

# Scottish Gaelic political terminology – Term formation in the Scottish Parliament Annual Report

Lena Krochmann

*Leipzig University, Germany*

## Abstract

This paper analyses the Scottish Gaelic political terminology used by the Scottish Parliament, based on the translations of three Annual Reports. Applying principles from terminology theory and taking minority-language concerns into account, the Scottish Gaelic terms are examined for methods of term formation and their relation to their English and, where applicable, Irish equivalents. Inconsistencies in the terminology are also considered. The results are placed in the wider context of research on Scottish Gaelic terminology and corpus planning. The paper argues that the examined terminology is shaped by the dominance of English, as well as by practical concerns arising from the current language planning situation.

**Keywords:** Scottish Gaelic, terminology, corpus planning, translation

## 1. Introduction

After a long period of exclusion from most of public life and politics, Scottish Gaelic has become more present in these areas over the past few decades. Notably, the new Scottish Parliament, which opened in 1999, allows for the use of the language. In practice, however, this is mostly limited to the translation of selected publications. Scottish Gaelic also gained legal recognition under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005, which refers to it as “[...] an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language [...]”. Promoting the use of Scottish Gaelic in all areas of life is one of the aims of official language policy, as described in the National Gaelic Language Plans (Bòrd na Gàidhlig 2007, 2012, 2018). This expansion of Scottish Gaelic use requires corpus and terminology planning. As there is no language academy or similar central corpus planning institution, several organisations are involved in the creation of specialised terminology. For instance, the Scottish Parliament commissioned two parliamentary dictionaries (*Faclair na Pàrlamaid* 2001 and *Faclair Rianachd Phoblaich* 2012), which involved the creation of new terms. The decentralised approach to Scottish Gaelic corpus planning has been criticised for a lack of co-

ordination and consistency (cf. Bauer et al. 2009; Dunbar 2010; Bell et al. 2014). Weaknesses of official Scottish Gaelic terminology have also been pointed out by McLeod (2000, 2001).

This paper, based on research from an unpublished MA thesis (Krochmann 2019) takes a closer look at one example of Scottish Gaelic specialised terminology: the political terminology currently used by the Scottish Parliament. Based on three of the Parliament's translated Annual Reports, it analyses the term formation in an attempt to characterise the Parliament's current Scottish Gaelic political terminology. The paper considers the different term types found in the reports and assesses the tendencies and preferences that can be inferred from them. It also discusses how the Scottish Gaelic terminology relates to its English counterpart, as well as political terms in Irish. The results can be interpreted against the backdrop of the current sociolinguistic and language planning situation for Scottish Gaelic. It is also useful to compare them to earlier research to assess how tendencies in Scottish Gaelic political terminology have evolved over time.

## 2. Background and methodology

Although the Parliament makes provisions for Scottish Gaelic, it is by no means a completely bilingual institution. There is the post of Gaelic Development Officer for various Gaelic-related tasks, but no in-house translation department.<sup>1</sup> English remains the sole language of legislation, and only some of the Parliament's official publications are translated. As a result, the amount of Scottish Gaelic text available from the Parliament is limited. As a regular bilingual publication covering a wide range of political topics, the Scottish Parliament Annual Report (which has been available in Scottish Gaelic since 2012) seems particularly suited for a terminology analysis. The text corpus for this analysis comprises the reports for 2016–17, 2017–18 and 2018–19, which were published in bilingual format (English and Scottish Gaelic translation). The word count of each bilingual report, as well as that of the translation alone, is given below.

**Table 1:** *Word count of the text corpus*

Year	Words in bilingual report	Words in Scottish Gaelic translation only
2016–2017 <sup>2</sup>	11,088	5,660
2017–2018	10,709	5,674
2018–2019	10,386	5,456
	32,183	16,790

When discussing political terminology, it should be noted that the research object is difficult to define. There are varying views on what is political and, accordingly, what constitutes political language and vocabulary. As this paper is concerned with terminology planning and the vocabulary used by a specific state institution, the focus is on the specialist terminology

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Alasdair MacCaluim, Gaelic Development Officer at the Scottish Parliament, for the information about translation and the use of Gaelic in the Scottish Parliament.

