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1. Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of research on language learning and visual art, undertaken over the course of a year (2009/2010) in connection with the Gaelic-medium art project *Air Iomlaid*. This project, developed and delivered by artist Julie Brook and The Fruitmarket Gallery, offered learning opportunities in both the visual arts and Gaelic to children from two different regions (Isle of Skye and Edinburgh). The research focussed on the children’s linguistic and artistic development and experience, looking especially at terminology, confidence and the influence of the environment on the children’s attitudes, abilities and art work.

The research methods were based on Linguistic Anthropology (interviews, observations, etc.). This way, useful information was gathered and analysed throughout the year. According to the research results, *Air Iomlaid* has had a very positive influence on the children, in terms of abilities and confidence in both art and Gaelic. Moreover, their learning experience was not limited to art and language alone; it became clear that it went far beyond those two topics. The research findings will be explained in detail throughout this report, confirming the overall success of the project. Looking to the future, it is hoped that the research results of *Air Iomlaid* will encourage schools and other groups to organise more Gaelic projects of this kind.

The research report is structured according to the following topics. The introduction will provide useful background information on both the project *Air Iomlaid* as a whole and the research work. Furthermore, the broader context in which *Air Iomlaid* was established will be presented, before giving a short literature review on Linguistic Anthropology and language acquisition, which will introduce the primary research methods. After discussing and presenting the main findings, further results which emerged during the project will be introduced, as well as conclusions and recommendations for similar projects in the future.
2. Introduction

Air lomlaid (‘on exchange’) was a Gaelic-medium art project which offered tuition in the visual arts, primarily through outdoor workshops, on art to the children of two primary schools, Bun-sgoil Shlèite (Sleat Primary School), Isle of Skye, and children from the Gaelic-medium unit in Tollcross Primary School, Edinburgh. The project was initiated in 2008, ran for 16 months from March 2009 till July 2010, and consisted of a programme of weekly workshops, with the two groups in their respective environment, as well as two exchange visits: a group of pupils from Edinburgh came to Skye for five days, and two weeks after that, a group of pupils from Sleat went to Edinburgh for five days.

The project received financial support from The National Lottery via The Scottish Arts Council’s Inspire Fund, with additional funding being made available by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Scottish Natural Heritage, Learning and Teaching Scotland and The Ernest Cook Trust.

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Scotland’s Gaelic College based on the Isle of Skye, was commissioned to undertake research on the children’s linguistic and artistic experiences during the project, and on how the respective environments influenced their experiences and learning. Sileas Landgraf was hired for 43 days by Sabhal Mòr Ostaig to undertake the research contract. Sileas Landgraf is a linguist who has also worked as assistant manager in a Gaelic-medium childcare facility and thus has experience in working with children.

In order to provide advice and support for the researcher an advisory group was established (cf. 2.3). The research project followed the work of the artists, the teachers and the children from June 2009 until the end of the project (July 2010). Interviews and observations were undertaken, and the researcher was also present at some of the discussions (cf. 3.4).
2.1 Research Objectives

The research focussed upon the most important objectives of the project *Air lamhaidh*, and undertook research in three core areas, as follows:

1. Art Terminology in Gaelic (What have the children learned and how? Which terms do they understand? Which ones do they use themselves?)
2. Language and Art (progress in both areas, the children’s attitudes and strategies, confidence), and
3. How the respective environment in which the children were working on art would influence their abilities and attitudes in terms of language, art and confidence.

2.2 Research Methods

The research was based on the methods used by Linguistic Anthropology, on which more information will be provided in Chapter 4. In accordance with that methodology, a detailed analysis of material gathered through conversations, interviews etc. has been provided. In order to gather this material, three observations were held in both Sleat and Edinburgh (six sessions altogether) while the children were drawing or painting, whether outside or in the school. The researcher was also present on several occasions when the children were discussing their pictures together, at the end of their day.

In doing the research this way it was possible to gather useful information, e.g. by hearing the children’s own ideas, by seeing in which areas they were not quite confident yet (e.g. which questions arose during their work and how they were solved) and also by seeing how the children made use of their skills in Gaelic in order to express praise or critique.

Information was also gathered through sets of interviews that were held with four children from Sleat. The children were between eight and ten years old and had been chosen for the interviews according to their linguistic situation at home. In order to keep any information about them anonymous, capital letters (A, B, C, D) will be used throughout the report instead of the children’s names.

Throughout the report, female pronouns will be used for all the children, boys and girls, in order to avoid recognition.

One of the four children was from a Gaelic-speaking family where both parents were native speakers. Thus this pupil (A) was a native Gaelic speaker too, coming from a family background in which Gaelic was the main language.

The second pupil was a native speaker with only one parent speaking Gaelic at home (native speaker, bilingual situation at home), where there was a clear separation of languages depending on whom the child would speak to. This pupil (B), for example, would always speak Gaelic with her mother and English with her father, without switching between languages with the same person. Thus, pupil B came from an equal bilingual background.

The third pupil (C) was a learner, with parents who had both been learning Gaelic too, up to a quite a high level, and all were fluent enough to use some Gaelic at home, although English was the main language of the family.
The fourth child was a learner of Gaelic and had parents who did not have any or, at most, very little Gaelic. This pupil (D) would not use Gaelic at home, since English was the main language in her family background. By choosing children from different linguistic backgrounds it was intended to find out whether the children were, for example, learning terminology in different ways during the project, and whether they were perceiving and discussing things differently, due to this background. Sometimes this distinction helped a lot in trying to find out whether a problem was, in fact, of a linguistic nature, or simply a problem of understanding a concept in general.

Three interviews were held with each child (in a setting where no one was involved in the conversation except for the researcher and the child), one before the exchange, the second during the exchange in Edinburgh, and the third after the exchange. Every interview lasted between 10 and 25 minutes.

The researcher also had the opportunity to speak to some of the adults who were involved in the project. Interviews were held with one teacher and one artist in Edinburgh, and with one teacher and two artists in Sleat. The adults’ interviews are anonymous as well, and in order to distinguish them, abbreviations are used: T1 (teacher 1), T2 for the teachers, and ART1 (artist 1), ART2, ART3 for the artists.

In order to indicate appropriately the quotations from discussions, observations and interviews, the following abbreviations are used: “D31-8” (Discussion 31/08/09), “O30-9” (Observation 30/09/09), and for quotations from the interviews abbreviations (e.g. ART1) or single capital letters, followed by the number of the interview (B2:4 = second interview with pupil B, p. 4 in the transcript). During the discussions with bigger groups of pupils, everyone was assigned a number (not consistent throughout all the discussions), e.g. PUP3 = pupil 3 in that respective discussion.

The results of the research are based on the analysis of observations, interviews and group discussions, and on further information which had been documented in the research diary that was kept during the whole time of the research.

1. Before the research started, letters were sent out to the pupils’ parents in order to get permission to speak with their children, confirming that the children’s interviews would be used confidently and completely anonymously in the research report. They were also informed that all recordings would be destroyed after transcribing the content.
2.3 Advisory Group

Throughout the project, the researcher was supported by an advisory group, in order to provide her with professional knowledge and advice from experts in the respective fields that were of importance for the research:

- Prof. David Adger (Queen Mary, University of London: Linguistics)
- Johnny Gailey (Children and Young People’s Programme Manager, Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh)
- Prof. Murdo MacDonald (University of Dundee: History of Scottish Art)
- Prof. Boyd Robasdan (Sabhal Mòr Ostaig: Gaelic & Education)
- Mary Smith (Stornoway: Singer, Artist & Art teacher).

Four meetings were held with the advisory group in order to discuss methodology, results and progress of the research.

2.4 Report Structure

The research report will present the following topics: in the first part, information on the project’s (Air Iomlaid) specific objectives will be presented (3.1), before considering background information on the wider context (language and arts at school) of the whole project. The researcher will take a closer look at the main curricula for arts at primary school level, and at the aims for Gaelic Medium Education at the same level (3.2, 3.3). Following these chapters, some more detailed information on the project itself (staff, children, programme structure and methods) will be offered (3.4).

After a short chapter with a literature review of Linguistic Anthropology (the primary methodology on which the project has been based), on the methods of this research and on language acquisition (Ch. 4), the research results will be discussed according to the main research topics: terminology (Ch. 5), language and arts (Ch. 6) and the influence of the respective environment (Ch. 7).

In the last part of the report, further research findings will be discussed (Ch. 8), before the main conclusions are presented (Ch. 9) and recommendations for future projects are offered (Ch. 10). The bibliography for the research is to be found in Chapter 11.
3. Context

This chapter will give detailed information on *Air Iomlaid*’s main aims and the context in which the project was established (3.1). This includes background information on national guidelines for teaching arts at primary school level (3.2), for Gaelic Medium Education at primary school level (3.3), and practical information on the project itself (3.4). All this information will be of importance in order to fully understand the context in which the project was set up, and also to realise how closely *Air Iomlaid*’s objectives were linked with national guidelines for both the visual arts and Gaelic.

3.1 Project Aims

The project *Air Iomlaid* had three main aims, which will be further explained in the following.

**Aim One**

- “To develop in the children from Tollcross Primary School and Bun-sgoil Shìle, a deeper and lifelong interest and engagement with contemporary visual art and Gaelic language/culture” (Gailey 2008).

This aim was sought to be achieved by:

- Developing the children’s drawing and painting skills
- Developing the children’s observational skills
- Developing the children’s language skills
- Developing the children’s understanding of the natural and built environment
- Developing the children’s understanding of, and skills in, using technology
- Extending children’s understanding of Gaelic and its context in Scotland
- Enabling the children to establish a committee, allowing them to be key decision-makers throughout the project
- Developing the children’s self-confidence, sense of responsibility and ambition
- Delivering a more extensive/intensive/involved project than the pupils had been involved in before.
Aim Two

• “To enable more schools across Scotland to engage with contemporary visual art and Gaelic language/culture” (Gailey 2008).

The project sought to achieve this by:

• Delivering expressive arts workshops for schools in the Lothians and Skye and Lochalsh during the exhibitions
• Producing bi-lingual learning materials that can be used by schools throughout Scotland
• Providing CPD training opportunities for teachers
• Supporting the schools to develop ways of working to deliver A Curriculum for Excellence
• Extending the use of GLOW technology within schools in Scotland
• Involving the teachers fully throughout the project in planning and decision-making
• Commissioning and distributing academic research on the outcomes of the project.

Aim Three

• “To provide opportunities for more people to access contemporary visual art and Gaelic language/culture” (Gailey 2008).

This was to be achieved by:

• Creating a high quality exhibition which inspires new and existing audiences at the Fruitmarket Gallery and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig
• Presenting contemporary Gaelic culture as a vibrant part of modern Scotland to Scottish and international audiences
• Using technology to enable schools/pupils in Edinburgh and Skye to communicate across geographic boundaries
• To reach new Gaelic and non-Gaelic audiences through the exhibition
• To introduce non-Gaelic speakers to the Gaelic language and culture and engage Gaelic speakers through the exhibition, publication and documentary film.

