Leasachadh Corpas na Gàidhlig (LEACAG)

Work stream 4:
LEACAG Project assessment

Report for
Bòrd na Gàidhlig

Soillse
February 2019

Contents

1. Introduction

This report to Bòrd na Gàidhlig's Comataidh Comhairleachaidh Cànain (CCC) presents findings and recommendations relating to Sruth-obrach 4 of the LEACAG project. This involves an assessment of the effectiveness of the corpus development work carried out in Sruthan-obrach 1 and 2, including the functioning of LEACAG itself.

The evaluation has three distinct parts.

Sruth-obrach 4.1 evaluates Lexicopia, the terminology hub developed for Sruth-obrach 1 of LEACAG, as described in the relevant project sub-report.

Sruth-obrach 4.2 evaluates the grammar guidance developed for Sruth-obrach 2 of LEACAG, as described in the relevant project sub-report.

Sruth-obrach 4.3 evaluates the functioning of LEACAG project itself and the remit and work of the CCC.

In order to expedite completion of this work stream, the methods to be applied to the review were revised from those set out in Soillse's project bid with the agreement of the Bòrd in early 2018. The different methods used for the three sub-streams (4.1, 4.2 and 4.3) are described below.

2. Sruth-obrach 4.1: evaluation of Lexicopia

For the evaluation of Lexicopia, it was decided to seek input from a specific group of expert users, the members of the Bòrd's Buidheann Obrach air Acadamaidh Ghàidhlig (BOAG). The twelve members of BOAG (not including members of the group who are also members of the CCC or the Soillse LEACAG project team) were contacted by email on 21 June 2018 and invited to participate in the evaluation. A reminder was then sent on 5 July.

BOAG members were asked to make six 'searches', for terms of their own choice, following the Lexicopia guidance, which was provided to them. They were also offered the opportunity to test out the Lexicopia terminology creation facility. They were then asked to complete a questionnaire giving their views of the system, which could be completed either online or using a form in Word.

Unfortunately, few replies were received, from a small number of the ten organisations represented on BOAG. One respondent offered to test out the terminology creation facility, but this did not happen for technical reasons.

Although this rate of reply is disappointing, the responses received were detailed and helpful.

Question 1 asked respondents how easy it was to use the Lexicopia search interface. There were mixed views here, with two respondents finding the system less than completely intuitive. One respondent praised the predictive text functionality as being 'very helpful indeed'. Another reported that the system was generally slow in producing results.

Question 2 asked whether respondents had any suggestions as to how the interface could be improved. The main issue identified involved moving between English and Gaelic; respondents initially found it unclear how to navigate from one language to the other. Respondents made the following observations:

> I didn't immediately understand how to search a Gaelic term. I had to refer to the instructions, and then saw the G/B toggle on the top right. Again, could this be put where it more easily seen and its function understood more intuitively. I understand technically why the user has to switch G to B or vice versa depending on which language term you are searching, but I wonder whether the system might actually recognise [it] so the user doesn't have to bother toggling to and from G and B.

> Maybe having the search box and option to select [a] Gaelic or English term could be located more prominently on the home page – it wasn't immediately apparent that 'Gaidhlig' in the top right was how you needed to change to entering a Gaelic term as on most bilingual websites this changes the website text.

> You may have to make . . . more explicit to users on the page that they have to change bho Bheurla gu Gàidhlig. The other thing that was happening to me was that the search would default to the Beurla search, which would be a real turn-off. I was typing in Gàidhlig words and it was coming up with no results, I would be really disheartened.

In terms of the basic layout, one respondent advised that s/he 'initially couldn't find the search term input box' and suggested that it might be moved from its current position to the 'dead centre of the page'. This respondent also commented 'I found the homepage a bit cluttered with text and not focused enough on my needs as a user'.

Question 3 asked how clear the search results were. All respondents agreed that they were, although one suggested that 'it might work better to be able to select from a list rather than have to click on the form you want in the drop-down list after typing'.

Question 4 asked respondents whether they had any suggestions as to how the presentation of the results could be improved. Two suggested that it would be helpful to provide the English translation automatically, rather than requiring users to click [+en], particularly as the English sometimes gave essential information that was necessary to interpret the Gaelic terms provided. Another suggested that it would be useful to indicate what part of speech (noun, verb etc) a particular term represented; for example, the search term 'dog' produced both *cù* and *lean*, with the former interpreting 'dog' as a noun and the latter as a verb meaning 'pursue'.

Finally, another respondent found the mechanics of the system somewhat unhelpful: 'Hitting "back" taking you back to the homepage every time was frustrating, especially if you had been navigating through multiple entries'.

Question 5 asked how useful respondents found it to be able to search for random entries. All agreed that this function was not especially useful, but thought that it was 'a bit of fun' or

'nice to have'. They also thought that 'iongnadh' was not a particularly clear name for this function and suggested it might be placed differently on the interface.

Question 6 asked whether respondents found the links between base words and compounds useful (such as *craobh* > *craobh aiteil* > *aiteal*). All respondents agreed that it was, with one noting in particular that it would help translators put terms in context.

Question 7 asked respondents how useful they would find it to have a vetted list of Gaelic terminology. All agreed this would be extremely useful, but one clarified that in practice it would only be 'as useful as the implementation and infrastructure/staff capacity needed to maintain the system and keep the lists up-to-date'. In addition, 'to ensure confidence in the system' there would need to be 'clear information about who is doing the "vetting" and maintaining all stakeholders on board through this process'.

Question 8 asked respondents whether, after searching for an unfamiliar word, there was anything specific about the results provided that would encourage them to use the word, or not. While one respondent was not sure, another commented that the source material constituted a 'stamp of approval' and a guarantee of correctness. Another indicated that the 'notes on "authority" of a certain term would be the main decision-maker here' and recommended that the 'notes under each entry should be kept to a minimum (e.g. which database(s) it came from first, then additional information (pronunciation, etymology)'.

Question 9 asked respondents in what situations they would expect to use Lexicopia as opposed to other on-line dictionaries such as Am Faclair Beag. Respondents indicated that Lexicopia would ensure that the terms displayed – especially 'contemporary 21st century terms' – were in active use. This would be especially useful 'in situations where it is necessary to be prescriptive (e.g. educational texts)' but in order to achieve this Lexicopia would need to 'be very clear where the authority for the use of a certain term comes from, and provide clear guidance where there are multiple (often correct) forms of terminology which have been used'.

Questions 10 and 11 related to the terminology creation function, but as noted above no respondents volunteered to test out that function.

The responses received give a useful preliminary view of the Lexicopia system from users. It is to be hoped that this feedback will be beneficial for the further development of the system. However, it is clear that considerably more 'road-testing' will be required, perhaps using a workshop of some kind, with a group of users testing out the system simultaneously in one place and then discussing their views in a group environment.

3.   Sruth-obrach 4.2: evaluation of grammar guidance

For the evaluation of the grammar guidance, it was decided to seek input from a group of expert users, broadly following the approach taken with Sruth-obrach 2.1.