<sup>2</sup> This report contains a list of all members of the Scottish Parliament. As only the English versions of the names are given, this list is included in the overall word count, but not the translation word count.

used to describe a system of government and the associated processes. This type of political terminology is described by Klein (1989) as institution vocabulary (*Institutionsvokabular*) and comprises terms for state institutions and organisations, roles and offices, laws and treaties, and the actions and processes specific to politics (as opposed to those that are not exclusively political). Other types of political vocabulary, such as words used to express political values or to influence public opinion, are not the subject of this analysis. As institution vocabulary forms part of a specialist language, principles from terminology theory can be used to describe and categorise the terms. General strategies of term formation, as described for example by Sager et al. (1980) for English and Arntz et al. (2014) for German, can be adapted to group the Scottish Gaelic political terms from the Annual Reports into five broad categories:

- Borrowing: taking an entire term from another language, with or without assimilation
- Semantic extension: giving a new meaning to an existing word, thus adapting it for political terminology
- Derivation: term formation by prefixing or suffixing
- Compounding: combining several words to form a terminological unit
- Abbreviation: formation of an acronym or other short form, including as a synonym for another term

In addition to this categorisation, it makes sense to characterise the terms further by their relation to and use of other languages, especially English. Borrowing is a possible term formation strategy for any language, but for a minority language such as Scottish Gaelic it is closely linked to questions of language policy. Cooper (1989) points out that corpus planners are faced with a choice between coining new terms using the means of the target language, or borrowing from another language. However, as borrowed and native elements can be combined, the use of loanwords is considered in all types of terms here, rather than only in pure borrowings. Other foreign influences, such as loan translations, are also taken into account.

This analysis of the Scottish Parliament's terminology can be considered within the context of existing research on Scottish Gaelic corpus planning, terminology, and official registers. The Scottish Parliament's terminology was discussed by McLeod (2001) in his evaluation of the first parliamentary dictionary, *Faclair na Pàrlamaid*. While this dictionary and McLeod's evaluation cover a wider range of vocabulary than the political (institutional) terminology discussed in this paper, a comparison between the tendencies pointed out by McLeod (2001) and those found in the Annual Reports may be useful. As *Faclair na Pàrlamaid* was drafted in the early years of the Scottish Parliament, the analysis of the Annual Reports could point to possible developments in the terminology used by the Parliament. Since part of the Scottish Parliament's terminology has changed over the years, and since *Faclair na Pàrlamaid* and its successor *Faclair Rianachd Phoblaich* (2012) were never made available as a searchable database, they are currently not the primary terminology resources for translators working for the Scottish Parliament.<sup>3</sup> The subject of 'official Scottish Gaelic', not limited to politics or terminology, was also discussed by McLeod (2000), based on translated documents from the public sector. Beyond politics and state institutions, formal or specialised Scottish Gaelic registers have been discussed in other contexts, such as news scripts

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<sup>3</sup> Alasdair MacCaluim (personal communication)

(Lamb 1999; Lamb 2008). McLeod (2004) discusses different aspects of linguistic purism in Scottish Gaelic, including the borrowing and creation of terms. Terminology issues are also addressed in research concerned with Scottish Gaelic corpus planning, e.g. the corpus planning study by Bell et al. (2014), with a survey on speakers' attitudes and preferences. While not concerned with the formation of individual terms, Bauer et al. (2009) provide a detailed review of terminology planning and resources for Scottish Gaelic, pointing out problems concerning co-ordination and dissemination. Studies like these indicate tendencies in Scottish Gaelic terminology use that can be compared to the results of this analysis of parliamentary reports. This will be discussed in the concluding section.

### 3. Types of term formation in the Annual Reports

There are some fairly clear tendencies regarding the frequency of term formation strategies used in the text corpus. While not the most common term category, loanwords from other languages make up a significant portion of the terminology. The vast majority of borrowed terms are assimilated to some degree. However, there is variation as to how far this assimilation goes. The more strongly assimilated terms are usually those that have been in use for a longer time, such as *lagh* 'law' and *pàrlamaid* 'parliament'. More recent loanwords are usually only adapted to conform to Scottish Gaelic spelling conventions without further morphological or phonological assimilation, e.g. *deamocrasaidh* 'democracy'. Nowadays, English is usually the source language for borrowings into Scottish Gaelic, even with words that are themselves loanwords in English (cf. Bell et al. 2014: 53). This is illustrated by international terms such as *deamocrasaidh*, *comataidh* 'committee', *pàrtaidh* 'party' and *poileataigs* 'politics'. The Scottish Gaelic forms mirror their English equivalents, which strongly suggests that these terms were borrowed through English. Despite the weaker assimilation of most loanwords, terms borrowed without any form of assimilation are very rare. Apart from acronyms and foreign proper names, there are only two examples in the text corpus: *Brexit* and the Irish loanword *reifreann* 'referendum', which seamlessly fits into Scottish Gaelic spelling conventions. Thus, while borrowing, especially from English, is a popular source of political terminology, there is apparently a reluctance to use more conspicuously foreign terms and to violate Scottish Gaelic orthography.

