣaiv	for them	ɔu	poll	pʰɔul̥ˠ	mud
	cainnt	kʰain̥ʲtʃʰ	speech		donn	tɔun̥ˠ	brown
	taing	t̥ʰain̥ʲc	thanks		leam	lɔum	at me

Table 7: Pairs of words illustrating the word accent contrast (phonemic transcription).

Monosyllabic words are to the left, polysyllabic comparison words to the right.

Syllabicity/Accent	Word	IPA	English	Syllabicity/Accent	Word	IPA	English
Monosyllabic/Accent 1	bò	poː	cow	Polysyllabic/Accent 2	bogha	po.ə	rockpool
Monosyllabic/Accent 1	gu leòr	kə lʲɔːɾ	enough	Polysyllabic/Accent 2	leabhar	lʲɔ.əɾ	book
Monosyllabic/Accent 1	sùil	suːl	eye	Polysyllabic/Accent 2	ubhal	u.əl̪ˠ	apple
Monosyllabic/Accent 1	falbh	fal̪ˠav	going	Polysyllabic/Accent 2	falamh	fal̪ˠ.u	empty
Monosyllabic/Accent 1	tinn	tʃʰein̪ʲ	ill	Polysyllabic/Accent 2	tighinn	tʃʰi.ən̪ʲ	coming
Monosyllabic/Accent 1	ainm	anam	name	Polysyllabic/Accent 2	anam	anəm	soul
Monosyllabic/Accent 1	ràmh	ɾãv	oar	Polysyllabic/Accent 2	rathad	ɾa.ət	road
Monosyllabic/Accent 1	sinn	ʃəin̪ʲ	we	Polysyllabic/Accent 2	sithinn	ʃi.in̪ʲ	venison