Ninety identified expert users were contacted by email on 21 June 2018 and invited to participate in the evaluation. In addition, invitations to participate were posted in four Gaelic groups on Facebook.

The invitation explained the process by which the eleven *cùisean buairidh* were selected and listed the issues in question. In order to make sure the evaluation process was not unreasonably time-consuming, so as to obtain a sufficient number of responses, respondents were asked to review the guidance for only three of the eleven topics. These were dative case marking, impersonals with <u>rach</u> and lenition of verbal nouns. These topics were selected with a view to how complex and potentially controversial they were, with the dative regarded as most complex and potentially controversial and lenition of verbal nouns the least.

Following their review of the guidance, respondents were then asked to complete a questionnaire (either online or in Word) concerning their views of the guidance. An initial general question asked whether they agreed that the eleven topics chosen are the most misunderstood aspects of Gaelic grammar, and if not what other topics they consider more important than those identified above. The questionnaire then asked respondents whether, in relation to the three grammar topics, the guidance was clear, whether it aligned with their own understanding of contemporary Gaelic grammar and whether sufficient examples were provided to convey the important grammatical concepts and clarify the points of uncertainty.
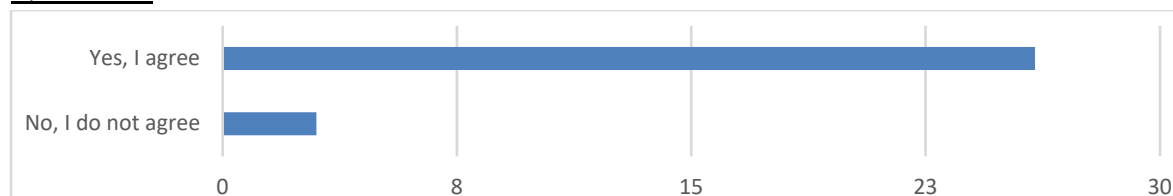
Twenty-nine responses were received. This number was less than hoped for but it was estimated that completing the survey (including reviewing the guidance) would take 45 minutes, which may have discouraged some potential respondents, particularly given the degree of close attention required. All respondents confirmed that they had a high level of competence in Gaelic (i.e. at least 4 a scale of 1 to 5, 'with 5 signifying excellent, native-like ability').

A. Views on the guidance – quantitative results

Most of the questions in the questionnaire sought to assess respondents' levels of agreement with particular propositions and as such the responses can be readily quantified. Responses to these questions are summarised below and presented in bar charts.
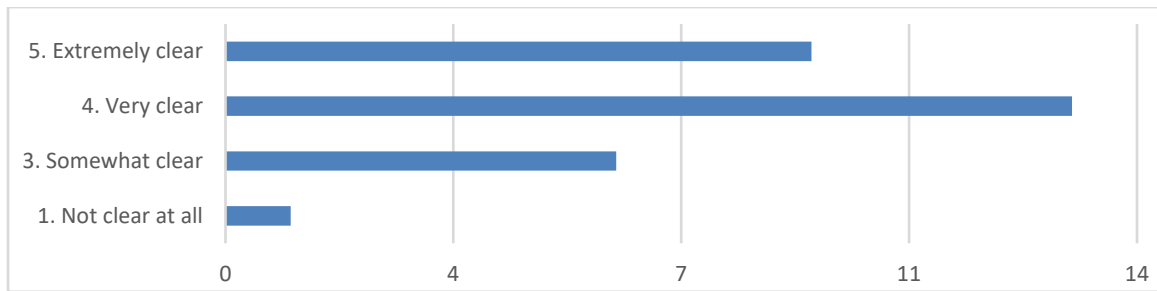
The overwhelming majority of respondents (89%; 26 of 29) agreed that the eleven grammatical topics identified in this project are the most misunderstood aspects of Gaelic grammar (question 2).
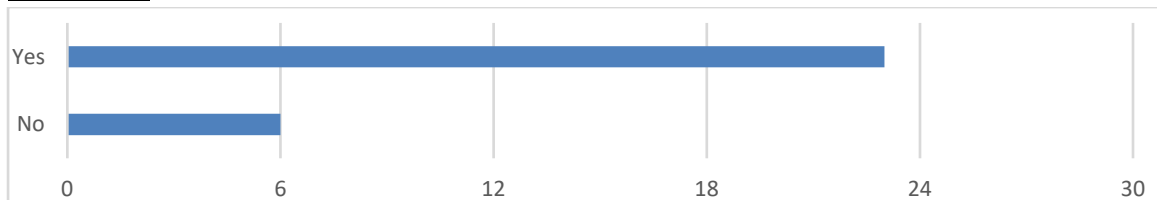
<u>Question 2</u>

Question 4 asked whether the guidance for dative case marking was well-structured; does it flow in a clear and logical way? A large majority of respondents (75.8%; 22 of 29) thought the guidance in this respect was 'extremely clear' or 'very clear'.

<u>Question 4</u>

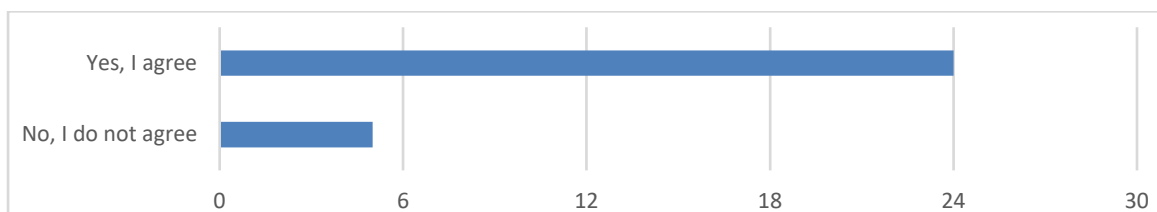|	
5. Extremely clear	
4. Very clear	
3. Somewhat clear	
1. Not clear at all	

0   4   7   11   14

Question 5 asked whether the guidance concerning dative case marking contained sufficient examples to convey the important grammatical concepts and clarify the points of uncertainty. Almost four-fifths of respondents (23 of 29) thought this it did, six respondents disagreed. This issue attracted more verbal responses than the other points of grammar in the guidance, and these are discussed in the next section.

Question 5

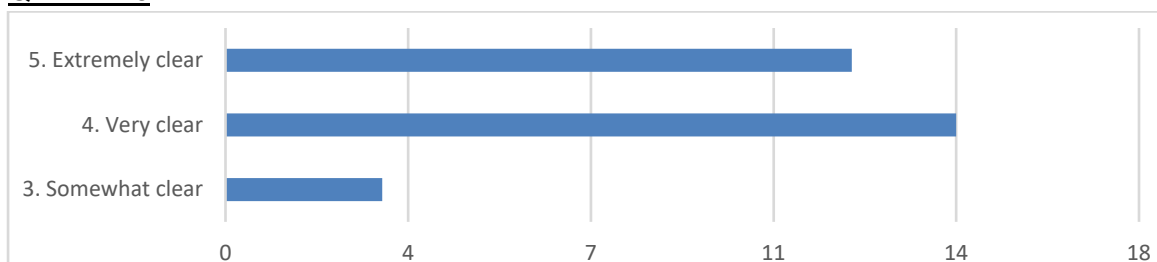|	
Yes	
No	

0   6   12   18   24   30

Question 6 asked respondents whether they agreed with the guidance concerning dative case marking relative to their own understanding of contemporary Gaelic. 83% agreed and 17% disagreed (24 and 5 respondents respectively).