Semantic extension, i.e. giving an additional, specialised meaning to an existing Scottish Gaelic word, is a much less frequently used method of term formation in the examined reports. A few examples can be found, such as the following.

- (1)
- a. *coiteachadh*: a verbal noun meaning pushing or urging somebody, used in the reports to mean 'lobbying'
  - b. *glusad*: a verbal noun for moving or motion, used to mean a motion in Parliament
  - c. *suidheachan*: a physical seat, used to mean a seat in Parliament

In the latter two cases, the semantic extension is the same as with the English terms *motion* and *seat*. It is thus likely that the terms are modelled after their English equivalents and are loan translations as well as examples of semantic extension. As a result, Scottish Gaelic and

English both have polysemic terms that are one-to-one equivalents in both contexts. It is worth noting that all cases of semantic extension in the text corpus are based on words still used in general language. There are no examples of the revival and adaptation of archaic words, in contrast to some political terms in Irish (see section 5).

The distinction between derivation and compounding in Scottish Gaelic is somewhat problematic. Words modified by ‘prefixing’ them with a noun or adjective are sometimes categorised as compounds rather than derivatives (Gillies 1993; Mark 2004). MacAulay (1992) does not distinguish between derivation and compounding at all and classifies combinations of a stem and affixes as compounds. A useful distinction for Scottish Gaelic is made by Csonka (2016), who differentiates compounds and derivatives based on the function of the added element rather than by whether or not it can be used independently. Derivation thus uses affixes that “[...] convey only logical meaning but no conceptual meaning [...]” (42). When applying the latter definition, only a handful of terms from the Annual Reports fall into the category of derivation. However, some compound terms contain elements formed by derivation. For example, the adjectives *poilitigeach* ‘political’ and *pàrlamaideach* ‘parliamentary’, derived from the loanwords *poileataigs* and *pàrlamaid*, are used in compound terms such as *pàrtaidh poilitigeach* ‘political party’ and *taghadh pàrlamaideach* ‘parliamentary election’. The following table shows some typical examples of term formation by derivation found in the text corpus: the word *reachd* ‘law’, ‘statute’ is used to form a cluster of terms for related concepts.

**Table 2:** Examples of terms formed by derivation

Scottish Gaelic term	Prefixes/suffixes used	English equivalent
<i>reachdas</i>	-as (abstract ending)	<i>legislation</i>
<i>fo-reachdas</i>	<i>fo-</i> ‘under’; -as	<i>secondary legislation</i>
<i>reachdadaireachd</i>	- <i>adair</i> (agent noun); - <i>eachd</i> (abstract ending)	<i>legislature</i>

All of these terms are morphologically motivated and quite transparent due to the use of common affixes and the fact that designations derived from the same stem are used for related concepts. The same is true for the noun compound *bun-reachd* ‘constitution’, which combines *reachd* with *bun* ‘base’. While *reachd* is a word of Gaelic origin, borrowed words are also used for derivation with Scottish Gaelic prefixes and suffixes.

(2)

- a. *Priomhaire* ‘Prime Minister’: long-established loanword *priomh* ‘prime’, ‘first’ and suffix -*aire* (agent noun)
- b. *fo-chomataidh* ‘sub-committee’: loanword *comataidh* and prefix *fo-* ‘under’

These examples show that the loanwords are very much assimilated into Scottish Gaelic and are treated the same way as native words would be (e.g. the lenition after *fo-* in the second example).