2. All information on the project aims in this chapter is directly taken from Gailey (2008).
3.2 The Arts in Primary Schools in Scotland

In this chapter, information will be provided on the primary objectives established by the national guidelines for teaching expressive arts in primary schools (National Guidelines 5-14 (used until June 2010), Curriculum For Excellence (CFE)). It will be noted that many of the proposed objectives coincide with the project’s objectives. According to the National Guidelines 5-14, the role of expressive arts in education is to:

- "promote distinctive ways of understanding self, developing individual abilities and finding personal satisfaction and enjoyment" (5-14: 1)
- "develop aesthetic awareness" (5-14:1)
- "make an important social and economic contribution to our society" (5-14:1)
- "develop an awareness of our heritage" (5-14:1)/"deepen my understanding of culture in Scotland and the wider world" (CFE)

Within Art and Design in particular, it is recommended that the children will learn:

- "to enjoy and appreciate their own art and that of others, and to become aware of the influence of place, time, culture, and material on the images and objects created" (5-14: 2)
- "to become more aware of the visual environment and their relationship to it" (5-14: 2)
- "develop skills and techniques that are relevant to specific art forms" (CFE).

The attainment outcomes which were established for Expressive Arts in primary schools provide some more detailed information. The children are meant to develop their skills in:

- using different materials, techniques, skills and media
- expressing feelings, ideas, thoughts and solutions
- evaluating and appreciating (cf. 5-14: 4).

Concerning visual elements, pupils should reach a level of understanding of the following concepts: line, shape, form, colour, tone, pattern, perspective, image, and media. The abilities that are expected of children at different stages have been put into categories according to the age levels. Levels B and C are the most relevant for the age of the children in the core groups of Air Iomlaid.

At level B, for example, it is expected that the children are able to “make simple compositions or structures in 3-dimensions” (5-14: 18) and to “create paintings [...] from imagination and observation” (5-14: 18). At level C, further skills would be expected, e.g. that the children were able to “(e)xperiment with a given range of media”, “produce images which show some understanding of the visual element and their use” (5-14: 19), “us(e) appropriate vocabulary to make comparisons of art and design works” (5-14: 19), and to “express and communicate (their) ideas, thoughts and feelings through activities within art and design” (CFE).

For levels C and D, the aims are set a little higher still, for example:

- “Creating an image from the same subject, e.g. ‘The house across the street’, in a range of media (drawing, painting, print-making)” (5-14: 21).

Generally, the importance of outdoor education is emphasised in the curricula, since it is expected that the pupils will be able to develop their aesthetic awareness and to become more sensitive to their natural environment when working outside, instead of in the classroom (5–14, 79).
3.3 Gaelic Medium Primary Education

This chapter will provide information on the objectives for Gaelic at primary school level (Gaelic Medium Education, as opposed to Gaelic as a second language), based on the National Guidelines 5-14 as well as the Curriculum for Excellence (CFE). The curriculum includes guidance on different functions of language, such as communicating (talking and writing), thinking, feeling, and making (creative work). Again, it will become very clear how Air Iomraidh has aimed at and supported most of these objectives.

The children are expected to develop the following skills at primary school level through the medium of Gaelic:

- to be able to use new words, phrases and idioms in Gaelic, in order to engage in conversations in a coherent manner (CFE)
- when engaging with others, to respond in ways that are appropriate to their role, to show that others’ contributions are valued and used to build on thinking (CFE)
- to develop confidence “when engaging with others within and beyond my place of learning” (CFE), to communicate in an appropriate way that is clear and expressive (ibid.)

The National Guidelines 5-14 explain, on a more general level, how schools should provide “structured and stimulating opportunities to use Gaelic with increasing precision in contexts appropriate to the needs of individuals and the communities in which they live” (5-14), involving the following levels (ibid.):

- **Communicating**: for example, receiving and expressing ideas and information; playing; reformulating ideas and information; arguing; persuading; debating; performing in speech and writing; reporting.
- **Thinking**: for example, speculating; hypothesising; discovering; reflecting; generalising; synthesising; classifying; evaluating.
- **Feeling**: for example, describing, reflecting on and considering their own feelings and those of others; dealing with emotional complexities; coping with conflicts between values and feelings; achieving resolutions.
- **Making**: for example, stories, poems, letters, reports and scripts; graphics; sound and video recordings.

Moreover, there are four broad aims for the schools’ role in the children’s learning process:

- **develop pupils’ Gaelic language skills and knowledge so that they can fully realise their ability to understand Gaelic and use it accurately**;
- **support pupils’ personal development through Gaelic and its literature and culture, including intellectual, emotional, aesthetic and moral development (ibid.)**

Furthermore, some particular aims are listed concerning the children’s talking skills. According to the National Guidelines, the children should be able to convey information properly, to establish relationships and interact with others, to express their feelings, to present, share, clarify and reflect on ideas, experiences and opinions (5-14). This includes listening to others during activities, and responding with relevant comments (expected for level B)/by offering an opinion (level C), talking to others in an activity led by a known adult and contribute appropriately to the activity’s purpose by responding when prompted by the adult (level B)/by asking and answering questions (level C), and finally, talking readily about their own and others’ experiences and feelings (level B)/and also take some account of the reactions of others (level C).
3.4 The Project Air Iomlaid

The Gaelic-medium arts project Air Iomlaid, which ran for over a year, was designed for primary school children from two very different environments: Bun-sgoil Shìleite (Sleat Primary School, Isle of Skye) and children from the Gaelic-medium unit in Tollcross Primary School (Edinburgh). During the first stage of the project, the two groups worked separately, in their home environments, where they went on weekly trips to different locations over a period of three to four months in order to draw or paint pictures outside.

During the second stage, the children from the two groups had a chance to meet, during two exchanges to each others’ environment. At first, a group of pupils from Edinburgh spent five days in Skye, and, two weeks after that, a group of pupils from Sleat went to Edinburgh for five days. They all learned a little about the visited environment in general, and they figured out how to create their pictures in an environment different from the one they were used to, and in which they had learned to draw and paint. Throughout the third stage, the children worked on large pictures (charcoal and paint) within their respective schools, working as a team instead of individually. Both groups made a composite picture of their home area and another picture of the area they went to during the exchange.

The last part of the project included the opportunity to further develop their ideas of ‘exchange’, e.g. through poetry writing, music and animation. During this stage, they were facilitated by professionals who were experienced in one of these areas.

Throughout the project, the children and their teachers would work together; the school teachers drew pictures in every location the group visited, in the same manner as the children, and everyone received help and advice from at least two artists during the art sessions.
4. Literature Review

In this chapter, the main methodology used during the research, drawn from Linguistic Anthropology, will be introduced in detail. A definition will be presented in 4.1, before looking at the understanding of language within Linguistic Anthropology (4.2). Chapter 4.3 will deal with methods specific to this theoretical basis, and chapter 4.4 will provide information on language acquisition and language use. Finally, practical issues within the framework of Linguistic Anthropology, and ways of dealing with them, will be discussed (4.5).

4.1 Definition of Linguistic Anthropology

As suggested by the term itself, Linguistic Anthropology makes use of two different theoretical areas: Anthropology and Linguistics. Principles of the two fields work together closely within Linguistic Anthropology, trying to connect culture and language, instead of regarding them as separate issues.

Alessandro Duranti has introduced a useful definition for Linguistic Anthropology: “the study of language as a cultural resource and speaking as a cultural practice” (Duranti 1997:2), which inherently unites different fields in its own research methods and theories, especially Linguistics and Anthropology. The main aim is to provide a deeper understanding of different perspectives on language, while looking at language as a set of cultural practices, which thus should not be analysed separately from its cultural environment and basis (cf. Duranti 1997: 3).

This way, a holistic view on language and its culture is created by bringing different perspectives together, and by bearing the main aspects of Anthropology in mind while looking at a language and analysing it. “It examines language through the lenses of anthropological concerns” (Duranti 1997: 4).

4.2 Language within Linguistic Anthropology

Language is considered to be a cultural practice rather than an individual tool, since culture always influences language and vice versa. The different expressions for colours in different languages are a good example of this phenomenon, because the colour terminology will be based on different perspectives regarding colour ranges (e.g. gorm ‘blue’ is used in Gaelic for a range of colours, including some that are closer to what is called green in English, e.g. for the colour of grass and other plants).

One of the most important issues within Linguistic Anthropology is the relationship between individual speakers and the linguistic system that they use (Duranti 1997: 83), since this relationship gives valuable linguistic and cultural information at the same time.

4.3 Methods

Usually, Linguistic Anthropology is used in connection with qualitative research, and the focus is kept on information that is gained through methods such as interviews, observations etc. This way, it is always possible to observe the language in a specific environment while different activities are happening (e.g. arts).

This methodology was chosen for the research within Air Iomlad because the work methods of Linguistic Anthropology were very suitable for the project’s procedures. It did not make sense to undertake research on language and arts without seeing them happening together, at the same time. However, through the use of Linguistic Anthropology methods, language and culture were observed together throughout the research,
within different environments. In *Air Iomlaid*, the researcher was present at many art sessions, which enabled the gathering of information on the children’s linguistic and artistic skills, and it made it possible to get a holistic impression of the context, before formally analysing the material gathered.

Rather than putting great emphasis on theory, a very detailed analysis of the material gained through the interviews, observations etc. was carried out. A lot of time was spent with the data, to get to know even the fine details, in order to produce a reliable and appropriate analysis. No control groups were included, and the focus was on individual people within a group, in order to gain information from different perspectives and levels. This allowed the analysis to create a holistic picture of the situation under examination.

### 4.4 Language Acquisition & Language Use

This part will focus on language acquisition and its most relevant principles, especially concerning second language acquisition (L2). This information will be useful in order to fully understand the functions and underlying principles of the project *Air Iomlaid*.

For second language acquisition a two-dimensional model is usually assumed, with competence (‘knowing’) on the one side, and performance (‘doing’) on the other (cf. Widdowson 1990:157). This underlines how important it is for learners to get enough formal input (i.e. information on vocabulary and grammar), but at the same time enough opportunities to use what they have learned in a practical way (‘encourage learners to do things with the language they are learning, the kind of things they will recognize as purposeful and communicative’ (Widdowson 1990: 160)). For the learners, this is a crucial way of reinforcing and consolidating the thing learned, and is an important procedure to get them to understand the importance of function and use of the language.

In order to teach a language to children and to consolidate their abilities, teachers have to assume two kinds of principles that follow from the two basic aspects of language learning, as mentioned above: linguistic repetition (focus on vocabulary, grammar etc, abstract level ‘knowing’) and non-linguistic purpose (focus on meaning, using language as a practical tool ‘doing’) (cf. Widdowson 1990: 173).

Understanding these underlying concepts was useful for *Air Iomlaid*, since they were relevant throughout the whole project. The children learned new terminology (‘knowing’) and at the same time, they had to take the knowledge to a practical level while working on their pictures (‘doing’) and while discussing them.

During the research, it became clear that most children would not use their Gaelic according to how useful it would be (although their abilities in the language would have allowed that). Instead, they mostly seemed to
follow a system of domains of use for the two languages. Considering classical definitions for registers of language (e.g. Agha 2004: 24, “A register is a linguistic repertoire that is associated, culture-internally, with particular social practices and with persons who engage in such practices”) an interesting idea arises: the children seemed to use Gaelic as if it was a register of a language and not a language in itself; they would speak it at school and in formal situations (with teachers, other adults in the school, and only now and again with their peers), but in their minds Gaelic was not connected to every single aspect of their lives.

4.5 Practical Issues

One of the most important methods within Linguistic Anthropology is participant observation, i.e. observing while taking part. This is based on the basic concept that it is necessary to look at a language while it is being used in different situations and activities.

However, one will notice a paradox between ‘participating’ and ‘observing’, in order to gather information, it is necessary to look at the children’s interaction, but to observe their interaction (in a way that is ethically acceptable), the researcher needs to be present, in the scene (cf. Duranti 1997: 118), otherwise she will not be able to collect detailed information.