Question 6

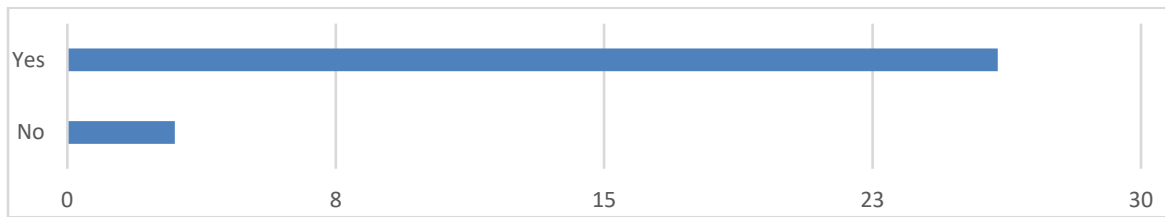|	
Yes, I agree	
No, I do not agree	

0   6   12   18   24   30

Question 8 asked whether the guidance concerning impersonal forms with *rach* was well-structured; does it flow in a clear and logical way? The overwhelming majority of respondents (89.7%; 26 of 29) thought the guidance in this respect was 'extremely clear' or 'very clear', with only 3 finding it 'somewhat clear'.

Question 8

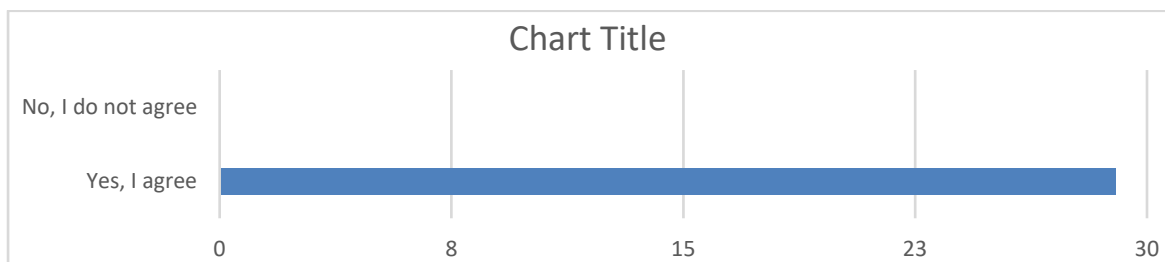|	
5. Extremely clear	
4. Very clear	
3. Somewhat clear	

0   4   7   11   14   18

Question 9 asked whether the guidance concerning impersonal forms with *rach* contained sufficient examples to convey the important grammatical concepts and clarify the points of uncertainty. Again the overwhelming majority of respondents (89.7%; 26 of 29) thought that it did, with only 3 respondents disagreeing.
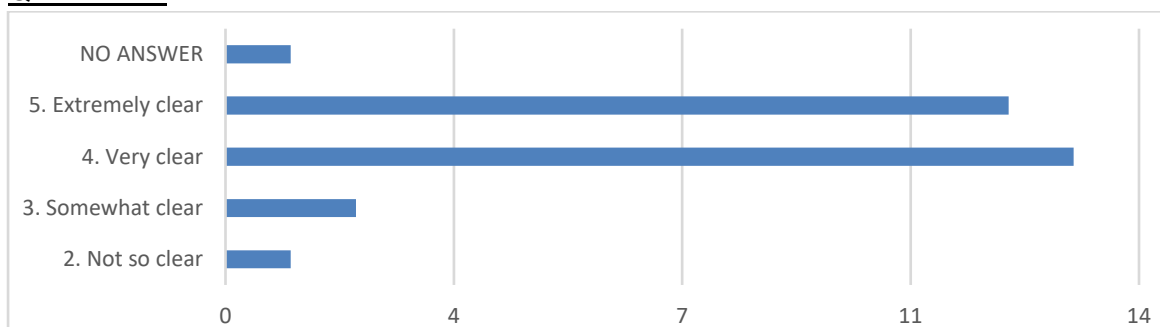
Question 10 asked respondents whether they agreed with the guidance impersonal forms with *rach* relative to their own understanding of contemporary Gaelic. Here the response was unanimous; all the respondents agreed.

Question 10

Question 12 asked whether the guidance concerning the lenition of verbal nouns was well-structured; does it flow in a clear and logical way? The overwhelming majority of respondents (89.3%; 25 of 28) thought the guidance in this respect was 'extremely clear' or 'very clear', with 2 it 'somewhat clear' and 1 'not so clear'.

Question 12

Question 13 asked whether the guidance concerning the lenition of verbal nouns contained sufficient examples to convey the important grammatical concepts and clarify the points of uncertainty. Again a large majority of respondents (79.3%; 23 of 29) thought that it did, but more than a fifth disagreed (6 of 29).

Finally, question 14 asked respondents whether they agreed with the guidance concerning the lenition of verbal nouns relative to their own understanding of contemporary Gaelic. Here, almost all respondents (27 of 29; 94%) agreed.

Question 14

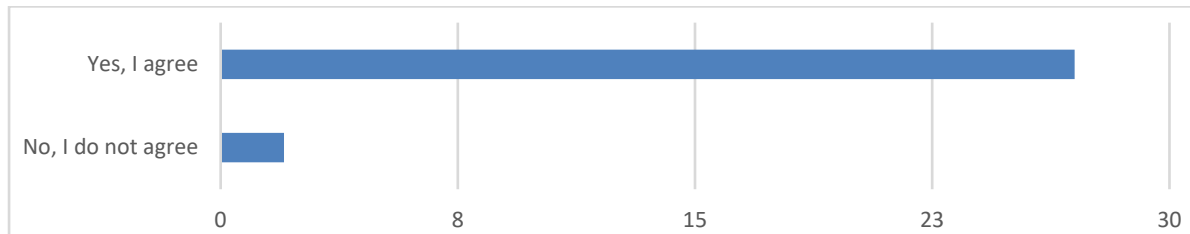### B. Views on the guidance – qualitative results

Respondents were also given the opportunity to make additional verbal comments on the guidance.

Six respondents offered comments in response to question 3, 'what topics do you consider more important than those identified above?' (These topics were those identified in Sruth-obrach 2 and listed in the introduction to the questionnaire). Two respondents flagged up the structure of compound words, especially the use or non-use of lenition in the genitive and dative (a topic that was considered for inclusion among the *cùisean buairidh*, but ultimately rejected). An issue that was mentioned, but not considered in SO 2.1, was that of lenition after ordinals, e.g. *leis a' chòigeamh balach/bhalach*. One of the topics suggested was a grammatical innovation that most users would still deem entirely unacceptable: *ma + nach* instead of *mur(a)*. Another was the structure *tha mi a' faicinn iad*, which is actually addressed in the guidance concerning direct object forms with *ga* (which was not provided to questionnaire respondents).