While derivation is one of the rarer types of term formation in the text corpus, compounding is by far the most common. This is perhaps unsurprising given that many of the political concepts discussed in the reports are quite specific. Compounding thus seems particularly suitable to modify existing one-word designations and form terms for sub-types

of bills, committees etc. Compound terms are also the most structurally diverse term category discussed here. For instance, they can include elements formed by derivation, as in *pàrtaidh neo-riaghaltais* ‘non-government party’. From a terminological point of view, any “[...] combination of two or more words into a new syntagmatic unit with a new meaning independent of the constituent parts” (Sager et al. 1980: 265) can be considered a compound. Consequently, some Scottish Gaelic genitive and prepositional phrases, such as the ones listed below, can be classed as compound terms. There are thus different subtypes of compound terms found in the Annual Reports. The first are simple noun + noun compounds:

(3)

- a. *bun- reachd*  
base law  
‘constitution’
- b. *comataidh cuspair*  
committee subject.gen  
‘subject committee’

The two terms above differ in that in example a), the first component modifies the second while in example b) the second component modifies the first, with the second component in the genitive case. This is generally a useful distinction when discussing Scottish Gaelic compounds (cf. Mark 2004: 646), and both types are quite common. However, the second type is more frequent in newer compounds while the first type is more typical for long-established compounds (cf. Csonka 2016: 84–86). This is reflected in the text corpus, where the second compound type is much more frequent than the first one. Example b) above is typical for the terminology in the text corpus in that the term appears to be modelled after its English equivalent. This will be discussed in more detail below.

Another compound term type is the combination of a noun with an adjective or participle, as illustrated by the following examples:

(4)

- a. *ball roinneil*  
member regional  
‘regional member’
- b. *mòr- sheisean*  
big session  
‘plenary session’
- c. *cuspair dìonta*  
subject protected  
‘protected subject matter’

These compound terms are also frequent in the text corpus. Again, the examples show the different structures possible in Scottish Gaelic: in term a) the adjective (derived from the term *roinn* for a parliamentary region) follows the noun, in example b) the adjective precedes it, similarly to a prefix. The former is much more frequent in the terminology from the Annual Reports. Term c) uses a participle rather than an adjective. Examples a) and c) once again illustrate the tendency of the compounds to be modelled after the corresponding English ones

(though still following Scottish Gaelic grammar rules). Example b) shows how English loanwords are integrated into Scottish Gaelic terms and treated as native elements would be, as with the lenition of *seisean* after the preceding adjective.

The last group of compound terms to be discussed here are genitive phrases with the definite article (as opposed to simple noun + noun compounds with the second component in the genitive) and prepositional phrases. These terms are the most complex compound terms found in the Annual Reports in that they usually consist of at least three or four elements (some of which are also used as terms in their own right) and they tend to combine different term formation techniques. Most often they are designations for specific organisational units, such as party names and proper names for political institutions:

(5)

- a. *Pàrtaidh Nàiseanta na h-Alba*  
 party national art.f.gen Scotland.gen  
 'Scottish National Party'
- b. *Coimisean air Ath-leasachadh Pàrlamaideach*  
 commission on reform parliamentary  
 'Commission on Parliamentary Reform'

As the other compound types discussed above, these terms also tend to reflect the formation of their English equivalents. There are some slight deviations, as with the name of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party, *Pàrtaidh Tòraidheach na h-Alba* (literally 'Tory Party of Scotland'). Compared to other term types in the text corpus, compound terms with genitive or prepositional constructions seem to be particularly prone to inconsistencies. This might be because they leave more opportunity for variation, e.g. by using different prepositions or different grammatical structures altogether. Inconsistencies in the terminology will be considered in detail in section 6.

The last type of term formation to be discussed here is abbreviation. Although abbreviations are often used as synonyms of other terms, it is worth looking at them as designations in their own right for the purpose of this analysis. While the Scottish Gaelic reports do contain a number of abbreviations (all acronyms), most of them are simply borrowed from English and therefore best categorised as loanwords. Interestingly, borrowed acronyms are often used even when a Scottish Gaelic full form also appears in the corpus. For instance, the Scottish National Party is referred to as *Pàrtaidh Nàiseanta na h-Alba*, but the English acronym *SNP* is used as the abbreviation, rather than one based on the Scottish Gaelic full form. The corpus contains only three acronyms based on Scottish Gaelic terms: *AE* for *Aonadh Eòrpach* 'EU', 'European Union', *BP* for *Ball-pàrlamaid* 'MP', 'Member of Parliament' and *BPA* for *Ball Pàrlamaid na h-Alba* 'MSP', 'Member of the Scottish Parliament'. Reasons for this can only be speculated on. In some cases (such as *SNP*) the English acronym was probably firmly established in everyday use and Scottish Gaelic media before the Parliament came to choose its terminology.