Sometimes one can postulate that it may be quite difficult to find out what children’s own ideas truly are, because if the children know a little bit about the research project already, they might be influenced by that knowledge of the project and by what they think the researcher wants to hear from them. This way, some of the children may at first answer questions according to what is “right” or “wrong” in the researcher’s eyes as they imagine it, instead of telling what they think themselves.

It is an advantage of the participant observation method that the researcher is able to keep an eye on both what the children say and what they do. This offered the researcher the opportunity of being inclusive, and, at the same time, the children’s activities are not interrupted (cf. Tisdall 2009: 78). A small disadvantage of this system is that one can still not be sure how the children feel about the observations, maybe they may feel that, to an extent, the researcher is intruding (ibid.).

Apart from observation, it is very common in Linguistic Anthropology to interview individual participants. One advantage of this method is the opportunity to get very strong and valuable data (cf. Tisdall 2009: 75), and moreover some children might generally be more comfortable with private interviews instead of working in large groups.

At the same time there can be a few disadvantages connected with the method of interviewing. If the children link the interview situation to a negative memory they have about, for example being admonished/questioned by a teacher, there is the possibility that they might be uncomfortable during the interview. Moreover, the analysis of the transcripts can be very challenging, because of the detailed and rich information likely to come out of one-to-one interviews (cf. Tisdall 2009: 75).
5. Research Findings 1: Terminology

This part of the report will provide the main research results concerning Gaelic terminology specific to arts in Air Iomlaid. Chapter 5.1 discusses the teaching methods that were used throughout the project to teach the children new vocabulary, Chapter 5.2 gives an overview of the ways in which the children dealt with new terminology at the different levels of the project, and Chapter 5.3 will discuss some of the arising difficulties within the children’s learning situation. At the end of this section, some of the children’s alternative strategies for dealing with new vocabulary will be described, in order to portray the learning experience as a whole (5.4.).

5.1 Teaching Methods

In this section, methods for teaching new words in the project are considered (5.1.1), including advantages and possible disadvantages of the teaching methods. Alternative strategies of the artists are looked at (5.1.2), and the last part of the chapter provides information on methods used for consolidating the new terminology in order to support the children within their own learning situation (5.1.3).

5.1.1 Teaching New Words

Instead of creating a list of new vocabulary at the beginning of the project, or even beforehand, the teachers and artists tried to find/choose new words together with the children, working as a team. During their discussions, they would work out which terms they needed at that stage, then found out if anyone knew the respective expressions already, and whether they would use the same terms, or whether different people used different words. If no one knew the word, or if the speakers strongly disagreed about the terminology, the group would work out an appropriate term, using dictionaries and electronic resources, etc. Then everyone would agree which term they would use from then on. Finally, one of the children would write down the newly found terms (Gaelic and English) on a piece of paper (a different child for every word), and these pieces of paper were collected in a box for further use in the project.

It was an advantage of this teaching method that the children were included in the process of looking up and deciding on new words, instead of the teachers/artists telling the children what was right or wrong. This way, all the participants (artists, teachers, children, and helpers) were working together, discussing concepts for which they needed new terminology. This procedure demanded a deep understanding of the concept in general, otherwise it would not have been possible to agree on the terms that would best express a concept’s substance.

A learning situation had been created in which everyone was working together and learning as a team, and in general, this was considered a good way of teaching/learning. However, the question arises as to whether or not it may have been problematic for the process of the children’s memorising that the correct terminology was not agreed on from the beginning. Difficulties of this sort are discussed in Chapter 5.3.

5.1.2 Other Strategies of the Artists

The main artists showed great awareness of new terminology and would always try and support the children’s learning process in different ways. Every time they heard one of the children use English terminology, Art1 or one of the other artists/teachers would ask them how to express the same thing in Gaelic, and if no one knew the Gaelic expression, they would work it out together, with the help of dictionaries (D31-8). This obviated the need to use English terminology.
Generally, ART 1 did not let the children use English terms at any time, and this was crucial for the children's learning process. If they had let them use English terminology here and there without interfering, the children would not have understood why they should make any efforts to learn new words in Gaelic.

Apart from correcting the children, or encouraging them to correct one another, the artists tried to give a little more explanation on the new terms in every session. This followed ART 1 becoming aware of the fact that the children had not completely understood some of the concepts and principles, and she realised that they would not properly learn new terminology unless they understood very well what the words meant.

5.1.3 Consolidation

It was crucial for the young learners that an effort was made to consolidate and confirm the new terminology continually. By hearing, seeing and using the new words themselves, as often as possible, the children were likely to remember them more easily. They experienced consolidation of the terminology in different ways during the project.

During every class the children had to write down new vocabulary on pieces of paper which were then collected and usually put in a box, intended to be accessible for everyone in the project (D31-8). This idea was very good, aiming at further consolidation of the children's knowledge, and the children would know where to go and look for a word if they forgot it. Unfortunately, the box was not of much use to the children during the project, since it was neither used often enough nor put in a fully accessible place, and thus it appeared that after a while, the existence and the intended function of this resource was forgotten by the children.

Whenever the children had problems trying to remember or use one of the new words in class, ART 1 would not just tell them the terms, but instead she would wait until the children worked out together which terminology they had been using before (e.g. D31-8). This was a great way of encouraging and strengthening the children's memories, because they had to think about the vocabulary and work together, instead of just being given the right word.

It was helpful that the children were learning through practical activities; they would not just hear about concepts of art in theory, but they had to carry them out. Thus they would understand better what the different concepts, in fact, meant, and it was easier for them to remember something they had done themselves instead of only hearing about it (“Ach, a chionn 's bho seachdain sa chaidh, a chionn 's gu bheil iad a' òranann na sàileachadh-deilbh leatha fhèin, 's dòcha an uair sin bidh concept a' dol nan ceann, nan cinn, agus an uair sin b'dha l' a tuigsinn le ... ann an dòigh gu math domhainn.” ‘But, because from last week onwards, because they are doing the composition by themselves, maybe then the concept will get into their head, their heads, and then, they will understand with ... in a quite deep way’ ART1.5).

The following idea would go in a similar direction: the children did not have any separate theory lessons on art concepts, but they received practical explanations while working on their pictures, quite often in a one-to-one teaching situation (ART1). This helped them to understand the concepts and ideas more quickly, because they would hear about them, and almost at the same time, they would see what those concepts really meant.

The children's confidence was strengthened in another way, too, sometimes one or two of the artists who were learners (or "re-learners") of Gaelic had problems understanding the pupils who were native speakers. They would then turn to the children themselves and ask them to explain what they had just said. This was a great opportunity for the children to understand that everyone was a learner in one way or another, and it gave them strength and confidence to realise that they knew something that some of the adults did not know (ART3).
5.2 Words – Meaning – Understanding: The Children’s Methods

This chapter will describe the different ways in which the children regarded the new terminology, i.e. the words themselves and their meaning. Since the children’s own methods of dealing with new terms were linked with different aspects and stages of the project, their analysis will be undertaken according to three levels: before the exchange (5.2.1), during the exchange (5.2.2), and after the exchange (5.2.3).

5.2.1 Before the Exchange

During the first stage of the project (March to June 2009), before the exchange, some of the children were still not aware of specific terminology, and very few remembered any of the new words. For some children, it was a big enough challenge to speak about the pictures at all, in any way. Pupil B felt that her vocabulary was generally good enough at this stage to talk about the pictures, but she could not name any of the newly introduced terms yet (B1), and pupils C and D expressed similar impressions. They all said that they understood concepts of art a little better now, but could not remember any particular terms (C1+D1). A was not aware of new terminology at this stage.

At this point in the project, the researcher noticed some problems with the concept of ‘composition’, both in Edinburgh and in Slēte. It seemed to be the case that it was difficult for the children to understand this idea or concept (in Gaelic and in English), and it finally became clear that this was neither a linguistic problem nor
a problem of memorising vocabulary. It did not make a difference which language was used — the children simply did not understand the meaning of the concept ‘composition’ yet (D26-8).

5.2.2 During the Exchange

The researcher noticed that some of the children remembered a few new words, but were not completely sure about their meaning. The understanding of art techniques had improved in a practical way, i.e. the children were able to use more techniques in their pictures, but often without a connection to the respective terminology. Examples of this will be discussed below.

D was good at the different art techniques, but she was not able to name them. This showed, for example, with the term inneachan ‘textures’, she would use different textures in her pictures, and she would talk about things looking rèidh, ‘even’, or amh, ‘rough’, but she did not make a connection yet between these ways of painting and the term “inneach” (D2:2/3).

D remembered some of the new words, but was not always sure about their meaning (“SL: Dè mu dheidhinn ‘suidheachadh-deilbh’? An cuala tu sin? D: Tha fios agam air sin. SL: Dè th’ ann, eil thios agad? D: Mion-thiosrachadh mu dheidhinn, no ... dè tha sin?” “SL: What about “composition”? Did you hear that? D: I know that one. SL: What is it, do you know? D: Details about, or ... what is it?” D2:3). It is obvious that D knew the words a little, and that she had heard them often enough to remember them, but was not sure about their meaning at this stage, and thus she confused them.

The same situation was noticed during an observation in Edinburgh (O30-9): the children did not show a good understanding of new vocabulary at that time, not many of them understood mion-thiosrachadh ‘details’, suidheachadh-deilbh ‘composition’ etc. when the researcher used those expressions during the conversation, but in general, they would recognise more of the new terms than they did at the beginning of the project.

5.2.3 After the Exchange

Following the exchange, remarkable progress at working with new techniques was noticed, and the children showed knowledge of a greater vocabulary than at the beginning, but some problems remained with a few words. In some cases, the children still had some problems establishing a connection between a term and its practical meaning, it was as if they knew how to perform the techniques, but were not sure how to label them. Generally, good progress in talking about the pictures was evident, and the children spoke a lot more fluidly and confidently.

There are plenty of examples illustrating this aspect. Pupil D understood the term tònaichean ‘tones’, and was able to explain its concept a little (D3). She recognised mion-thiosrachadh ‘details’ too, but could not say exactly what it meant (D3). She was used to hearing this term during the project, but had not fully grasped its meaning yet.

An interesting conversation arose with pupil C: she recognised tònaichean ‘tones’ and showed some ability to explain what it meant (C3), but when the researcher asked her a question about suidheachadh-deilbh ‘composition’ (such as: “Which word do you use in class for the way everything is working/coming together in a picture?”), C answered tònaichean ‘tones’. It seems that C had not really understood tònaichean ‘tones’ at this point after all, even though she gave the impression at first that she had.
Towards the end of the project it happened several times that the pupils were talking about one of the techniques, explaining them quite well, but not specifically naming them. They understood the techniques in a practical way, without always knowing which "label" to put on that technique. A good example for this phenomenon can be found in the observational notes of one particular session in Edinburgh, when the Tollcross children were working on their big charcoal picture of the Isle of Skye (O27-11), they were talking about the different parts of the picture and how they worked well together. In their own way, they almost gave a definition of *suidheachadh-deilbh* 'composition', only without using the term itself.

The researcher did not hear the children using any of the new terminology among themselves during that observation (O27-11), but improvement could be noticed in general in the way they were expressing their ideas about the big picture and its parts. They were happy and willing to explain their own views and ideas, and they were talking more fluidly and comfortably in general.