Another respondent flagged up confusion with the use of *cuir* and *cur* (although this is more readily understood as an orthographic issue rather than a grammatical one, and is dealt with on p. 25 of GOC).

There was also a suggestion (offered in relation to question 16 rather than question 3) that 'there is a need for some guidance on (or emphasis to be placed upon) the use of possessives with the modal verbs and with certain, idiomatic constructions':

In my experience, errors such as those which follow are commonly heard nowadays: (i) *Feumaidh sinn ga dhèanamh* (instead of *Feumaidh sinn a dhèanamh*); (ii) *Faodaidh tu gan leughadh* (instead of *Faodaidh tu an leughadh*); (iii) *Bu chòir dhut gan ceannach* (instead of *Bu chòir dhut an ceannach*); and (iv) *'S urrainn dhut gan lorg* (instead of *'S urrainn dhut an lorg*).

This is a valid observation and should be taken into consideration when the guidance is supplemented to take in additional grammatical issues. (The issue of direct object forms with *ga* (*aig*) was discussed in section 2.11 of the sub-report on Sruth-obrach 2.1 but it was ultimately decided not to include it among the eleven cùisean buairidh addressed in the guidance).

Respondents were also given an opportunity to comment on the guidance as a whole and on the three individual sections that were presented for consideration. Twenty respondents offered comments. General comments are discussed first followed by comments that relate to the guidance on specific points of grammar.

Eight respondents offered general comments praising the usefulness of the guidance:

Tha an stiiùireadh uabhasach feumail.

Tha seo gu math math feumail agus tha e air rud no dhà a shoilleireachadh dhomh mar-thà!

Tha mi a' dèanamh fiughair ris an stiùireadh. Tha mi am beachd gur e deagh chruth a dhealbhaich sibh an seo. Tha e gu math soilleir, uil, cho soilleir 's a ghabhas. Chan eil dòigh ann gràmair a dhèanamh an dà chuid coileanta agus soilleir aig an aon àm. 'S e cuspair toinnte a th' ann agus sin e.

The guidance was also clear and well written.

Very useful, clear and much needed guidance.

The guidance looks as though it will be very useful.

This guidance is certainly needed, and I think this consultation draft is clear and useful.

Excellent balance between prescription and description. Very useful to have a section on background followed by recommendations. Very good use of examples. Helpful glossary . . .

This last respondent also noted that it 'would be great to have [the glossary] also in Gaelic, and the same goes for the rest of the guidance'.

Two respondents thought that the presentation and layout of the guidance could be clearer:

Generally, think of presentation, layout and infographics to assist with learning.

I thought that all of the guidance was generally good, although it could be laid out a little more clearly – perhaps more in the style of Michel Byrne's *Gràmar na Gàidhlig* with more examples as you explain.

There were differences of opinion in relation to the degree of prescriptiveness in the guidance. One respondent commented as follows:

Is toil leam mar a sheachnaich sibh 'ceart' agus 'ceàrr' ach gun do chleachd sibh 'molta' agus 'dì-mholta'. Bidh mi fhìn a' cleachdadh traidiseanta/nuadh, foirmeil/mì-fhoirmeil, Gàidhlig a' mhinisteir/Gàidhlig na sràide, a.m.s.a.a. leis na h-oileanaich agam. Gu h-àraidh le oileanaich le Gàidhlig a-staigh no bho FhMG, saoilidh mi gu bi ceart vs. ceàrr gam fàgail *defensive*.

In contrast, another respondent found the guidance more problematic in terms of 'style and tone':

I find there to be value judgement implicit in the guidance that concerns me. Other languages cope with variation especially in speech without the need to deem speakers 'correct' or 'incorrect'. I think the guidance could be revisited with attention to style and tone. I'm also unclear on what on earth 'changing grammatical norms' means. For editors, proof-readers, translators and others producing text for professional purposes, as it were our Chicago Style? For schoolchildren? For speakers?! I remain unconvinced that many 'revisions' of Gaelic grammar and/or orthography – the *suidheachadh ceangailte* comes to mind here – have done more than deskill those who have a skills deficit in the first place.

This second set of comments seems wide of the mark in some respects, given that the terms 'correct' and 'incorrect' were hardly used in the guidance (as suggested by the previous respondent) and the reference in the guidance to 'changing grammatical norms' was actually the statement that 'there is no rationale for changing the current grammatical norms' (p. 16).

Three respondents made positive general assessments concerning the grammatical recommendations in the guidance:

All of the recommendations seem to me to be best practice and reflect how Gaelic is spoken by those seen as 'good speakers' in the community.

I found I agreed with the guidance very well – much better than I expected. In fact I agreed with everything, except that I thought that the guidance on the dative case, while balanced overall, was perhaps a bit over-prescriptive. I think there is a great danger of being over-prescriptive and too rigid with the rules. Better to provide good information on how highly respected speakers and writers use the language and people will naturally try to follow them without being forced.

It's timely, and reflects language change.

Most of the comments concerning specific points of the grammar guidance concerned the dative case. The more substantive points concerning that issue are addressed here.

Two respondents would have preferred a more conservative approach than that presented in the guidance, with traditional slenderisation applied to all feminine nouns and adjectives:

> There are points where my opinion diverges, e.g. - on page 5, section C, all the type B examples are to me simply wrong. I would slenderise in all these instances, but I have to concede that usage has moved on and I probably sound like a bad facsimile of Calders.

> The only issue I have is with: C. THE DATIVE WITH DEFINITE FEMININE NOUNS, where it has type A but then also says that type B (no slenderisation) should not be considered incorrect. However, I feel particularly in formal and / or written Gaelic not using slenderization is for me not at all correct, and I feel that use like this would be judged as 'bad Gaelic'.

Another respondent commented that the guidance could make clearer that slenderisation was more appropriate in formal contexts:

> There also should be a bit more guidance on register [vis-à-vis] the dative, the dative marking is more acceptable in formal settings compared to less formal settings.

Another observed that some dialects probably maintained dative slenderisation more than others:

> Leis an tuiseal tabhartach, faodar a ràdh gu bheil grunn dual-chainntean anns an glèidh an tuiseal tabhartach mar a bhiodh dùil, (m.e. Barraigh), ach cha mhòr nach chanainn gu bheil glèidheadh an tuiseal tabhartach seo annamh. Uime sin, 's math dh'fhaoidte nach biodh [tu] ag iarraidh an tuiseal tabhartach a leantainn mur eil thu son blas Barrach a thogail.

This hypothesis is commonly advanced, and there is certainly some evidence in support of it, but it could not be demonstrated adequately through corpus analysis (SO 2.2).

One respondent drew attention to the issue of the implementation of the guidance:

> Sabhal Mòr Ostaig does not teach about the slenderisation of feminine nouns in the dative case. They teach that both masculine and feminine are the same in the dative case. If slenderisation is recommended then Cùrsa Inntrigidh should be altered to correct this [although] this may have already been changed.

Certainly it will be necessary to find effective mechanisms for the dissemination and implementation of the guidance by key institutions. This issue is discussed further in section 4 below.