Having described the different term formation types in the Annual Reports, the remainder of this paper will take a closer look at some of the general tendencies that can be discerned.

#### 4. English influence

Throughout all types of term formation, the terminology in the reports is strongly influenced by English. This influence takes different forms. Firstly, there is the prevalence of loanwords, which are almost all borrowed from or, in case of internationalisms, via English. While borrowed terms are almost always adapted in terms of orthography and inflected and lenited as native words, some contain morphemes that are not typical for Scottish Gaelic. For instance, the terms *deamocrasaidh* ‘democracy’ and *poileataigs* ‘politics’ have endings taken from English and not traditionally used to form abstract nouns in Scottish Gaelic. They also appear in loanwords outside political terminology, such as *matamataigs* ‘mathematics’ and *economaidh* ‘economy’. In the term *bhòt* ‘vote’, the initial consonant is lenited to recreate the /v/ sound of the English word, which would normally only occur in certain contexts for grammatical reasons. As borrowed terms make up a good part of the basic parliamentary terminology, they are used to form many other terms, such as compounds, to designate more specific concepts. For instance, *bile* ‘bill’ reappears in designations for different kinds of bills: *bile riaghaltais* ‘government bill’, *bile buill* ‘member’s’ bill’ and *bile priobhaideach* ‘private bill’. As a result, most terms used in the text corpus contain at least some element borrowed from or through English.

In addition to such direct borrowings, there is a very high number of loan translations in the terminology.<sup>4</sup> As mentioned above, some terms formed by semantic extension or derivation are apparently modelled after their English equivalents, taking the English term formation strategy and applying it using Scottish Gaelic and/or borrowed elements. However, loan translations are especially prevalent with the compound terms in the text corpus, which are almost always some form of calque, either from Scottish Gaelic components only or as blends with components borrowed from English. There could be several reasons for this. Firstly, there is the general dominance of English in Scotland and Scottish politics, and fact that the Annual Reports are translations from English, as are almost all official texts written in Scottish Gaelic. It is thus very likely that the English terminology would have a strong impact on its Scottish Gaelic counterpart. This side effect of asymmetrical translation situations has been pointed out with regard to Irish by Cronin (1995: 90), who maintains that “[...] translation is not a marginal but a central activity in the development of the minority language”. Besides the general, and perhaps subconscious, English influence through translation, newer parliamentary terminology was deliberately created to provide equivalents for existing English terminology, as stated for instance in a foreword to *Faclair na Pàrlamaid* (McNeir 2001). In this situation, loan translation lends itself as a quick term formation strategy that would feel natural for many speakers. In addition to being a sign of English influence, loan translation is a way of achieving terminological transparency for readers who are more familiar with political terminology in English – which would include many native Scottish Gaelic speakers. A closer look at compound terms that are not calqued from English

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<sup>4</sup> While it is not possible to retrace the exact process of term formation in every case and determine whether a term was actually created by loan translation, this is very likely when a term reflects the structure of its English equivalent, as English is the dominant language in Scottish politics.



shows that these are usually self-explanatory from their components, as illustrated by the following examples.

(6)

- a. *sgìre- taghaidh*  
district election.gen  
'constituency'
- b. *siostam còir- bhòtaidh*  
system right voting.gen  
'electoral franchise'
- c. *tiomnadh cumhachd*  
ceding power.gen  
'devolution'
- d. *bun- reachd*  
base statute  
'constitution'

For the term *mòr-chuid iomarcach* 'supermajority', which is not quite as transparent, the English translation is given in brackets in the Scottish Gaelic text. This approach is recommended in the Scottish Parliament's translation guidelines, for when the translator considers a term difficult to understand (Scottish Parliament 2019). All of this suggests that there is a high concern for the transparency of the Scottish Gaelic terminology, and this seems to affect the way terms are chosen and used in the reports.

As a more subtle sign of English influence, the Scottish Gaelic terminology makes the same terminological distinctions as English. For instance, as English uses different terms for the head of government of Scotland (*First Minister*) and the United Kingdom (*Prime Minister*), the same distinction is made between *Prìomh Mhinistear* and *Prìomhaire* respectively. Apparently, there is a preference for one-to-one terminological equivalents. While this means that the Scottish Gaelic terminology mirrors English on yet another level, it is practical from a terminological point of view as one-to-one equivalents can facilitate translation, terminology work and bilingualism within the same political system.