One needs to remember that parts of the terminology were new to everyone, including the adults who were involved in the project, and it was not easy for them, either, to remember every single term. The researcher heard that one of the teachers thought the children understood some of the new words "ceart cho math ’s a tha mise" ‘just as well as I do’ (T2.2). This shows that the situation was, to a certain extent, a challenge for everyone in the project. Another teacher agreed that some progress in the children’s linguistic abilities was noticeable anyway ("Tha eòlas aca air facail agus gnàthasan-caint nach robh aca roimhe" ‘They know words and idioms now that they didn’t have before’ T1.2), and that the children knew most of the new terminology, even though it was not quite natural to them yet, and they would not use it often themselves.
5.3 Difficulties with the Acquisition of new Terminology

It did not help the children’s learning situation that artists and teachers were sometimes not sure about new terminology and would not always agree with one another on new vocabulary. During the first part of the project, some of the artists still used the English term instead of the Gaelic one, until they were sure about the newly chosen terminology themselves. It was a very long process until the artists and teachers remembered the new words and were able to use them naturally. Maybe this was due to the fact that it was already two or three months into the project before a list of terminology was created; it would have made things easier for staff and children if this had happened before the project began.

Apparently, the artists were not completely in agreement with one another throughout the project as to which word to use for ‘composition’. In a conversation towards the end of the project, Artist 2 was talking to the researcher for quite a while about “dòigh cuidheachadh” (lit. ‘way of situation/composition’). Artist 3 used another word for the same concept (“seall-deilbh”), saying that this was the word they had agreed on in class, although it was not. This does not mean that they were against the newly chosen terms, but it shows that they simply had not remembered them correctly.

This was problematic for the children, since they could not consolidate the new term cuidheachadh-deilbh in their memory strongly enough when they, in fact, heard different expressions for the same concept from different adults in the project.

The situation was challenging for the staff, too, and one of the teachers said that she did not find it unproblematic to decide on new specific terminology, especially to work out which word was “right” and suitable (“chan eil feadhainn ahiubh, th a e really doirbh taclan thaighinn, taclan — chan eil thu cinnteach a bheil iad ceart” ‘Some of them aren’t, it is really difficult to get words, words — you’re not sure whether they are right’ T2:2). Without doubt, it was not easy to set up new terminology, expecting it to be absolutely correct and natural, because it was not possible to find a native Gaelic speaker who would use Gaelic in a formal and detailed way in connection with art work.

This learning situation had some influence on the children. They did not remember many of the new words properly, because (1) they were not sure which word was the correct one, when everyone was using a different term and (2) they did not hear every individual word often enough (with everyone in agreement) — especially during the early stages of the project — to achieve consolidation of the learned. They had seen that the adults were not always sure themselves and that they sometimes disagreed with one another, and in this way, the children’s confidence in the terminology was diminished.

In conversations between the project’s adults who were Gaelic native speakers and non-native ones, the children would sometimes hear English words being used (“details” etc.) instead of Gaelic ones (D31-8), and since they would usually look at the adults as the ones setting good examples, this may have influenced them as well, in such a way that they would think they might just as well use English words too.

However, towards the end of the year, good progress was to be noticed among the artists in terms of Gaelic terminology, they would use the new terms more fluidly and naturally, and it can be assumed that this circumstance made a difference to the children’s learning procedures (O27-11), they could hear most of the words in a more natural way now, and this would make the words themselves far more reliable to them.
5.4 The Children and new Terminology/Alternative Strategies

This chapter will take a closer look at the different ways the children chose to deal with new terminology. It must be borne in mind that young children do not always think in a linear way, and they would not take on new words in the same way that an adult would. It will be illustrated in this chapter how alternative strategies were used by the children and how they made different choices. Part 5.4.1 will provide information on the different words that were used, 5.4.2 shows how some of the children used English expressions in their Gaelic sentences, when they did not know the proper word in Gaelic, and in 5.4.3 the children’s own choices in connection with new terminology will be examined.

5.4.1 Different Words — the same Meaning: Expressing Ideas

Sometimes the children would use simple terminology, but were nonetheless able to express their ideas about a picture, e.g. what they liked about it (D31-8): “Agus carson as toil leat an craobh seo? — PUP1, Tha tòrr alofar donn ann, agus solas.” (And why do you like this tree? — PUP1, There are lots of different browns, and lights’. D26-8:2). This pupil was in fact talking about tones, without remembering the correct terminology, and without being aware that it was tones that she was talking about. The pupils were also able to express ‘3-dimensionality’ by saying something like “Tha e a’ faireachdaín mar a tha thu anns an dealbh” ‘It feels like you are inside the picture.’ (D26-8:5). Again, the answer would describe the concept of ‘3-dimensionality’, without naming the actual term (”tri-taobhach ‘3-dimensional’).

During the observation O27-11 in Edinburgh, the children told the researcher about the large picture they were working on (charcoal drawing of the Isle of Skye). They did not use any of the new terminology (although they were talking about the techniques), but they described, in a very detailed way, why they had chosen to put certain parts together for the big picture, where those parts/places had been in Skye, and what they (the children) had to do, at that point, in order to make the picture work as a whole. This way, they were, in fact, explaining the concept of suidheachadh-deilbh, ‘composition’, just without using the word itself.

In a conversation at the end of one of the sessions on the big pictures, the children showed a good understanding of ideas in art (D27-11), they talked about the movement of water inside the picture, about likeness between the picture and the real view when it was actually raining in Skye. Everyone had the opportunity to go up to the picture and take a closer look. One of the girls talked about the river, and how it did not work well from a very short distance, but that it worked a lot better from a longer distance. This statement was a good example of the level of understanding of art that the children had developed. It was obvious that this pupil understood important concepts of art, and everyone was able to follow her in that conversation.

5.4.2 English Words in Gaelic Utterances

The children were able to understand some of the underlying concepts of the new terminology, sometimes at first in English (e.g. ‘texture’), without yet remembering the Gaelic expression for it. In that scenario, some of the children would simply use the English expression for the respective concept, even though everything else they said was in Gaelic. As soon as the main artist would hear that, she would put the conversation on hold, in order to look for the Gaelic term for that expression, and the pupil would then go on talking.
There are several examples (e.g. D9-9) which illustrate that the children understood what the artistic concept was about, and how they could use it practically, even though they still used English words when explaining what they had done (Pur2: “Chuir mi uaine undercolours. Mix mi gorm agus uaine.” ’I put green undercolours on. I mixed blue and green.’ D9-9.2). Sometimes, it was not quite clear whether it was the children’s choice to use the English rather than the Gaelic word or whether they simply did not remember the Gaelic expression. It quite often happened that the children would use English words in a conversation (e.g. “details”), although they had been taught the Gaelic word previously and had heard it repeated several times in class as well.

5.4.3 The Children’s Choices

Sometimes, the children created a meaning for a new word by themselves, if they did not remember what it meant, and they seemed to be contented with their own definition, not thinking to ask anyone about the proper meaning. Pupil C, for example, was quite happy with the meaning she had ascribed to faileas ‘shadow’; she thought it was about a certain painting style with water colours that looked very nice (C2), and she did not ask anymore about it.

Pupil C was in general a very interesting informant. At the beginning of the third interview, she used the word “textures”, e.g. “nuair a tha thu a’ dèanamh (dealbh) san leabhar, fhios agad, (...) chan fheum thu dèanamh tòrr textures. Ach nuair a tha thu a’ dèanamh an dealbh uabhasach mòr, feumaidh tu dèanamh tòrr, uabhasach tòrr, dealbhain,. textures.” ‘When you are doing your picture in the book, you don’t have to do lots of textures. But when you are making the picture really big, you have to do lots, really lots of pictures, .. textures’ (C3:1). Since she expressed this very interesting idea about the function of textures, it certainly looked like she had understood the meaning of “textures” in the right way.

However, when the researcher asked her more questions about the pictures, trying to get her to use some of the new terminology herself (by giving her a definition of one of the words and then asking which one it was), she was not able to work out the term ‘textures’. When she was then given the word (inneach ‘texture’) she did not seem to recognise it as the same thing she had been talking about beforehand. This situation looked a little like she had created her own definition of ‘textures’, and that this definition did not coincide 100% with the proper definition (C3).

Towards the end of the project, the children were very able to talk about their work fluidly, and it became clear that they had become more comfortable and more free with their Gaelic, even when they were using normal, non-art-specific vocabulary (O9-12).

T2 expressed the thought that maybe the children did understand most of the terminology, but she had not heard them using the words themselves yet. However, she said that maybe this was the case since they may not have seen any reasons for using them (T2,3). This idea is very interesting, because it shows the possibility that maybe the children did understand more words than it may have looked like, but were not using them when they felt that their usual vocabulary was good enough to express the same thought, only in a more simple way. According to T1, everything depended a little on the situation; if someone had asked the children in a formal way, maybe they would have used the new terminology in that situation, since there would have been a reason. She saw a certain similarity between such a situation (art class) and classes in which the children had to do formal written work on the one hand, and then informal oral work on the other hand.
The researcher noticed a connection between the children's interest/choices and their memorising of the words; e.g. if they were really enjoying pictures made with charcoal, they were more likely to remember words that were connected with charcoal. A good example of this could be seen during one of the observations in the city (O30-9). For the first time in the project, the researcher heard one of the children using mion-thiosraadh 'details' (PUP1, Slèite) in a natural and correct way during a conversation, and this was a child who was always very interested in the smallest details of her pictures and the objects she chose. Details were important to her in her pictures, and maybe that was the link to her memorising and naturalising this term at such an early stage.

In general, one needs to bear in mind that children do not remember words according to a logical system, but rather according to what is important and relevant for themselves at the time. As opposed to adults, they usually do not follow a linear procedure of learning. Throughout the project, some of the children's memory seemed to be ‘coming and going’ (“Le na tònaichean no inneachan, tha, uaireannan tha iad, cuimhne aca, uaireannan chan eil.” ‘with tones or textures, it is, sometimes they do remember, sometimes they don’t’ ART1: 5). This highlights the point that children are more intuitive about words and techniques in general, and that if they had not been dealing with tones one day as opposed to another, they would not remember the word for ‘tones’ either.

6. Research Findings 2: Language and Art

This part of the report will take a look at the influence of the project on the children’s abilities and attitudes in connection with Gaelic, visual art and the two together. Information on the children’s ideas on speaking in Gaelic about other topics will be presented in 6.1, followed by a chapter on the connections between topics and choice of language (6.2), before the development of confidence in language and the visual arts during the project will be analysed (6.3). In the last parts of this chapter, Air Iomlaid’s influence on the children’s attitudes towards Gaelic (6.4) and Art (6.5) will be examined.

6.1 Understanding the Ability of Using Gaelic to Discuss Different Topics

At first, most of the children were not too sure about talking about the pictures in Gaelic, but gradually, they got used to it, and they realised that they in fact had the abilities to discuss art in Gaelic. Some of the children (native speakers) said that they were very happy in general that the project happened through the medium of Gaelic, and that they, in fact, preferred Gaelic (“Tha e nas fheàrr na bruidhinn Beurla” ‘it is better than speaking English’ A2:3). The other pupils were also happy to face challenges, and many of them said that they wanted Gaelic in the project, even if it was a little harder for them at the beginning.

It was very important that Gaelic was used as a naturalised language, as a medium to talk about a completely different topic (visual art); it seemed that the children would then be more confident to talk about other topics in Gaelic as well. They had already seen that Gaelic had worked for a topic such as visual arts, and they had all gained more confidence about their own linguistic abilities through the project. It could be noted that they had all improved in their ways of discussing and describing art in Gaelic, as long as they had kept up practice and were willing to try out new ideas.
6.2 Semantics: Connection between Topics and Choice of Language

To a certain extent, a connection could be distinguished between personal/private topics and the use of English, and equally a connection between topics connected to school and the use of Gaelic. In a way, the children were looking at *Air lomlaid* as a school project, although most of it happened away from the school environment (and outdoors). Therefore, for them, anything to do with the project was connected to school, and therefore to Gaelic as well. However, not all of the children made this distinction between languages and topics.