Finally, as noted above, one respondent 'thought that the guidance on the dative case, while balanced overall, was perhaps a bit over-prescriptive'. It is not entirely clear what 'over-prescriptive' means here, as the guidance does allow different usages; if 'over-conservative' is intended, this comment is diametrically opposed to the first comment given above.

Three comments addressed the issue of lenition with verbal nouns. One appeared to disagree with the main recommendation of this section:

> The form *a dhèanamh* is very fast creeping into sentences with modal verbs. *Tha mi toilichte a ràdh*, *tha e doirbh a chreidsinn*. They don't express: I am happy to say IT, but just I am happy to say. And people do not see the difference between them. This has to be clear and there is more guidance necessary. *Beurlachas*.

The other respondents proposed that additional information or examples be provided in the guidance:

> Although the guidance about lenition of verbal nouns when there is no object is very clear, I feel it would be helpful to have an extra section showing what happens when there is an object: e.g. *Feumaidh sibh a' chiad rann a sheinn*, *Faodaidh sibh ceistean fhaighneachd*

> In examples, especially when looking at lenition of verbal nouns, *always* cover all initial sound groups i.e. esp. vowel initial and f- initial, in addition to dentals and other lenitable consonants.

The latter point raises the general issue of how many examples should be provided. In this case, there are potentially five different categories for exemplification (lenitable consonants, dental consonants, vowels, f + vowel and f + consonant).

Only one comment addressed the issue of impersonals with *rach*. This respondent agreed with the substantive recommendation in the guidance but felt it could be more forcefully stated:

> I would venture to suggest that rather than calling the example *chì sinn na taighean a chaidh an togail* a hypercorrection that is not recommended, we should say that it is definitely wrong. . . . I'd say: *na taighean a chaidh an togail* is always wrong, horrible, hate to hear it.

In summary, participants overwhelmingly agreed with the choice of the *cùisean buairidh*, as well as the structure and content of the guidance. Some of the criticisms received involved whether the guidance should attempt to address dialectal and register variation further. Others concerned the level of prescription represented by the guidance, suggesting that it was either over- or under-prescriptive in places. However, some of the criticism can be dispensed with: e.g. the comment that terms such as 'correct' and 'incorrect' should not be used, and that we suggested 'changing grammatical norms'. In fact, these terms were barely referenced, and the guidance concluded that no substantial revision was required to widely regarded grammatical norms in Scottish Gaelic. Overall, these results endorse the approach

that we have taken so far on providing grammatical guidance to users and its continuation in the future.

4. Sruth-obrach 4.3: evaluation of the LEACAG project and the CCC

For the evaluation of the work of the CCC and the LEACAG project, all members of the CCC, together with Peadar Morgan of BnG, were contacted by email on 21 June 2018 and invited to participate in the evaluation. A reminder was then sent on 5 July.

As with the other work streams, a questionnaire was prepared, which respondents had the option of completing either online or in Word. There were two parts to the questionnaire: Part A dealt with the structure and operation of the CCC and Part B concerned the structure and functioning of the LEACAG project and future Gaelic corpus development projects. There were 6 questions in Part A and 8 questions in Part B. Respondents were given the option of submitting a single overarching reply rather than answering each question in turn.

Responses were not received from all eight CCC members, but they give useful insight into the experience of the CCC as a whole. Again, the names of the individuals who provided responses are not used in this report, although they were given when these responses were submitted.

A response was also received from Peadar Morgan.

A. Responses from CCC members

In relation to Part A (Structure and operation of the CCC), question 1 asked whether the remit of the CCC was sufficiently clear from the outset and whether the work proceeded in the manner proposed.

Two respondents suggested that clarity was somewhat lacking at the early stage of the project:

> I think we were all feeling our way at the beginning of the process. Over the two years of the project working with the LEACAG teams was of great benefit to us in terms of our understanding of the task ahead.

> I feel the work did proceed well but perhaps the scale of the ultimate overall task of reviewing and developing consensual recommendations on Gaelic corpus – and the time this might take, and the sort of budget it might require - only became clear as this first phase progressed.

A third respondent explained that s/he joined the CCC only after the project had started and therefore 'was feeling my way for a while'.

Question 2 asked how well the CCC has advanced the Gaelic corpus development agenda. All respondents expressed a degree of uncertainty in this regard. The main issue was ensuring effective engagement with stakeholders and with the wider Gaelic community.

We have made our recommendations to Bòrd na Gàidhlig as to the next phase. The greatest challenge is serious engagement with all stakeholders – traditional communities, new users, education practitioners, broadcasters, publishers etc – all those who use the language or have an interest in it. Unless the recommendations of the project are widely disseminated and adopted the research effort and CCC's time will not have advanced the development agenda in any significant way.

CCC has achieved a significant first step, but the real challenge now will be the adoption of the recommendations.

To some degree. However, I am not entirely certain that we tapped fully into general community opinion in terms of the spoken language, rather than the opinions of more 'professional' Gaels.

Question 3 asked whether there was a way to improve the CCC. Although one respondent proposed that 'the remit and composition of CCC should be reviewed in advance of a further phase of the project', the only concrete suggestion was to 'bring in a couple of younger speakers', as 'their opinion on preferred grammatical models could be very useful'.

Question 4 asked how well the CCC has worked in tandem with the LEACAG team. Two respondents replied 'reasonably well' but a third, although noting that there was a 'good working relationship', 'always felt aware of the other demands on the LEACAG team's time, and that this had a significant bearing on the programme for delivery of the research project'.

This issue of the timing of project delivery is discussed again below.

Question 5 asked whether the two groups (i.e. the CCC and the LEACAG team) managed to achieve consensus about the priorities and processes for Gaelic corpus development. All respondents felt that this had generally been the case but suggested that further discussion about options in terms of process would be helpful.

Finally, question 6 of Part A asked whether a bipartite model (i.e. the CCC and the LEACAG team) was the best way of advancing Gaelic corpus development, whether it garnered sufficient popular legitimacy, or whether there was a better way? This is an important and complex question and the CCC members gave detailed and thoughtful responses:

As I said above the greatest challenge is serious engagement with all stakeholders. Unless the recommendations of the project are widely disseminated and adopted the research effort and CCC's time will not have advanced the development agenda in any significant way.

Legitimacy and authority will always be a challenge in such a task as corpus development and this is well reflected in the name agreed for CCC – where an advisory rather than a didactic function is specified. As suggested above the adoption of recommendations into colloquial language use is the ultimate challenge, and a first step in that direction must be the acceptance and adoption of the recommendations by educationalists and broadcasters. Both professions have been

represented on CCC but that does not essentially mean that these sectors will formally accept and deliver changes.

Popular legitimacy is a tricky one. In Iceland it works through active consensus, because there is a culture within the general population of discussing corpus issues affecting the Icelandic language. This dynamic operates within Gaelic Scotland at a very low level outside what might be termed 'activist' circles. That is not to say there is not a latent interest in such questions in the community which could be stimulated – but a platform is needed for it. Why are there not discussions and workshops held in conjunction with the National Mod – that surely provides a great opportunity for CCC and LEACAG to inform the community of their work and to advance the issues. And why not have a programme on BBC ALBA or Radio nan Gàidheal about it, seeking feedback? I feel that too much of this sort of work is happening remotely from the community of speakers – and we're all to blame for that – but a new approach would be healthy for the state of the language.