## 5. A brief comparison with Irish

For a further characterisation of the Scottish Gaelic terminology, it is worth comparing it to that of its 'sister language' Irish. As a closely related language that gained official status much earlier and has more institutionalised corpus planning, Irish has been suggested as a possible inspiration for Scottish Gaelic terminology planning. For instance, in his evaluation of *Faclair na Pàrlamaid*, McLeod (2001: 10) describes Irish as an "underused resource" that could have been a helpful model for the Scottish Parliament's terminology, but was not sufficiently utilised. A comparison of the terminology from the text corpus with that listed in the official Irish terminology database *Téarma.ie* suggests that this remains true today. Some similarities can be found between the Irish and Scottish Gaelic terminologies. A few terms, such as the following, are almost identical:

(7)

- a. 'republic': ScG *poblachd*, Ir *poblacht* (derivation)
- b. 'constitution': ScG *bun-reachd*, Ir *bunreacht* (compounding)
- c. 'petition': ScG *athchuinge*, Ir *achainí* (semantic extension)

However, these similarities are not very frequent considering the close relationship between the two languages and the high number of cognates in less specialised registers. While they might be the result of Scottish Gaelic taking inspiration from Irish, they could also be coincidental. In some cases, both languages use loanwords from English, which leads to similar terms in Scottish Gaelic and Irish.

(8)

- a. 'party': ScG *pàrtaidh*, Ir *páirtí*
- b. 'commission': ScG *coimisean*, Ir *coimisiún*
- c. 'vote': ScG *bhòt*, Ir *vótáil*

The text corpus only contains one term clearly borrowed from Irish: *reifreann* 'referendum'. This borrowing is suggested in the evaluation of *Faclair na Pàrlamaid* (McLeod 2001: 22) as a replacement for the term *referendum* listed in the dictionary. In this case, the suggestion to draw on Irish terminology as a resource was thus followed, but overall, Irish still seems to have very little influence on the Scottish Gaelic terminology used by the Parliament. A closer look at the differences between the two terminologies suggests that there are different preferences in Scottish Gaelic and Irish when it comes to certain term formation strategies. While Irish has revived some archaic words and adapted them as modern political terms, such as *Taoiseach* for the Irish head of government, there is no such example in the Annual Reports. The term used for the respective office in Scotland is *Prìomh Mhinistear*, a calque of the English *First Minister*. In several cases where Scottish Gaelic uses a loanword, the Irish equivalent is formed without borrowed elements, as in the following examples.

(9)

- a. 'committee': ScG *comataidh*; Ir *coiste*
- b. 'democracy': ScG *deamocrasaidh*; Ir *daonlathas*
- c. 'minister': ScG *ministear*; Ir *aire*

In some instances, both languages use the same term formation type, but the Scottish Gaelic terms are still more strongly influenced by English than their Irish equivalents. With the terms for 'politics', for example, both languages use loanwords, but with different degrees of assimilation. The Irish term *polaitíocht* uses an Irish abstract ending while the Scottish Gaelic equivalent *poileataigs* uses an ending borrowed from English. The Scottish Gaelic and Irish terms for 'motion' are both formed by semantic extension, but different words were chosen to be adapted as political terms. Irish extends the meaning of *tairiscint* 'offer', 'bid'. Scottish Gaelic, on the other hand, uses *gluasad*, the verbal noun of *gluais* 'move', and thus a semantic loan from English. The Irish solution is arguably more semantically motivated than the Scottish Gaelic one and consequently transparent without relying on loan translation from English. A similar solution would have been possible in Scottish Gaelic, but a loan translation

was preferred. All these examples suggest that Scottish Gaelic political terminology is less purist than its Irish counterpart and more open to different forms of borrowing from English. It is important to bear in mind that many terms from the Annual Reports are specific to Scottish and/or UK politics and do not have exact Irish equivalents as the corresponding offices, institutions or other concepts do not exist in the Republic of Ireland. The number of terms from this corpus that can be compared to Irish is thus limited and the observations made here are based on a small number of examples. They do, however, correspond to previous research on Irish and Scottish Gaelic terminologies, e.g. the observation that Scottish Gaelic is generally not very purist in comparison to other European minority languages (McLeod 2004: 25). The usage (or lack of usage) of archaic terms as a terminology source has been cited as a major difference between Irish and Scottish Gaelic (McLeod 2004: 38). The differences between the Irish and Scottish political systems (resulting in a lack of exact equivalents for some concepts) also mean that in some cases Irish cannot serve as an inspiration for Scottish Gaelic. For concepts from the Scottish political system, there is of course always a corresponding English term, which might be an additional reason why English was frequently used as a resource while Irish was not.