During the observation sessions (e.g. O31-8) it could be noticed that many of the children were using quite an amount of Gaelic among themselves (simple vocabulary rather than the new terminology) when they were talking to each other about the pictures (colours, objects, views etc.).

Among the Edinburgh pupils it appeared that there was a stronger link between location and language than between topic and language; the children would speak Gaelic at school, to the teachers and artists, and then switched to English amongst themselves when they were not in class, and also quite often during the art sessions (when they were outside the school or in parts of the school that were linked to English topics or classes).

This changed a little through the exchange and towards the end of the project, e.g. when they were working on the big picture, or when groups from both schools worked together outside (e.g. O1-10; two girls from Edinburgh were talking to each other in Gaelic while working on pictures near the National Galleries; they spoke about the colours they had used, and there was a small discussion about the use of blue and green (trees vs. sky) in their pictures.

A good example of the division between topic/situation and language could be found during one of the observations in Edinburgh (O27-11). The researcher heard both languages that day; the children were very good in terms of speaking Gaelic, as long as they were working together on the big picture, but when they were tidying up the place, they went back to speaking English with each other, as if, since they were finished with the art work, they were also finished with Gaelic for the time being.

6.3 Confidence: Language and Art

In this chapter, a closer look will be taken at the improvement of the children’s confidence and understanding, both in terms of art and language. The information on their improvement has been divided according to two different stages: the beginning of the project, and their improvement throughout the project. In 6.3.3 the children’s abilities of self-assessment and understanding their own skills will be discussed.

6.3.1 Beginning of the Project

a) Confidence in Art/Understanding Art

At the beginning, the children often had problems saying why a certain picture was difficult or easy to work on, or why it was good or bad, etc. (e.g. “NE1: An do chòrd e riut a bhith ag obair air (i. an dealbh)? Pup7: Bha e doirbh. NE1: Carson? Pup7: Chan eil fios agam.” “NE1: Did you enjoy working on this one (i.e. picture)? — Pup7: It was hard. — NE1: Why? — Pup7: I don’t know.’ D31-8.3).”

A had similar problems when she spoke about the pictures, not because she had problems with the language, but simply because she did not feel capable of saying why a certain picture was good or bad in
her opinion: “Uaireannan, tha...nì fhios agam dè tha mi ag ràdh, dìreach ’s toigh leam an dealbh agus sin e. Chan urrainn dhom h dad a ràdh m a dheidhinn. T ha e dìreach m ath.” ‘Sometimes, I don’t know what to say, it’s just that I like the picture, and that’s it. I can’t say anything about it. It is just good.’ A1:1).

As could be seen during the observations at the beginning of the project (e.g. O31-8), the children appeared to feel confident and secure in general (especially the ones in Sleat), and they were quite free in their own ways of working on the pictures, mixing colours, trying out different styles and techniques (e.g. undercolours). NE1 agreed that the children from both groups had made excellent progress, but she thought that the team from Skye had been a little freer from the beginning, maybe because they were living in an environment which was very spacious, free, and full of different colours and natural shapes.

b) Confidence in Language

Most of the children were comfortable speaking Gaelic in general, but still a bit careful and shy when speaking about a topic as specific as art. Pupil B confirmed this idea, saying that she was very confident in Gaelic in general, but that at the beginning of the project she did not feel confident enough to speak about such a specific topic as art in front of the other children (and teachers) (B1); she felt she did not always remember the right words for this.

Others simply thought that their own ideas were not useful for the rest of the group, e.g. pupil D. She was very shy and careful when she talked about art, since she thought at the beginning that her comments were not interesting enough to be mentioned (D1). This was not a linguistic problem, but a problem of confidence with their own ways of thinking, not everyone was sure whether their ways of analysing and thinking would be useful for the other children/adults. Moreover, for some of the children, it was clearly a new situation to speak Gaelic out of school and especially to talk in Gaelic about a topic that possibly went deeper and into more professional detail than many other subjects at school at that level and age.

6.3.2 Improvement throughout the Project

a) Confidence in Art/Understanding Art

Very good progress was to be noticed in terms of both confidence in art and understanding of art. The artists agreed that the children had acquired several techniques (e.g. using charcoal, pencil, paint, working with undercolours, mixing colours) and that they were more uninhibited and free in every way. A good knowledge of styles and drawing procedures showed especially in their work on the big pictures (O27-11).

Furthermore, it was noticeable how confidence and independence developed in the children’s own ideas, and how they would start to change little things within their pictures deliberately. Usually, likeness was very important to D, for example, but at the same time, she enjoyed playing a little with the composition and adding things to the picture (“Chan eil mi ag atharrachadh càil, ’s e dìreach, bha mi a’ cur ris rudeigin” ’I’m not changing anything, it is just, I added something to it’ D3:1). D became more confident about her own ideas on art in two ways. she would try to put her own ideas into practice, and she became more confident in terms of talking about these ideas too.

Art3 found the children to be more confident in terms of art at this stage, and she felt that they were looking at things in a different way. For example, instead of simply looking at a tree as a tree, they would see how the tree was situated in its bigger environment, i.e. they would see the whole composition (Art3). Generally, both groups showed a better understanding of working with art (e.g. leaving things out, following their own ideas). Art1 commented on the children’s progress concerning art and confidence in general. “Aig an toiseach, chan eil iad cho cothurtail, chan eil iad cho làidir, chan eil iad cho saor, ach beag air bheag, tha iad a’ faighinn gu
math fosgailte agus gu math laidir leis na dealbhan.” ‘At the beginning, they are not so comfortable, they are not so strong, they are not so free, but step by step, they are getting quite open and quite strong with the pictures’ (Art 1,1). These ideas were confirmed through the children’s work on the big pictures (O8-12 and others), for example, where they were creating the composition themselves. This displayed their abilities very well. It was a big step for them, since it practically proved that the children completely understood the concept of ‘composition’ at this point.

b) Confidence in Language

The project’s influence showed strongly in several ways. It could be seen that the children had improved in terms of talking in front of other people, expressing their own ideas, and talking about other children’s work in a constructive way. According to T2, this progress was noticeable in other projects at school, too – not just during the art classes. The children agreed with this.

T1 was not too sure about visible progress in Gaelic, but she emphasised the point that the project opened up another domain for the use of Gaelic and how this was very important for the children, since usually most of them would not use Gaelic out of school. It was more natural for them to speak English to one another, as they lived in an English speaking environment.

Moreover, T1 explained that the children were not used to speaking in front of a big group of people when Air Iomlad started. Most often, they would work in small groups during classes, instead of one person speaking in front of the whole class on their own. However, she did see that the children became more confident throughout the project, even if it was not easy for them in all situations yet.

Art 1 and Art2 agreed that the children were more comfortable towards the end of the project, in terms of
speaking about the pictures and art techniques. The project offered them many opportunities for practice, and they were learning from one another by listening to the others while they were talking about the pictures.

### 6.3.3 Self-Assessment & Understanding of Skills

At the end of the project, most of the children were able to assess their own and others’ work in a constructive way. They had become more aware of both their strengths and weaknesses, and, as such, they had been learning about their personal skills and how they could make use of them while working, for example, on art.

The children started speaking about their own progress, because at this stage it was obvious enough for them to see how they had developed their skills — for example, on techniques which they had not been so good at when the project started. After only three months, B and C were already aware that their pictures were better than at the beginning, and that they themselves felt better about the pictures (B1), (C, “a’ fàs tòrr nas fhéarr” ‘getting a lot better’ (C1:4) B, “aig an toiseach den bhliadhna, cha robh sin cho mAth. Ach an uair sin, an-dràsta, tha e caran mAth!” ‘At the beginning of the year, that was not so good. But then, now, it is quite good!’ B3:6).

Moreover, they started to understand that there was a connection between continuous practice and progress (“cha robh mì toilichte nuair a bhà mi direach, a’ tòiseachadh, ach nuair a tha mi mar, .. nuair a tha mi a’ dèanamh e a-rithist is a-rithist, tha mi a’ fàs nas fhéarr, is tha mi a’ smaoineachadh thà iad (na dealbhain) tòrr, beagan .. fàs nas fhéarr cuideachd.” ‘I wasn’t happy when I was just starting, but when I am like, when I do it again and again, I am getting better, and I think that they [the pictures] are getting a lot, a little better, too.’ C3:6).

The project was also useful to the children in a personal sense, in that they learnt to be open to challenges and to trust that they can achieve lots of different things in life, as long as they try and are willing to work hard. During a discussion in Edinburgh (D26-8), one of the boys said about his picture that he had not thought at first that he could do it, but after he had started, he saw how everything worked out, and he managed to finish it without problems.

Some of the children created their own understanding of style and concepts, for example, when they started working on the big pictures, a few pupils thought it was going to be a lot more difficult than the small pictures. However, D was looking at the big pictures as if they were smaller pictures put together (i.e. the smaller pictures from their books), similar to a jigsaw, and this way, she did not feel a huge difference between the small pictures and the big pictures (D3). She had found a way for herself to deal with the new situation.

### 6.4 Attitude towards Gaelic

This chapter will present some information on the children’s attitudes concerning Gaelic, and how they changed during the project. Background information on the different language situations of the children will be provided in 6.4.1, the children’s feelings towards Gaelic will be looked at in 6.4.2, and part 6.4.3 will highlight the influence of different linguistic backgrounds and situations on the children’s confidence and attitudes by looking at equal bilingualism vs. two languages (school/home). At the end of this chapter, part 6.4.4 will present information on the use of Gaelic during the art outings.
6.4.1 Speaking Habits

Every pupil on the project came from a different linguistic background: some spoke Gaelic at school and at home, while others used Gaelic exclusively at school. The latter was true in particular for children in Edinburgh, since the city as such would not offer them many opportunities to speak Gaelic outside of the school environment. In Skye, there are more Gaelic-speaking families and generally more opportunities to speak Gaelic in the community. It is important to be aware of these differences from the start, since the linguistic background always influences attitudes towards the language.

Several examples of this can be found among the children. B said that she would speak Gaelic “uaireannan aig an taigh is anns an sgoil” ‘sometimes at home and at school’ (B1.1) as well as at particular Gaelic activities. She would speak it to the teacher and other people at school, but would usually speak English to her friends (with a little bit of Gaelic), even on the art outings, when no adult connected with the school was around (B1).

Gaelic is A’s first language, and she speaks it with her whole family, and with her friends, too. However, she switches between the two languages when she is at school, according to whom she is with (Gaelic-speakers vs. children from the English unit, other teachers etc.). C said that she would normally speak a mixture of Gaelic and English with her friends (C1).

Pupil D explained that she speaks Gaelic at school and in Fàs Mòr (a Gaelic-medium childcare facility in Sleat), but not at all at home, even though one of her younger siblings (Sgoil Àraich) is very good at Gaelic, and even though she receives a very open and encouraging attitude towards languages in general at home (D1). The researcher noticed that D seemed to have created different domains for every language (“SL: Cuin a tha sibh a’ bruidhinn Gàidhlig is cuin a tha sibh a’ bruidhinn Beurla ri chèile (i.e. clann anns an sgoil) “ − D: Beurla a-muigh, Gàidhlig a-staigh” ’SL: When do you speak English with each other, and when Gaelic (i.e. children at school)? − D. English outside, Gaelic inside!’ D1.1). To some extent, this pattern was followed during the project, too.