In response to question 1 of Part B, 'How effective has LEACAG been as a corpus development project?', two CCC members expressed the view that it was 'fairly effective' although two also expressed the view that the process was 'slow and ponderous' and 'perhaps unnecessarily complicated and drawn out'.

In response to question 2, 'What potential does LEACAG have for positively impacting Gaelic language planning?', two CCC members emphasised the need for consensus in the development of Gaelic corpus planning and thought that LEACAG had 'a lot of potential' or 'reasonable potential' for contributing to this. A third noted that 'the status of the educational institutions involved bring important expertise, authority and legitimacy to the process and they obviously can / should seek to implement their own recommendations as endorsed by CCC'.

Question 3 asked 'How well did Sruth-obrach 2.1 (consultation with professional users of Gaelic to identify grammatical issues) work in practice during the project?' Here, the responses expressed a degree of disappointment, both in terms of the number of responses received and the overall value of this kind of consultation:

The survey response rate from the professional users was disappointing. Are long online surveys the most effective means of gathering data? However the resulting report was comprehensive and well written and the team were very willing to act on suggestions from CCC.

Fairly well, but the number of consultees seemed to be small and I'm not sure we got opinions that varied from what members of CCC might have given. Their approach was conservative.

It seems to have been reasonably effective – but I think many will have been surprised by the extent to which we are all being subliminally influenced by colloquial language evolution.

Question 4 asked in what ways further consultations with professional users could be useful to corpus development initiatives in the future. One respondent noted that 'they will surely be useful but perhaps alternative means of consultation need to be explored'. Another suggested in particular that it would be useful to include 'some younger professional speakers and users of Gaelic' within such consultations. The third emphasised that although 'a living language must always be evolving . . . the maintenance of the richest vocabulary, and proper grammatical structures, must be a continuing objective' and that within this 'professional users have a duty to preserve language quality'.

Question 5 asked how well Sruth-obrach 2.2 (consultation with Gaelic speakers in the community on identified grammatical issues) worked in practice during the project. Two respondents expressed some doubt in this regard:

> I must confess to having some doubts about the methods used to consult Gaelic speakers in the Gaelic-speaking communities and whether the sample was sufficient. Engagement with CCC was fairly limited.

> Perhaps I'm being a little unfair but I wasn't convinced that the methodology (ie how the 'panels' were chosen and questioned) elucidated matters in the best way. This is not an easy issue in a community where many fluent users of the language lack the full skill set and can be reticent and overly modest about their own abilities. This part of the project seemed to me to be the potentially weakest in terms of reaching consensual community opinion.

The third respondent expressed concern at the substantive outcome of this strand of research:

> My impression is that community users reflected the influence of the negative evolutionary influences to an even greater extent than professional users – but sadly most community users will not have seen these changes as damaging.

Question 6 asked in what ways could further consultations with Gaelic-speaking communities be conducted so as to be useful to corpus development initiatives in the future. Two ideas were suggested:

- working with particular groups or audiences (e.g. GME pupils, youth groups, church groups; radio and television audiences or local newspaper readerships).
- studying practices in relation to other minority language corpus planning projects elsewhere.

It should be noted in this connection, and also with reference on the earlier comment that long questionnaires may not be the most suitable method of investigation, that assessing specific aspects of language use necessarily requires detailed, focused and time-consuming work, typically involving the careful consideration of specific examples. It is simply not possible to carry out such work at a high level of generality and without the use of writing. These constraints need to be borne in mind when contemplating alternative mechanisms for consultation.

Question 7 asked respondents how well has the structure of the LEACAG project had worked and whether they had any suggestions about how to make it work better. One respondent proposed shorter project periods, but the others felt unable to offer a view here.

Question 8 asked how well Sruth-obrach 2.3 (corpus-based research on identified grammatical issues) worked in practice. All responses were positive:

> This seemed to me the strongest part of the project, well designed and researched, providing guidance based on data.

> This team were very willing to explain their methods and their vision for the future. Their research was well organised and their results well presented. The Stiùireadh is well written and accessible to non-specialists.

> Generally thorough and effective.

It is possible these responses misunderstood this question, in that the Stiùireadh was only partly based upon the analysis in SO 2.3, and SO 2.3 does not 'provide guidance'.

Question 9 asked in what ways could further corpus-based research be useful to corpus development initiatives in the future. Here it was suggested that it would be useful to analyse recorded spoken Gaelic in addition to literature. This would clearly be desirable but would involve significant technical/logistical complications.

Question 10 asked respondents how well has the administration and management of the LEACAG project worked, and whether they had any suggestions about how to make it work better. One respondent stated that 'it seems to have been interminably slow – secondary to the teaching demands of the various academic establishments involved'. Another commented more specifically that 'finding dates for meetings seemed to be a tortuous process at times' and that the dates and locations of meetings should be agreed at the start of the project.

Question 11 asked respondents what the main priorities for further advancing Gaelic corpus development are. One respondent argued in general terms that 'Gaelic has to survive in today's (and tomorrow's) world while retaining the wealth of its traditional linguistic heritage'. Another emphasised the need to equip more Gaelic speakers with 'the tools and confidence' to consider issues of grammar and language use:

> We need to greatly expand the teaching of Gaelic grammar and language use etc to give many more people the tools and confidence to consider the issues. Too low a percentage of the community has the necessary understanding and terminology to give effective advice and guidance to those involved in corpus development and the danger with that is that it is an 'elite' that tends to be surveyed.

Finally, the CCC members were asked if there is a way to make Gaelic corpus development more participatory and democratic. Their replies were as follows:

Again I would emphasise the need for engagement with a wide range of individuals and groups so that the process is not seen as something that belongs only to an elite group of people.

I think that in an ideal world this would be an on-going process which attracted regular input from the widest possible range of practitioners – thus identifying, reacting to, and in some cases resisting evolutionary language evolutions. We accept that corpus development is critical to the survival and revitalisation of Gaelic but while it is an urgent need the work involved is challenging and slow. If there was a way of creating a system which operated continuously and was able to feed into the national corpus guidance on a quarterly basis this might be most efficient. We need to get teachers and educators more involved. We have to tell everybody who speaks Gaelic that their opinion is valued.

B. Response from Bòrd na Gàidhlig

This section summarises the response from Peadar Morgan on behalf of BnG. In contrast to the responses from the CCC members, this response dealt with both Part A of the questionnaire (the structure and operation of the CCC) and Part B (the structure and functioning of the LEACAG project and future Gaelic corpus development projects).