## 6. Inconsistencies in the Scottish Gaelic terminology

The last notable aspect to be discussed here is the relatively high inconsistency of the Scottish Gaelic terminology. Inconsistencies can be found on different levels, and in some cases different versions of a term even appear within the same report. Often there is simply a variation in spelling, such as two Gaelicised spellings of *politics* (*poilitigs* and *poileataigs*). Other orthographic inconsistencies concern hyphenation and capitalisation. For instance, the Scottish Gaelic equivalent for *consul general* appears as *àrd-chonsail* and *Àrd Chonsal* (note the additional inconsistency in the spelling of *consa(i)l*), and *member's bill* is rendered as both *bile buill* and *Bile Buill*. Some inconsistencies go beyond orthographical variation. The Scottish Gaelic equivalent for *First Minister's Questions* appears in four versions differing in their use of prepositions, the genitive case, the definite article and, in the last case, capitalisation:

(10)

- a. *Ceistean a' Phrìomh Mhinisteir*  
questions art.gen First Minister.gen
- b. *Ceistean don Phrìomh Mhinistear*
- c. *Ceistean dhan Phrìomh Mhinistear*  
questions to.art First Minister
- d. *ceistean Prìomh Mhinisteir*  
questions First Minister.gen  
'First Minister's Questions'

On rare occasions, the differences between alternative designations make it difficult to recognise them as referring to the same concept. This is arguably the case with the terms for 'legislative consent memorandum', which use the same structure but different components:

(11)

- a. *meòrachan aonta reachdais*  
 memorandum consent legislation.gen
- b. *gluasad cead reachdais*  
 motion permission legislation.gen  
 'legislative consent memorandum'

Some acronyms are also treated inconsistently. While the term *Ball Pàrlamaid na h-Alba* 'Member of the Scottish Parliament' is usually shortened to *BPA*, occasionally the English acronym *MSP* is used instead. *BPA* is sometimes treated like the full form with regard to lenition (e.g. *do BhPA*), in other instances it is left unchanged (*do BPA*). There are also two different plurals used in the corpus: *BPAan* and *BPA*. The frequent variation in the Scottish Gaelic translations contrasts with a very high level of consistency in the English reports, which may indicate that the translations are not as thoroughly edited for terminological consistency. A lack of comprehensive, standardised terminology resources for translators may also account for consistency issues in the Scottish Gaelic reports.

## 7. Conclusion and discussion

This analysis of three Scottish Parliament Annual Reports has shown some tendencies in the Parliament's Scottish Gaelic political terminology. Perhaps the most notable one is the strong influence from English, beginning with the borrowing of complete terms. As is generally the case with loanwords in Scottish Gaelic (cf. Gillies 1993: 222f.), more recent borrowings are less strongly assimilated than older ones. Still, there are only very few terms that are not assimilated at all and/or violate Scottish Gaelic spelling norms or morphology. Loanwords are frequently blended with Scottish Gaelic elements to form 'hybrid' terms. Even more frequent than English loanwords are loan translations, especially of compound terms. Purely Gaelic-based terms are not as numerous, but there are examples of creatively formed and morphologically or semantically motivated terms that are distinct from their English equivalents and reflect the differences between the two languages. The terminology bears little similarity to that listed in the official Irish terminology database, despite the close relationship between the languages and the fact that Irish has been put forward as a possible inspiration for Scottish Gaelic terminology development. A comparison of the Annual Report terms with their Irish equivalents suggests that the Scottish Gaelic terminology is more open to borrowing from English than its Irish counterpart. The lack of similarity to Irish terminology may be partly due to differences in the political systems of the two countries. As a consequence of the different term formation preferences and the Scottish orientation towards English terminology, the differences between Scottish Gaelic and Irish increase, at least within the specialist language relating to politics. Besides term formation preferences, the analysis has shown a number of inconsistencies in terminology use, suggesting that the Scottish Gaelic terminology is not as firmly established as the English.