As could be seen in 6.2, there was quite a strong separation noticed between language and locations in Edinburgh — Gaelic at school, and English for everything that did not happen in class. According to T1, the problem for most of the children was that they were not used to Gaelic out of school. “S e an t-eòlas a th’ acasan air Gàidhlig a bhith ann an rùm còmhla ri tidsear. (...) Chan eil iad eòlas air Gàidhlig a bhith air a cleachdadh ann ann an sìdheachadh neo-thoirmeil no fiù ’s ann ann an sìdheachadh fosgalte.” ’The knowledge they have of Gaelic is to be in a room with a teacher. They don’t know Gaelic as being used in informal or even open situations’ (T1.5). However, it looks like the project has changed that attitude towards the language a little (’gu bheil iad a’ smaoineachadh mu dheidhinn Gàidhlig mar rud as urainn dhut cleachdadh a-mach às an sgoil” ‘that they think about Gaelic as something that you can use out of school’ T2.1).

6.4.2 Feelings about Gaelic

The children had different attitudes towards the language, depending on where they usually spoke Gaelic and with whom they spoke it. To some of them, speaking Gaelic was more natural than English (e.g. A who came from a linguistic background with Gaelic being the main language at home). Others were equally comfortable in both languages, since they would use lots of Gaelic at home, too, with their family (e.g. B). It is interesting that many of the pupils who would not use Gaelic at home at all/very little, told the researcher
that they were still comfortable and quite happy to talk about many different topics in Gaelic, art being one of them, even though English was a little easier for them.

The children from both schools always spoke Gaelic to the teachers and artists, as could have been expected, according to their language domains. At times, however, there were more practical reasons involved, too, when the children spoke Gaelic, “Cha bhi m i a’ bruidhinn Beurla aig an sgoil, air sgàth ‘s bidh thu a’ call puingean” ‘I won’t speak English at school, because you will lose points’ (B2:4). Others already understood practical advantages connected with being a Gaelic speaker, not for the language’s sake itself (not many of them would understand that at this level - they were too young - but for the sake of special opportunities that pupils with Gaelic would be offered quite often (such as Air Iom laid etc. (cf. C2)).

T1 explained that they always tried to work on the children’s attitudes towards Gaelic at school, since the children would not see it as anything special. However, this attitude would be quite natural, as the children had never had a comparison. They did not know classes/school through the medium of English, and thus they would look at Gaelic medium classes at school as being the norm, without feeling special about it.

### 6.4.3 Equal Bilingualism vs. Two Separate Languages (School/Home)

Some of the children were in the situation that both languages were equally part of their lives, at home, at school, in their free-time. Others, however, were also bilingual but with a strong separation between the locations and languages (home vs. school). This was likely to have some influence on the children’s confidence, for if they were not used to Gaelic as a personal and private language (beside its function as a formal language of the school) they might be less confident using Gaelic out of school. They probably would not feel safe in terms of the locations.

On the other hand, there were pupils like B, to whom it felt natural that the whole project was in Gaelic, since she was used to Gaelic out of school and in connection with different topics that were not part of school topics (“Chan eil e a’ faireachdainn neònach, a-mach às an sgoil, air sgàth ‘s mise, bidh mi a’ déanamh e co-dhiù, agus bidh tòrr daoine anns an sgoil a’ bruidhinn Gàidhlig mach às an sgoil” ‘It doesn’t feel strange, out of school, because I, I do that anyw ay, and lots of people from school speak Gaelic out of school’ B2:3).

Then again, there were pupils like D, who was happy enough with Gaelic in the project, but generally felt more comfortable with English, which was the language of her home. Some were quite shy to use Gaelic out of school, especially some of the pupils from Edinburgh, because they were living in an English speaking environment, even if they spoke Gaelic at home. They were generally a little more shy to speak Gaelic in places that — to them — were not connected to Gaelic.

### 6.4.4 Gaelic on the Art Outings

Generally, a mixture of English and Gaelic was being used, with a little more English in the city (an English speaking environment). Sometimes it was difficult to say which language would have been chosen naturally by the children, since they would always speak Gaelic if an adult was nearby.

During the observation O31-8 lots of Gaelic was spoken among the children, and there were only two pupils who spoke in English most of the time. Everyone else was doing very well, although they were not aware whether or not adults were near them (they did not see who was around because they had to work sitting
under umbrellas, due to the rain that day). In general, there was a little more Gaelic to be heard among the children while they were all in Skye (e.g. O9-9), and pupils from both groups spoke Gaelic to the teachers, artists and helpers (the ones who had Gaelic) as usual.

The children reached a level where they no longer thought too much about which language they would use. Arr2 had noticed that this was different at the beginning of Air Iomlaid, when they thought more consciously about language. Towards the end, however, this did not seem to happen to the same extent anymore, and the choice of language happened more naturally. An interesting situation was to be noticed during an observation in Skye (O9-12) where the Sleat children were working on one of the big pictures. One boy from the English unit (with no Gaelic) was around, too, but the others did not worry too much about that. They still spoke in Gaelic most of the time. This confirms that using Gaelic had become more natural for the children, and that Air Iomlaid had been turned into a Gaelic domain in their eyes. They did not think about language as such, they naturally spoke Gaelic during project activities, otherwise they most likely would have switched to English due to the pupil who did not have Gaelic.

6.5 Attitude towards Art

The following chapter will take a look at the influence of the project on the children’s attitude towards art in general. At first, some information will be presented on the children’s interest in art before the project and afterwards (6.5.1), then it will be analysed how the children’s art experience, and what they learned through art, has had a broader influence on them (6.5.2). Part 6.5.3 will discuss the children’s progress in their artistic abilities and understanding, and the last part of this chapter will examine the children’s focus and procedures during their artistic work (6.5.4).

6.5.1 The Children’s Interest in Art — Before and after the Project

Before the project started, some of the children were already interested in art. However, quite a few of the pupils developed an interest in art due to their experiences in Air Iomlaid and started working with art at home, too.

Pupils A and B were interested in art before the project started. B had a book similar to the ones they used in the art classes in which she created pictures at home, too. She would use this quite often, usually with just pencil (B1). A and D would sometimes do a little art at home, too, before and during Air Iomlaid, and D said that she did more work on art at home due to the project (D1). Moreover, D produced so many pictures during the outings, that she had already filled one whole book at quite an early stage in the project and needed a second one (a small number of children were so eager with their pictures that they needed a second book).

Under the influence of the project, C started painting at home as well (C1), and the researcher heard about a girl in Edinburgh who asked her parents for painting equipment for Christmas, because she wanted to start working on art at home. Apparently, Air Iomlaid generally raised a new interest in art in many of the children.
6.5.2 Learning about Art and through Art: Opening other Doors?

Through the working procedures that the children had learned with their art work, they started looking at their environment in a different way, too. They were more aware of colours, lights and natural compositions around them, both in the city and on the Isle of Skye. Moreover, topics that were connected to art were often very useful in order to raise thoughts and questions in other different areas, e.g. philosophy.

The children enjoyed seeing different colours and views that were new to them during their art trips (e.g. A) and they felt that they learned a lot about their own environment. They went to see places they had not been to before, and in general they got to know their own environment a lot better, as well as another area that was very different and new to them (the island or the city). It was surprising how well the pupils from Edinburgh remembered lots of details about their trip to Skye (D2-7-11). When they explained the different parts in the big charcoal picture of Skye, the researcher heard lots of details and anecdotes from the children about the trip to the island.

Beside comments on their new knowledge of their environment, a very interesting and very advanced conversation developed during one of the discussions (D18-9). The children were talking with Art1 about the philosophy behind arts, such as freedom in art, the question of whether there was such a thing as ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ in art, etc. They created a comparison to mathematics and other systems based on strict rules in which ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ are very important concepts. It was amazing to listen to the children’s ideas and to realise how advanced they were.

6.5.3 Abilities and Understanding of Art/New Skills

Most of the children reached an artistic level where they were able to make their own decisions and analyses. They learned to understand the importance of the different artistic concepts, and were happy to make their own choices and changes accordingly.

Pupils A, B, C and D said that they enjoyed learning new things about art (styles, techniques) since they all hoped to get better at art by learning more about its background and underlying ideas. (“Tha mi a’ feuchainn a bhith a’ dèanamh dealbh nas fheàrr.” ‘I am trying to make better pictures’ D1:5). Most of the children were determined to improve their pictures throughout the project. At the same time, A and B quite liked adhering to their own ways and styles, as something personal that they had worked out themselves.

It was not always easy for the children to understand new principles in art at the beginning. At times, they had difficulties (e.g. B) grasping new techniques (“Bhiodh e math a’ déanamh an dòigh agam fhèin air sgàth ’s, uill, aig an taigh, tha mi a’ faighinn dealbh agus tha mi a’ copyadh an dealbh. Ach nuair a tha mi a’ tighinn dhan sgoil, feumaladh sinn a’ dèanamh techniques ùra agus tha sin really confusing, mar like, na undercolours, no rudeligin. Bha sin really confusing.” ‘It would be good to stick to my own style, because, well, at home, I just get a picture and copy it. But when I am at school, we have to do new techniques and that is really confusing, like, undercolours, or something. That was really confusing’ B1:4). However, everyone got better during the project, even if they were worried at first about one or two techniques that were new to them.

Towards the end of the project, some of the pupils from both schools (e.g. D) were showing a good understanding of techniques and how they could make a picture better and more special (SL: “Agus carson a tha e a’ còrdadh riut, dè tha math ma dheithinn? D. .. ’S e ailleach an dath a tha sin…Dh’fhàg mì a-mach rudeligin an sin, rinn mì an dealbh seo le peansail agus rinn mì e ann am peant, ach dh’fhàg mì sin a-mach.”
‘SL: And why do you like it, what is good about it? D. „It is just this colour. I left something out over there, and I did the picture with pencil and with paint, but I left this out.” D21). It showed great progress that D understood the artist’s freedom to change or leave out things in order to improve a picture. From the exchange onwards, more and more children started being freer in this sense, too, even though different things were important to individual pupils.

B was a good example of the improvement of skills that were important to her individually. Likeness between the object and the picture was very important to her (and to some of the others, too (cf. D9-9)), this was the main aspect, she realised herself, that had changed in her abilities. At the beginning of the project, she did not recognise objects as they were in her pictures, but at the stage of the exchange, she saw her own progress in terms of likeness (B2) (SL: “A bheil thu a’ falcinn dòfar eadar an fhéadhainn a rinn thu aig toiseach a’ phróiseict agus a-nise? B: Tha! SL: Dè dh’atharraich? B: Anns na rudan eile, chan eil e a’ coimhead mar dè th’ ann, ach anns na dealbhān a rinn mi an-dràsta, agus rudan, thà e a’ coimhead mar dè a th’ ann.” SL: Do you see a difference between the ones you did at the beginning of the project and the ones now? B: Yes! SL: What has changed? B: In the other things, it does not look like what it is, but in the pictures I have done now, it looks like what it is’ B22).

In general, it could be noted that the children from the city had a different style (O26-8), stronger lines and borders, simple and full colours, as were more suitable for an urban environment. Naturally, the style of the Skye children was a little different, with more emphasis on natural colours and undercolouring, and shapes that were wide and open.