In relation to question 1, 'Was the remit of the CCC sufficiently clear from the outset and did the work proceed in the manner proposed?' The response here addressed the first issue, recalling the history of the group's creation:

Tha e coltach nach robh a h-uile duine air an aon cheum nuair a chaidh CCC a stèidheachadh. B' e bh' ann ach tionndadh beag dhen mhodail airson eòlas corpais na coimhearsnachd a bha ga mholadh ann am Bell et al. 2014 *Dlùth is Inneach*; ach thàinig e air ais bho bhàrr BnG leis [Thug] an t-ainm Buidheann Stiùiridh Cànain, a thug dreach is dealbh nas gnìomhaiche air a' phannal (ìomhaigh a chaidh a bhrosnachadh, dh'fhaodte, leis na dreuchdan a b' àbhaist a bhith aig mòran dhe na buill). Chuir BSC fhèin romhpa an t-ainm atharrachadh gu CCC air 8 Ògmhios 2017.

In relation to question 2, 'How well has the CCC advanced the Gaelic corpus development agenda?', the group was generally conservative in approach without being overly rigid, with a high level of agreement among them:

Tha iad air a bhith nòsach nam beachdan, gun a bhith tur righinn, sna beagan chùisean a tha air a bhith fon phrosbaig. Tha ìre air leth àrd de cho-aonta air a bhith nam measg.

However, it was noted that the composition of the group raised possible issues concerning the connection to Gaelic communities, as none of the members were currently living in a community in which Gaelic is still strong (although most had grown up in such communities):

Tha CCC air am prionnsapal is an cleachdadh a stèidheachadh gum bi guth aig eòlas dualchasach na coimhearsnachd aig meadhan planadh corpais. Tha i air seo a dhèanamh a rèir a' phrofaidhl ais-dhùthchasaich aig Bell et al. 2014; ach chan eil gin

dhe na buill a' fuireach ann an coimhearsnachd làidir Ghàidhlig, agus nuair a thagh iad fhèin dithis bhall ùr, b' e fileantach a dh'ionnsaich an cànan na inbheach fear dhiubh sin.

This issue was also raised in relation to question 3, 'Is there a way to improve the CCC?'

In relation to question 4, 'How well has the CCC worked in tandem with the LEACAG team?', specific difficulties such as scheduling meetings were noted, but the principal problem identified was the distributed nature of authority in the multi-institutional LEACAG team. This issue was also noted by members of the LEACAG team.

> Bha còir aig LEACAG a bhith an eisimeil ri clàradh coinneamhan CCC (agus BOAG), ach cha do dh'obraich seo, agus 's dòcha nach obraicheadh; bha tuilleadh choinneamhan fa-near dha CCC fhèin, agus dh'iarr iad coinneamhan dìomhair.

> Bha còir aig LEACAG a bhith a' cumail fios cànanais ri CCC, agus nuair a tha seo air a bhith ann, tha e air cuideachadh gu mòr. Ach cha robh a' phròiseact aig ìre 's gun deach seo a stèidheachadh mar rud cunbhalach, àbhaisteach.

> Chan ann ri CCC a-mhàin a dh'fheumas co-obair a bhith. Gun aon neach leis an ùghdarras is a' chuimse is an ùine thairis air a' phròiseact gu làitheil, chan eil e air a bhith furasta co-òrdanachadh le BnG, agus dh'fhaodte am measg nan sruthan obrach fhèin.

In relation to question 5, 'Have the two groups (i.e. the CCC and the LEACAG team) managed to achieve consensus about the priorities and processes for Gaelic corpus development?' it was noted that no disagreement had become apparent so far:

> Chan eil eas-aonta ri fhaicinn (fhathast), ach dh'fhaodte nach eil LEACAG air argamaidean connspaideach a phutadh (ma tha a leithid ann).

Finally, in relation to question 6, 'Is a bipartite model (i.e. the CCC and the LEACAG team) the best way of advancing Gaelic corpus development? Does it garner sufficient popular legitimacy, or is there a better way?' it was suggested that while the division between research-based linguistic data and judgments based on feelings about natural usage was useful, it might be more appropriate to base decisions on the integration of the two approaches rather than leaving the final decision to the CCC:

> Tha an sgaradh eadar rannsachadh is fianais air an dàrna làimh, agus sìolachan airson faireachdainn nàdarrach a ghleidheadh air an làimh eile, gu math feumail. Ach 's dòcha gum bu chòir am frionas sa mhodail seo a bhith ag amas barrachd air co-aonta, seach air sruth car aon-sligheach gu CCC airson facal deireannach.

In relation to the key question of garnering popular legitimacy, it was pointed out that it is probably still too early to form a judgment:

> Tha e ro thràth a bhith cinnteach an glac CCC, is am pròiseas, gu leòr a dh'earbsa
> am measg bhuidhnean a tha an sàs ann an obair Ghàidhlig, gun luaidh air a' phoball,
> gus buaidh a thoirt air cleachdadh (no an cleachdadh a th' ann a dhaingneachadh).

Turning to Part B of the questionnaire, the first question asked 'How effective has LEACAG been as a corpus development project?' It was felt that it was too early to reach a conclusion here, but that there had been promising steps:

> Tha e tuilleadh is tràth airson buaidh nan co-dhùnaidhean is na h-uidheim fhaicinn –
> bhiodh e math sùil a chumail oirre seo.

> Ach co-dhiù tha a' phròiseact air feum is cothrom ann an cuid a rudan a dhearbhadh:
> planadh corpais dhan Ghàidhlig, sgrùdadh tro DhASG, co-chomhairle dhan
> choimhearsnachd.

> Dh'fhaodadh buaidh a bhith aig a' cho-àite bhriathrachais a bhios a' dol thar na
> làraich chudromaich fhèin, ma bheir e air buidhnean is daoine co-obrachadh
> barrachd air faclan.

In relation to question 2, 'what potential does LEACAG have for positively impacting Gaelic language planning?', it was noted that LEACAG had the opportunity to help direct official Gaelic usage by keeping different sectors and constituencies in agreement and by dealing over time with changes in linguistic usage:

> Tha an cothrom ann airson LEACAG – no ge b' e dè thig às a dèidh – stiùir a thoirt
> do chleachdadh oifigeil Gàidhlig air dhòigh 's gun cumar na diofar raointean air an
> aon cheum agus gun sgaradh fhaicinn eadar sgìrean no coimhearsnachdan.
> Feumaidh e cuideachd, ge-tà, stiùir a thoirt air dhòigh 's gun cumar rèidh
> atharrachaidhean tro thìm, a' leigeil leis a' chainnt is a gnothaichean corpais
> mùthadh mar a bhios a dhìth no ga iarraidh gun sgaradh fhosgladh (cus) eadar
> ginealaich.

In relation to question 3, 'How well did Sruth-obrach 2.1 (consultation with professional users of Gaelic to identify grammatical issues) work in practice during the project?', it was felt that this part of the project had not been as successful as hoped. It was again noted that the number of participants was not as high as had been hoped. The issue of varying levels of Gaelic competence among the respondents was also flagged up, as was the possibility that future surveys of this kind might generate even fewer responses, due to burnout.

> Cha robh e cho soirbheachail 's a bha an dòchas. Cha robh na h-uimhir an lùib na
> co-chomhairle 's a bhathar an dòchas, agus dh'fhaodte gun robh cus dhiofar ìrean is
> eòlais aig an luchd-freagairt. Cuideachd, theagamh nach biodh e furasta an aon
> mhodh obrach a chleachdadh ro thric agus na h-àireamhan a chumail suas.

