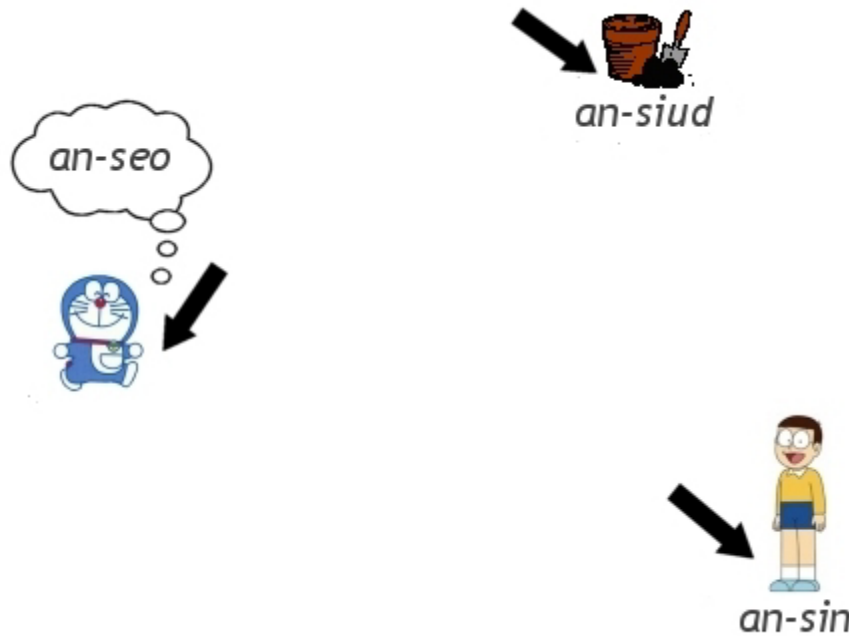


Adverbs or Thall 's a-bhos

Fascinating topic ... although linguists will tell you that Gaelic is actually quite boring in terms of its adverbial system. Caucasian languages for example make a distinction of whether the object in question is higher, lower or on the same level as you and whether it is visible or hidden from view. But I digress.

To start with, Gaelic distinguishes three spatial locations: proximal, medial and distal. Which in human means something that is close to the speaker, something that is close to the addressee and something that is remote from either. Luckily Doraemon has agreed to help us out with an example:

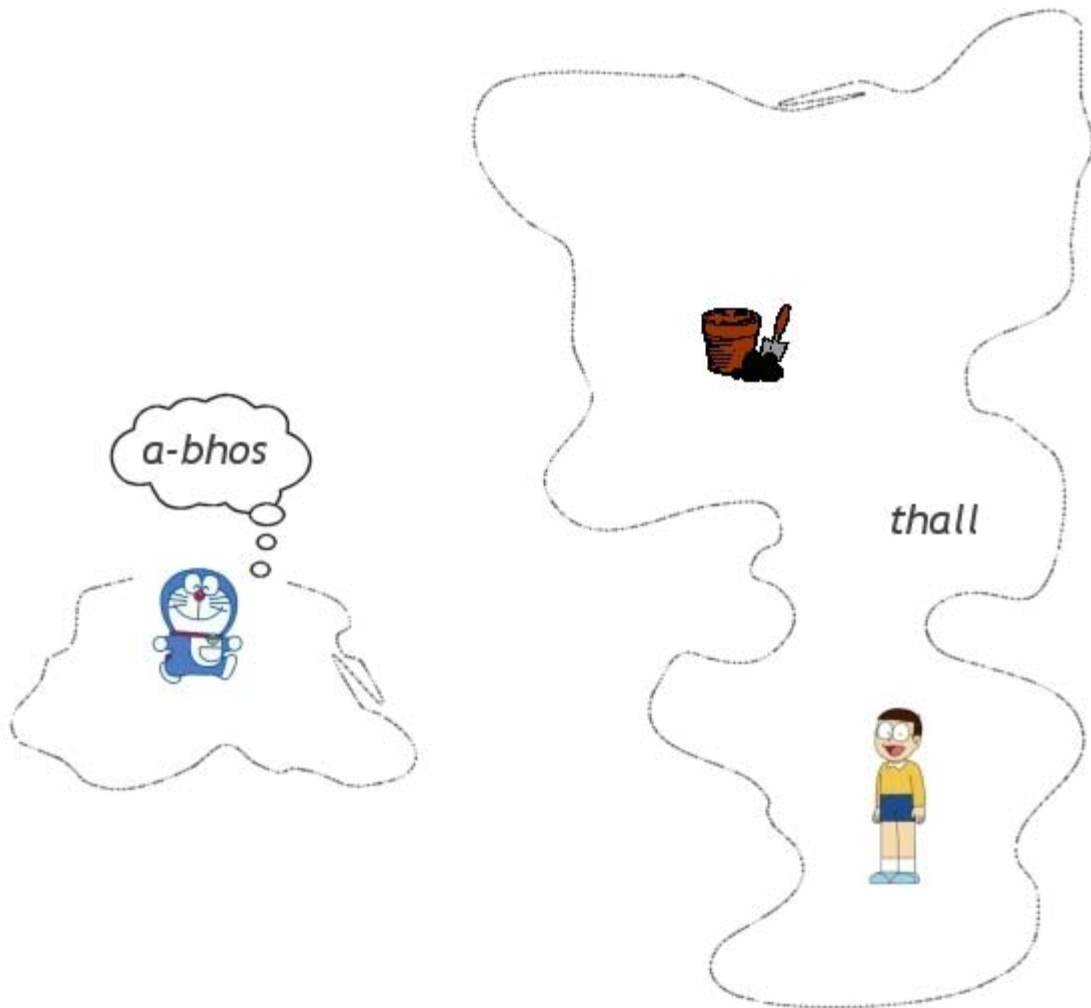


Why the arrows? Because **an-seo** [ən'ʃɔ], **an-sin** [ən'ʃin] and **an-siud** [ən'ʃəɪ] are quite 'specific' in their reference, as in, you are making a clear statement about where something is. These three vary quite a bit in their pronunciation, so here's an overview:

an-seo	an-sin	an-siud
ən'ʃɔ	ən'ʃin	ən'ʃəɪ
ɛ'ʃɔ	ɛ'ʃin	ɛ'ʃəɪ
ənə'ʃɔ	ənə'ʃin	ənə'ʃəɪ
ɛh'ɛ	ɛh'ɛ	ɛh'ɛ

What's the difference? The first line is definitely careful speech, the second colloquial and the third and fourth just colloquial variants.

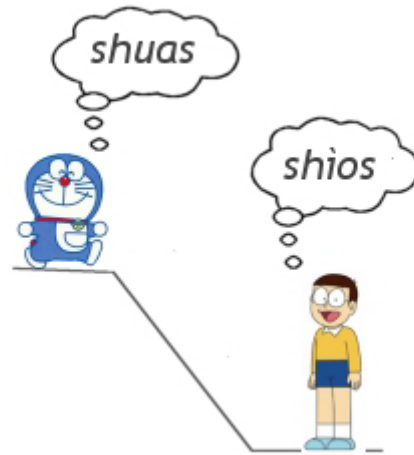
The above remark about being specific is important because Gaelic has another set of adverbs which are the exact opposite, *thall* [hauˠ] and *a-bhos* [ə'vɔs]:



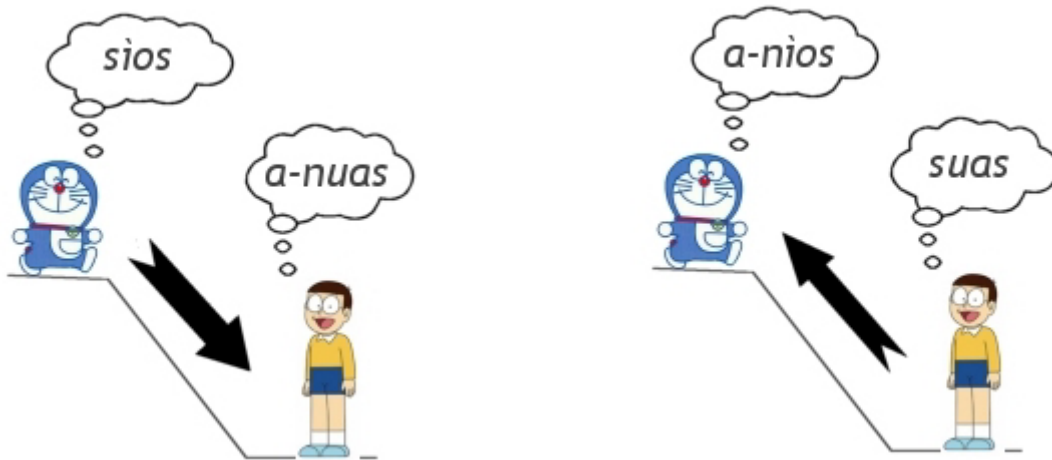
Slightly exaggerated but that is essentially the difference - *thall* is the space some way away from the speaker but with no specification of how far and where in location to the person addressed. *A-bhos* is similarly vague and so they often get translated "by over here, hereabouts" and "over there, thereabouts".