At the end of the project it could also be seen how the children were making use of what they had learned (e.g. O9-12): exceptional work on tones and details in the composition, the children were very aware of what would work in the picture, what was needed etc, and they were getting to a deeper understanding of art e.g. movement in the picture: “nuair a tha thu a’ coimhead air feadhainn de na dealbhān, thà e a’ coimhead
mar, tha a’ ghaoth ann agus tha e a’ coimhead mar an actual rud, (.), tha e a’ coimhead gu math beothail.”
When you look at some of the pictures, it looks like it is windy, and it looks like the actual thing, it looks pretty lively’ B3.4). This way, they were able to gradually find their own personal style, and some of them were so developed that the artists were, in fact, able to tell who did which picture, without looking for a name ("'aithnichidh mi stoidhle Pup1, stoidhle Pup2, cha leig mi leas coimhead a-nis airson ainm." 'I recognise Pup1’s style, Pup2’s style, I don’t need to look for names now.' Art2,4).

6.5.4 The Children’s Concentration Levels and Focus

It was an overwhelming result of the project that most of the children learned to concentrate on one thing/one piece of work for hours at a time. They would sit down for hours to work on their pictures, most of them would not let anything or anyone distract them. They were able to keep focussed for a long time, and looked quite professional during their work, which they completed efficiently and quietly, without too much nonsense (e.g. O31-8, O30-9).

Step by step, the children gained the ability to say more about a picture than “I like it” or “I don’t like it” (pupil in one of the discussions: “‘S toil leam na rudan seo (air dealbh), oir tha iad gu math detailed. Agus sin cuideachd. Agus ‘s toil leam na dathan, oir tha e really mar beagan làidir.” ‘I like these things (in the picture), because they are quite detailed. And this, too. And I like the colours, for they are really like a little strong.’ D31-8,1). They became more capable of focussing on one picture long enough to work out for themselves what was good/bad about it and why they did/did not like it.

In general, the children had started to work more independently on their pictures after the exchange, and did not need much instruction (“Cha chreid mi nach eil iad nas fheàrr air obair leotha fhèin, chan eil iad feum ach air cus stiùireadh” ‘I think they are better at working by themselves now, they don’t need much guidance’ Art2,6). At the same time, the work on the big pictures confirmed that the pupils were also able to work as a team (drawing and discussing), and some of them even said that they preferred working on the big pictures to working individually, since they enjoyed helping each other out as a team (e.g. A3).

7. Research Findings 3: Influence of the Environment

This chapter will deal with the influence of the environment in which the children were working on their pictures. At first, some examples of its influence on techniques and artistic progress will be discussed (7.1), before a closer look is taken at the environment’s influence on language, especially on terminology and feelings connected with Gaelic (7.2).

7.1 On Techniques and Progress

The influence of the respective environments in which the children were working on particular artistic techniques and the children’s artistic progress will be discussed in this chapter, starting with colours and awareness of surroundings (7.1.1). This will be followed by two further parts, one dealing with the influence on choice of views and objects for the pictures (7.1.2), and one on their personal style (which they had developed during the project) and their feelings concerning the different areas in which they worked (7.1.3).

7.1.1 Colours and Awareness of the Environment

At first, the pupils from Sleat were stronger and more free with colours, since they were used to an environment full of different natural colours in different shades, instead of the clearly separated, strong colours
of a city. Their pictures showed how much they enjoyed the different colours and how willing the children were to try out new shades and types of colours by mixing them. Lots of the children from Sleat were incredibly free in their efforts with colours, such as undercolouring and mixing (e.g. O9-9), and they managed to keep that artistic freedom with colours even when they were in the city (cf. O30-9).

The children from Edinburgh would not see those colours and natural shades in the city, where there are more buildings and artificial shapes, with strong boundaries and lines, and very different colours and shades which would not mix. However, they were a lot better with shapes, buildings and details than the Sleat pupils, in accordance with what they were used to. During the exchange in Skye, the Edinburgh pupils began to try out more techniques with colours, too, such as mixing, undercolouring etc. (O9-9).

Both groups learned a lot through the exchange, the Edinburgh children understood concepts and techniques about natural colours and shades better, and the Sleat children learned a lot about buildings, shapes and tones in an urban environment. Good progress concerning shades and lights could be noticed in the two groups (O1-10). The children themselves were aware of differences between the two environments, too. Some of the pupils agreed that the biggest difference between the two different environments (city vs. island) was that the colours were so different in the city (e.g. A2) and that there was not much green at all (e.g. C2).

### 7.1.2 Views and Objects

The children had very different ideas about which views and objects they preferred in their pictures, some claimed that it was easier for them to draw pictures of buildings, while others stated that natural views (mountains etc.) were easier for them.

A, B and many other pupils from Sleat thought that it was more difficult to draw pictures in the city (buildings, skyline, roads). It was not easy for them to draw houses and other buildings with all their fine details (cf. B2, C2:1: “thòrr togalachean ann, agus tòrr càran agus an rathad mòr, agus tha na caistealan, tha iadsan uabhasach duitich oir tha mar diofar shapes ann is rudan beaga” ‘there are lots of buildings, and lots of cars and the big road, and the castles, they are really difficult, because there are different shapes and small things’).

At the same time, D thought it was easier to draw pictures of houses and other buildings, even with all those details. She liked this technique in general (straight lines, buildings), but she said that she still preferred doing pictures of mountains etc, even though they were a little more difficult (D2).

The children always chose the views and objects for their pictures themselves, following their own choices. It was particularly interesting to see how differently the children chose their pictures (views/objects, distance to the object, scenes with lots of details vs. wider and far away views, e.g. O30-9), and although everyone was working from more or less the same place, one would not often see the same view in two pictures.

### 7.1.3 Personal Styles and Feelings towards the Environment

Since everyone had to adapt their style a little to the environment they were working in, they all learned about adaptation and flexibility, even though some felt more comfortable in a remote environment rather than in a city, and vice-versa. The choices of views for the pictures were always very different among the
children, even when they were working in the same place, for their choice would be influenced by their personal feelings (the way they looked at a place). According to Art2 everyone had taken a big step forward during the exchange in terms of confidence, to find and to follow their own style and choice in art.

D was aware that she used a different style in the city (D2), and although B thought that it was more difficult for her to draw pictures in an urban environment, she enjoyed it very much. She too realised that her style changed according to where she would be working on her pictures (buildings vs. mountains) (B2). For some of the children from Skye, it was very challenging to concentrate on their work with so much noise from the city around them. They were used to silence from living in a remote area, and it took a while until they were comfortable enough to do work, in spite of those distractions.

Most children from Edinburgh thought that it was more pleasant to do pictures of mountains, but they did not agree among themselves as to whether it was easier or more difficult to create pictures in a natural environment or in the city (O9-9:2). In general, they looked at the new situation as a challenge, which they took up immediately.

Art1 alluded to the fact that children from both groups had learned a lot about the concept of ‘composition’ during the exchange, since they saw natural compositions that were completely different (city and island). Possibly, it was easier for them at that point to understand the idea of ‘composition’, because they were seeing the compositions in the new place instead of just talking about them. They would then start to look at the environment in which they were in a different way.

Moreover, Art1 noticed that the Sleat children kept a lot of their style and artistic freedom even in Edinburgh: “tha am baile mòr anns na dealbhain aig a’ chlann bhon Eilean Sgitheanach, tha iad a’ faireachdainn nas saoire fhathast, tha i a’ faireachdainn mar talamh, actually, ann an dòigh, ach tha drochaid ann” ‘the city in the pictures of the Skye children, they [the pictures] are still feeling more free, they actually feel earthy in a way, but with a bridge on it’ (Art1:11). This confirms that the children had developed their own styles at quite an early stage of the project.

Another positive aspect of the children’s learning situation was noticed. Whenever the children from both schools worked together, they exerted a positive influence on each other. One of the Sleat pupils said, e.g. “Le clann Dùn Èideann bha tòrr inspiration agam” ‘With the Edinburgh children I had lots of inspiration’ (D18-9:7), and Art2 confirmed that both groups were focussing and concentrating better when they were working together, due perhaps to competitive feelings (“Bha iad airson sealltainn dha chèile dè as urrainn dhaibh a dhèanamh” ‘They wanted to show each other what they were able to do’ (Art2:4).

7.2 On Language: Terminology and Feelings

The following chapters show the influence of the environment on language, especially concerning terminology and feelings towards Gaelic. At first, a closer look will be taken at the children’s experiences when they were in Skye (7.2.1), and eventually their experiences in the city will be considered (7.2.2).

7.2.1 On the Isle of Skye

Skye is an environment with a lot more Gaelic than Edinburgh, and it was expected that it would feel more natural to the children of both groups to speak Gaelic on the island. Although the difference was not as significant as had been expected, a little more Gaelic could be heard during the outings on Skye.
During one of the observations before the exchange (O31-8), the researcher got a very positive impression concerning Gaelic among the children: the pupils were all sitting and working under umbrellas that day, due to poor weather. Even though they therefore did not always know when an adult was around them (they could not ‘see’ or ‘hear’ very well in those conditions) they were talking in Gaelic to one another almost the whole time. This situation was a good example of the fact that sometimes the children would speak Gaelic without thinking about the language as something they (only) had to speak while a teacher was around. At other times, not much Gaelic would be heard among the children, especially when children from both groups were together (O9-9, O30-9). This was the case in both Skye and in Edinburgh. It seemed to be the case that not everyone was comfortable enough with Gaelic as a social language, so they did not use it while getting to know each other. In spite of the fact that it was not yet very natural for them to speak Gaelic with each other, both groups were very good at Gaelic in formal situations (speaking to teachers etc.).

As far as learning procedures are concerned, it was noticed that it seemed to be easier for the children to remember words that were connected to the respective environment in which they were working. They were quicker at picking up words for colours (and topics connected to colours) while in Skye, because colours were very important for their work in that particular environment. While they were working in the city, other topics would be important, such as shapes, details, etc. Again, it looked like they picked up words connected to those topics more quickly while present in the urban environment, since they got to understand them better when they could see what they meant at the same time.

7.2.2 In Edinburgh

The children would not hear any Gaelic in their environment in the city, and this language situation had some influence even on those who were used to speaking Gaelic out of school. It could be noticed that some of them felt a little uncomfortable.

A was a good example for this difficulty, because in spite of the fact that Gaelic was very natural to her in general, she felt the influence of English in the city and thought that it would be a little more natural to speak English (A2). C said that she was generally not comfortable using Gaelic in places where English was clearly dominating (e.g. Inverness, Glasgow, etc.) (C1).

From time to time, one could still hear conversations in Gaelic among the children when they were in Edinburgh, but it would be difficult to say whether or not that happened due to the fact that there was always a teacher or an artist near them (O30-9).

On the other hand, the city had some positive influence as well. it seemed that some of the children were proud of their Gaelic when they were talking and were surrounded by people from the city who did not understand Gaelic at all. They started to look at their language in a different way, and to understand to an extent that Gaelic was special ("Théid sin a-staigh orra gu bhail rudeigineach sònraichte acasan nach eil aig tòrr daoine eile" ‘They will realise that they have something special that not many other people have’ T2. 6).

The project offered a good opportunity to use Gaelic out of school, and it made the children realise that they could even use it among themselves while they were in a city, surrounded by English speaking people.
8. Other Research Findings

In this chapter, other research findings which surfaced during the project and are of great interest, and though they are not immediately connected to the primary research questions, they will be discussed. 8.1 will provide information on aspects of the children’s learning about their environment, before considering their confidence and ability in general (8.2). At the end of the chapter, information on feedback from children, teachers and artists will be presented (8.3).