Question 4 asked in what ways could further consultations with professional users be useful to corpus development initiatives in the future. Here, it was suggested that different kinds of professional users could be dealt with as sub-groups:

'S dòcha na diofar raointean – luchd-teagaisg, eadar-theangairean, craoladairean, ùghdaran, is mar sin – a mheas mar choimhearsnachdan fa leth, agus co-chomhairle a dhèanamh riutha mar phàirt dhen cho-chomhairle phoblach.

In relation to question 5, 'How well did Sruth-obrach 2.2 (consultation with Gaelic speakers in the community on identified grammatical issues) work in practice during the project?', concerns were raised about the narrowness of the investigation and the delay in delivery, and also about the sustainability of the data-gathering method that was selected:

Chaidh am prionnsapal a stèidheachadh agus rudan feumail ionnsachadh, ach bha i car cumhang agus tuilleadh is màirnealach. Nas bunaitiche, ged a bha am modh obrach a chaidh a thaghadh soirbheachail, tha e duilich fhaicinn mar as urrainn dha bhith air a chumail suas gun daoine fàs cleachdte ris a' 'chleas' de cheisteachan 'san dol seachad'. Cuideachd, bha soirbheachas a' mhodh an crochadh air cliù is comas aon neach sònraichte – às aonais an neach sin, dh'fhaodte nach obraicheadh an siostam co-dhiù (no le dàil eile!).

Question 6 asked 'In what ways could further consultations with Gaelic-speaking communities be conducted so as to be useful to corpus development initiatives in the future?'. Here it was suggested

Tha e coltach gum feum barrachd stòrais a bhith an sàs ann, agus 's dòcha measgachadh de chonaltradh sa choimhearsnachd agus tro mheadhanan eileagtronaigeach.

A bharrachd air co-chomhairle mar phàirt dhen t-slighe gu co-dhùnadh, cha bu mhiste co-chomhairle air buaidh a' cho-dhùnaidh – an seas e ri cleachdadh, a bheil e air leantainn gu beachd eile, a bheil e air solas a chur air ceistean eile, is mar sin.

Question 7 asked 'How well did Sruth-obrach 2.3 (corpus-based research on identified grammatical issues) work in practice during the project?'. Although there were delays in delivery (mainly caused by the difficulties in doing detailed grammatical research with an untagged corpus), this section of the project was considered to have worked well in practice, demonstrating a very useful mechanism for analysis of language use. Concern was raised about the dependence of this investigation on written usage, which may be conservative or otherwise distinct from spoken usage:

Dh'obraich seo gu math, agus dhearbh e am feum a th' ann. Cuideachd, ge-tà, nochd e na duilgheadasan an lùib na saothrach seo. Bha barrachd ùine na bha an dùil a dhìth, agus cha robh an co-theacs aig abairt san stòr-dàta an-còmhnaidh soilleir. Agus air cùl a h-uile nì (agus air aithneachadh leis a' phròiseact), 's e traidisean sgrìobhaidh a bhathar a' sgrùdadh; traidisean a dh'fhaodadh a bhith a' teàrnadh bhon chainnt dhùthchasach. Dh'fhaodadh seo a bhith a' leantainn seann nòs, no a' leantainn nòs nach robh riamh ann ach air pàipear. No fiù 's a' cruthachadh nòs ùr-nodha. Ach a dh'aindeoin sin, tha am modh obrach air a dhearbhadh fhèin mar fhianais air leth feumail as urrainn pàtranan a dhaingneachadh no a nochdadh.

In relation to question 8, 'In what ways could further corpus-based research be useful to corpus development initiatives in the future?', the importance of taking evidence from the community and specific categories of language users was noted:

> Bu chòir fianais às a' choimhearsnachd a bhith an-còmhnaidh air beulaibh nam planairean agus nan eòlaichean nuair a bhios iad a' coimhead air cùis corpais, agus a bhith mar phàirt dhen taic is dhen mhìneachadh dhan cho-dhùnadh. Mar a chaidh a thogail . . . gu h-àrd, 's dòcha gum bu chòir dha na diofar raointean proifeiseanta a bhith air am meas mar choimhearsnachdan ùidhe fa leth, agus co-chomhairle a dhèanamh riutha mar sin.

Assessment of actual usage (as opposed to preferences stated in the abstract) is also necessary here:

> Ach cuideachd, tha feum air sgrùdadh dìreach (no dàrna làimh) air a' chleachdadh a tha stèidhte ann an leithid nan sgoiltean.

Question 9 asked how well the structure of the LEACAG project had worked and sought suggestions about how to make it work better. Here, tensions between the participating universities were noted:

> Tha e coltach gu bheil frionas obrach is mì-chinnt air a bhith ann eadar na diofar oilthighean. Gu ìre cha ghabh a leithid a sheachnadh le measgachadh de bhuidhnean an sàs – air an làimh eile tha am measgachadh air cur ris an dà chuid an t-eòlas agus an seasamh aig LEACAG. . . .[Tha] feum air stiùir ùghdarrasail ma tha measgachadh de bhuidhnean (no de sgiobaidhean san aon institiud) gu bhith ag obair gu h-èifeachdach.

Similar concerns about the lack of a unified voice among those involved in the project were noted in response to question 10, 'How well has the administration and management of the LEACAG project worked? Do you have any suggestions about how to make it work better?':

> Chan eil e an-còmhnaidh air a bhith furasta freagairtean a lorg bhon sgioba rannsachaidh mar bhuidheann chorporra. Chan e dìmeas idir air an neach-rianachd a tha air a bhith ann ri ràdh gun robh feum air aon neach le ùghdarras is eòlas a bhruidhneadh às leth LEACAG gu lèir, agus airson dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil an aon tuigse is fios aig gach buidheann is duine.

Question 11 asked what the main priorities for further advancing Gaelic corpus development should be. Several different areas were noted here:

> A' lìonadh is a' dearbhadh a' cho-àite bhriathrachais; a' sìneadh an stiùiridh air gràmar; a' leudachadh is a' daingneachadh structar planadh corpais gus lèirmheas is leasachadh air gnàthachas litreachaidh is poileasaidhean sgrìobhaidh a ghabhail a-staigh.

Finally, question 12 asked 'Is there a way to make Gaelic corpus development more participatory and democratic?' The importance of this issue was noted, but no concrete suggestion advanced.

C. Summary of section

Given the diversity of views expressed, and the divergence of opinion on some points, it is not possible to give an overview of the outcome of this aspect of the evaluation. Clearly, however, the logistics of the project were unsatisfactory in some respects and it is important to ensure a smoother process in relation to future initiatives in this field.

5. Conclusion

This evaluation clearly depicts a project in progress rather than a finished project. Responses to the surveys in Part 1 and Part 2 suggest overall satisfaction with what has been produced to date, although more testing and refinement is clearly necessary. Feedback in Part 3 underscores the importance of the collaborative approach to corpus development but also identifies some of the operational difficulties that may arise.