These observations are mostly in line with those made in earlier research on Scottish Gaelic terminology. For instance, the reluctance to use Irish as a resource was already pointed out by McLeod (2001) in his evaluation of *Faclair na Pàrlamaid*. The Scottish Parliament's

preferences apparently have not changed much in this regard. A low interest in turning to Irish for inspiration, as well as opposition to reviving archaic words for modern usage, have been found to be common among Scottish Gaelic speakers in general (Bell et al. 2014: 189–200). The dominant term formation patterns in the Annual Reports seem to reflect these attitudes. The heavy use of English loanwords and loan translations has also often been commented on, for instance with regard to the Scottish Parliament (McLeod 2001), the language of news reports (Lamb 1999) as well as terms relating to modern life in general (e.g. McLeod 2004). Despite the frequent use of English loans, formal registers in Scottish Gaelic have been described as having some purist tendencies, in the sense that unassimilated borrowing is usually avoided (cf. Lamb 1999: 152; Lamb 2008: 143–145). This form of “moderate purism” (McLeod 2004: 37) is reflected in the Annual Reports, which are also examples of formal language. However, given the prevalence of English loanwords with minimal assimilation, loan translations, and terms containing borrowed elements, the terminology is not purist in the sense of an overall avoidance of English influence. On the contrary, it appears to be modelled closely on its English counterpart. While a comparison with previous studies on Scottish Gaelic terminology and formal registers in general provides some interesting insights, further research focussing specifically on political terminology used outside the Parliament (e.g. in the media or the education system) could allow for a deeper characterisation of Scottish Gaelic political terminology.

The findings of this terminology analysis can be placed within the general context of Scottish Gaelic corpus planning. As mentioned previously, the use of the language in political institutions such as the Scottish Parliament is a fairly recent phenomenon and there are very few structures in place to co-ordinate corpus and terminology planning. This lack of co-ordination has been pointed out as problematic (e. g. by Bauer et al. 2009 and Bell et al. 2014) and inconsistencies have been discussed, for instance, in the context of *Faclair na Pàrlamaid* (McLeod 2001) and other public-sector documents (McLeod 2000). The corpus planning situation probably accounts for some of the inconsistencies in the Annual Reports. It may also have influenced the choice of terms and the use of English loans. The Scottish Parliament’s translation guidelines show a high concern for the transparency of terms, which is no surprise given the current corpus planning situation and the fact that many Scottish Gaelic speakers are not regularly in contact with political terminology in the language (e.g. through their work or the education system). As readers are more likely to be familiar with the English terminology, borrowing and loan translation from English might be the safest way of ensuring transparency. This could at least partly make up for the lack of co-ordinated terminology planning and dissemination and help make the Parliament’s texts accessible to all speakers. However, the heavy use of loan translation and borrowing from English can be seen as a double-edged sword, as this strategy creates a Scottish Gaelic terminology dependent on English and mirroring English concepts and term formation patterns. At least within the bounds of political vocabulary, it thus reduces the difference between Scottish Gaelic and English – two languages belonging to different language groups and functioning quite differently on many levels. Due to its orientation towards English, the terminology does not make full use of the word formation options available in Scottish Gaelic and distinguishing it from English. This phenomenon, and the associated problem for minority languages, is not

limited to term formation but is intertwined with translation in general. Writing about translation into Irish, Cronin (1995: 90) observes:

Translators in minority languages are [...] placed in a classical double bind. If they translate allowing the full otherness of the dominant language to emerge in the translation, inviting rather than eliminating anglicisms from their Irish translations, then the language into which they translate becomes less and less recognisable as a separate linguistic entity capable of future development and becomes instead a pallid imitation of the source language in translatoresque. On the other hand, if they resist interference and opt for target-oriented communicative translations that domesticate the foreign text, the danger is one of complacent stasis. Translation no longer functions as an agent of regeneration in the target language.

The fact that almost all official texts published in Scottish Gaelic are translations from English has been pointed out as problematic before (cf. McLeod 2000), and the prevalence of loan translation in Scottish Gaelic political terminology might be something to be aware of in this context. The self-explanatory Scottish Gaelic terms that are not modelled after their English equivalents show that there are other ways of achieving transparency, but this strategy requires much more time and effort than calquing from English, and this may not always be possible under the current circumstances.

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