You can combine them to emphasise the "over here" or over there bit": *a-bhos an-seo, thall an-siud, thall an-sin*.

The fun part starts when you realise that Gaelic distinguishes between location and motion and has corresponding adverbs:

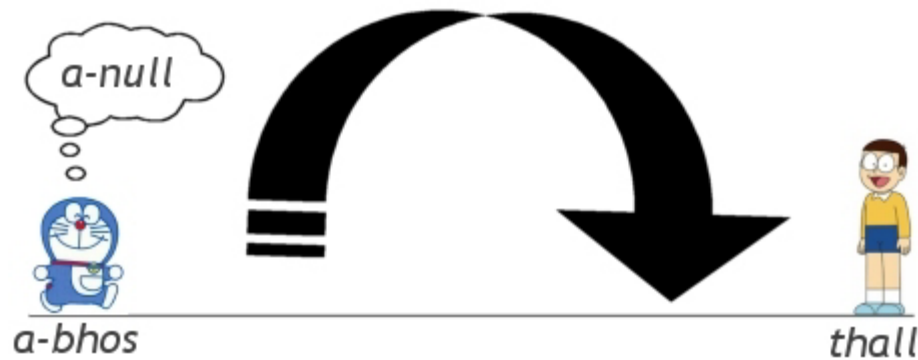
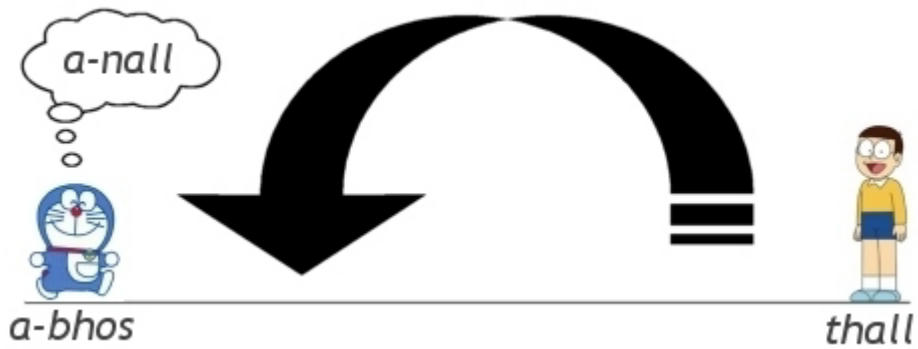


Shuas [huəs] and **shios** [hiəs] are simply adverbs of location - nobody is moving.



This is the fun bit - you have to watch out whether a movement is towards the speaker or away from him. If your cat is running up the stairs in front of you, she is going **suas**, if you are standing on top of the stairs and your owner is zooming up the stairs towards you, he is coming **a-nìos** [ə'niəs].

And the other way round - if your owner is running away from you down the stairs, he is going **sios** [ʃiəs], if Tiddles is falling down the stairs towards you, she is coming **a-nuas** [ə'nuəs]. Confusingly, some dialects have merged **a-nuas** and **a-nìos** into **a-nuas**, in which case **a-nuas** stands for 'movement towards you either up or downwards'. It may help you to think of them as ***an-shios** and ***an-shuas**, from below and from above, which is where these words originally come from which is also the reason why the **n** at the beginning of **a-nuas** and **a-nìos** are weak as if they were word medial or final - because they originally were stuck at the end of **an-**. But let's move on. We still have to deal with movement in the **thall** and **a-bhos** arena:



Pronounced **a-nall** [ə'nãũɸ] and **a-null** [ə'nũɸ]. Assuming that, as explained above, **a-bhos** and **thall** are considered "fuzzy" concepts. **A-nunn** [ə'nũɸ], which you will sometimes see is just a variant of **a-null**.

That's it.

Err ... not quite, as we've had a question about **a-bhàn** 'down' (motion) and **an-àird** 'up' (motion). This used to be a question of Mainland dialects (which used **a-bhàn** and **an-àird**) and Island Dialects (which use the above system). Today it's a stylistic question - **a-bhàn** and **an-àird** definitely being the marked terms. Which means that they are less common and sound something between off and posh when you use them, although **an-àird** is more acceptable than **a-bhàn**.