8.1 Learning about their Environment

By the end of the project, the pupils had all learned a lot about their own environment, both in Skye and in the city. They knew it a lot better than before, and they understood better what was around them. When talking to the children from Edinburgh about this, the researcher noticed that they agreed that they had learned a lot about their own city, because the project had taken them to many different places that were new to them in Edinburgh (“Airson tha sinn a’ falbh gu àiteachan diofraichte, agus, cha robh fios agam air Granny Green’s Steps, a’ch tha fios agam air a-nis.” ‘Because we go to different places, and, I didn’t know Granny Green’s Steps but now I do’ (D26-8:2); “Tha fios agam air tòrr a bharrachd mu dheidhinn baile mòr às déidh tòrr deailbhan, agus tha e a’ còrdadh riom a bhith a’ dol gu àiteachan” ‘I know a lot more about the city after lots of pictures, and I enjoy going to places’ D26-8:5).

One day during the exchange in Edinburgh (O1-10) an interesting situation arose. In the area of where the groups were working that day there was a 3D map of Edinburgh, just outside the National Galleries. The children started looking at it and talking about the places they had been to in Edinburgh. It was very interesting for them to see where they had been that very day, where they had been before, where the hostel was, etc. They spoke about the sites they had been to for their pictures, and how far or near those were from one another. This was extremely useful for the children and for the understanding they had of the different places that they had been to in general, but the map was particularly useful for the Sleat pupils, because it helped them work out and understand the concept of ‘city’ a little better (O1-10).

8.2 Confidence and Abilities in General

The children became more confident in general during the project. They learned how to talk in front of other people without feeling intimidated. They also learned a lot about their own abilities, and that they were able to do almost anything, even if it might look too hard at the beginning. It is essential that they made this experience through the medium of Gaelic, because, in this way, a connection had been created between the newly gained confidence and the language. This confidence – gained while speaking Gaelic – also confirms how the children got used to speaking Gaelic while discussing different topics, and how they were speaking more fluidly in Gaelic as well. Also, a big step was taken towards the naturalisation of Gaelic as a language which people can use to speak about anything, not only for the sake of speaking it, but as a natural medium of communication.

It was interesting to see how those artists who were learners made great progress in their Gaelic abilities, too. Towards the end of the project, most of them were using the new terminology in a natural way and very
fluidly, and in general they were a lot more fluent in Gaelic than at the beginning, when it had been new to them as well to talk about such a specific topic in Gaelic (cf. O27-11). The project's influence on the children's working procedures showed very clearly, and it also had an influence on their understanding and analytical abilities in general (T1). Since they were working so well, quietly and efficiently, they often seemed to look older than they were (e.g. D27-11). They learned to take responsibility for their own work, and most of them were very happy to take on the challenge of being involved in the project in a very independent way. Another benefit of the project was that they learned to use their skills when working individually as well as in a team (Art3).

Finally, it needs to be remembered that children work differently than adults in general, and that they would not think or worry about every single step, as adults would usually do (Art1). Thus one needs to be careful not to expect the children to learn in a structured and linear way. Quite often, the children did not even remember everything they had been doing, especially when in their minds they had already moved on to the next thing they would be doing that day. This way, it could easily happen that the children had been very busy and successful all day, but when someone asked them about that day, they would say that they did not remember anything.
8.3 Feedback

It became very clear that both the children and the adults who were involved in the project thoroughly enjoyed *Air Iomlaid*, although everyone saw different aspects of the project as being their best experience.

When pupil D was asked which part of the project she liked best, she shouted out: “S toil leamsa a h-ùile sìon!! Bha e a’ còrdadh rium gu mòr a bhith a’ déanamh dealbhan anns na beanntan, de togalaichean, de Scott’s monument, de .. gallery, de Waverley station, de eaglaisean, de gravestones agus ... barrachd.” ‘I like everything! I enjoyed it a lot to do pictures in the mountains, of buildings, of the Scott’s monument, of ... the gallery, Waverley station, of churches, of gravestones and ... more!’ D3:6).

Pupil A said that she was very happy with the project in general, and that she enjoyed in particular seeing new places, which had given her new ideas for pictures (A3). B mostly agreed with that, and she also said that the trip to Edinburgh was the part of *Air Iomlaid* she liked best, because of the knowledge she gained in this completely different environment, and which she could then utilise while making different pictures there accordingly (B3).

The teachers who were interviewed agreed that the project was very useful to the children. T2 said that she herself would now look at views in a different way, thinking about colours and undercolours, and she thought that the children were doing the same now, too, to some extent (“tha thu a’ coimhead air rudan ann an diofar dhòigh. No, mar gum biodh tu ... nas mothachail. Agus a’ chìlann cuideachd, tha mi a’ smaoineachadh” “You look at things in a different way. Or, as if you were more aware. And the children, too, I think” T2:1). According to T1, the project offered the children wonderful opportunities: “tha iad air uireadionnachadh m u dheidhinn ealain agus m un deidhinn fhèin, tha mi a’ smaointinn gu bheil e miurbhail each.” ‘They have learned a lot about art and about themselves, I think it is wonderful’ (T1:1).

The artists articulated very interesting ideas, too. AːrT2 said that she enjoyed the project a lot, and moreover, she stated how useful it was for the children. She felt that she herself learned a lot, too. Everyone agreed that the project was a very special opportunity for all the children, but especially for those who were not so good at other topics, such as mathematics or writing, but who were very successful in art (AːrT3).
9. Conclusions

In this chapter, a summary of the main results and conclusions of the research will be presented, structured according to the respective topics that were examined throughout the research: terminology (i), talking and analysing abilities (ii), learning procedures (iii), learning about art (iv), confidence in art (v), confidence in Gaelic (vi), and environment (vii).

(i) Terminology: Although the children may not have learned all the new words that had been introduced by the project, they showed awareness of the special terminology for arts, and they understood most of the underlying basic concepts in art at the end of the project. They were able to talk about the pictures and special techniques in a clear and informed way, even if they did not always remember or use formal terminology to express themselves.

(ii) Talking and Analysing Abilities: A great difference was to be noticed in the children’s ways of speaking and thinking. They had the ability to express their own ideas, in a way that was suitable and constructive, and had the ability to understand why they liked one picture but not the other. They also learned to analyse their own ideas and feelings. In addition to all this, the children developed their skills in talking in front of a group of people. Everyone had become more confident and fluent in general, and all were very capable of expressing their ideas regarding others’ pictures and work.

(iii) Learning Procedures: This report has shown that everyone in the project learned a lot in quite a short time. It needs to be remembered that both the terminology and the concepts were at a very high level for primary school children (P1-4 in this case). Moreover, it would take them a while to even be aware of new vocabulary, since they were busy with their own world and with the things within the project that were personally important for them. Distinct from adults, they would not look at their learning situation as such, and especially not in a linear, structured way at all, and they did not analyse beforehand what they would learn in the project.

(iv) Learning about Art: Not all of the children were successful in creating a link between the new terminology and new techniques during the project, but it has become obvious that they learned the basic art principles anyway, as well as some of the terms which indicate these principles. An interesting point arose in connection with learning strategies: the children seemed to be better at memorising words when those were connected to a technique/style that they personally liked. The report has noted that there were a few children who did not remember any of the new words, except for those that were connected to their own preferences. For example, if someone particularly enjoyed working with charcoal, they were more likely to remember terminology that was connected to pictures and techniques with charcoal. Examples of this kind show that there is a link between semantics, interest and memory, and that the kind of interest the children have in a topic has influence on their procedures of remembering.

(v) Confidence in Art: As far as art is concerned, great progress was visible in both groups, both in terms of confidence and ability. It was important that the children found out which abilities they had had at the beginning and how they improved while learning more about art and its theory. Furthermore, they had a chance to learn that it was a good attitude in general to accept challenges in life, and that they could achieve almost anything as long as they were willing to work hard for it. It also became clear that the children
improved their analysing abilities concerning art work, as well as their skills to analyse themselves. They learned a lot about themselves. The children were proud of their work, and if it was the case that they were not completely happy with one or two of their pictures, they were able at this point to explain what they did not like about them, and what they would do differently the next time.

(vi) Confidence in Gaelic: It cannot be said for sure whether or not the children used more Gaelic after the project. However, it is obvious that Air Iomlaid was very useful for their linguistic abilities in many ways. It made them more confident concerning Gaelic, and it showed them how Gaelic could open up lots of possibilities in different situations for them, even if they were not connected to specific Gaelic topics. Gaelic had been naturalised as a language which could function in every domain of their lives, and some pupils even realised to some extent that they were lucky to have Gaelic, and they started to feel proud of their Gaelic abilities.

(vii) Environment: It was of great importance for the children to see new places, and especially places that were different from their own environment, since this experience proved to be essential in them gaining an understanding of the basic principles of art and in enabling them to develop an artistic awareness in general. Again, the children were also in a position to understand that they had the ability to create pictures in any kind of place, even if it might feel impossible at first. Moreover, they learned a lot about the relationship they had with their own environment as well as with new and different places. This experience enabled them to be more open to different perspectives in life, and not to be afraid of them, but rather to be flexible in their ways of working and thinking.
10. Recommendations

After looking at the results and conclusions from the project, there can be no doubt about how useful Air Iomlaid was for the children, and more generally, for everyone else who was involved. Artists, teachers and parents agreed that it offered wonderful opportunities to the children. The report has already conveyed the idea that the benefits of the project were not restricted to the main objectives which were named at the beginning, but that the wider learning experience of the children went far beyond art and language. The experience they gained through Air Iomlaid opened up other doors in their lives, such as different ways of thinking, philosophical ideas, a deeper understanding of themselves, gains in confidence, etc. Therefore, the first recommendation to anyone showing interest in the project results is to go out there, try to develop a similar project and see for themselves!

Although there are not many comments to be made concerning points of improvement for the project, two points will need to be raised about project procedures which would be more supportive to the language learning situation. It is hoped that more schools will try and establish similar projects in the future, for which the following recommendations may be useful.

(i) In order to teach terminology specific to art, it would have been more efficient if the project’s staff had agreed on the terminology they were going to use before the project, since it would have been more supportive for the children’s learning success if they had continuously heard the same terms from every member of staff throughout the project. To support teachers and artists in that aspect, one could have created, for example, a booklet with new vocabulary before the project, with the most important terminology that was going to be used in it. By establishing this before the project, the staff would have known the terms well already and would have been able to use them more naturally, thus offering the children more strengthening of the learned vocabulary.

(ii) The second recommendation concerns the people who were helping out during some of the art outings, but who did not have Gaelic. The researcher is fully aware of the fact that it could not have been easy to find enough voluntary helpers who were fluent in Gaelic in the first place, but at the same time, it would have been an essential help for the children’s learning situation. Some of the teachers suggested that it would have been useful to teach these assistants some basic Gaelic phrases and words of encouragement at the start of the project. It would have been useful even if it had been established that everyone would use basic Gaelic, with some English words, if needed; or if they had no Gaelic at all, it would have had to be clear from the start that those volunteers would not ask the children to turn to English so that they could understand the pupils’ conversations (e.g. O1-10). They would therefore have to accept that this was a Gaelic project and that they should encourage the children to speak Gaelic, even if they did not understand it themselves.

Of course, it seems nearly impossible to find enough people with Gaelic in the city. But this brings another question to the surface, the researcher has commented on volunteers without Gaelic or very little Gaelic, but where were the fluent Gaelic speakers? Maybe it would be up to the parents/relatives who were fluent in Gaelic (and who understood the importance of creating a broader Gaelic environment for the children through projects such as Air Iomlaid) to offer their support.

It is hoped that this report will help to raise awareness of these points, so that future projects similar to Air Iomlaid will be able to get even more support from families and the whole of the community.
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