

**An Leabhar Achoimrí / Book of Abstracts**  
(san ord a gcuirfear i láthair iad / in order of presentation)

**Déardaoin / Thursday 13/10/16**

**Aoiléacht / Plenary 1:**

Margaret Deuchar (Bangor University)

***“Mae pobl monolingual yn minority” : a quantitative study of Welsh-English code-switching***

Although it is true that monolingual speakers are a minority worldwide, they are in the majority in the UK and even in Wales, where only about 20% of the population are bilingual in Welsh and English. Like many bilinguals elsewhere, many speakers of both Welsh and English make use of the resources of both their languages by codeswitching. While this has previously been denigrated as indicating poor command of one or both languages, or even an indicator of imminent language death, I shall report on evidence showing that (a) Welsh grammar is predominant in code-switching data and (b) that it is the most fluent speakers of both Welsh and English who do the most code-switching. The evidence comes from a 40-hour corpus known as Siarad which was collected from 151 Welsh-English bilinguals and is available at [www.bangortalk.org.uk](http://www.bangortalk.org.uk). An automatic glossing system made it possible to extract more than 60,000 clauses from the data and to quantify the extent of code-switching. Focusing on bilingual (vs. monolingual) clauses as the dependent variable and using Rbrul to conduct a multivariate analysis, it was possible to identify the extralinguistic factors which favoured code-switching. We found that the significant factors were age and pattern of bilingual acquisition. Younger speakers switched more than older speakers, and those who had acquired both languages in infancy switched more than those who had acquired one language first and then the other. We interpret these findings as suggesting that code-switching is becoming more acceptable in Wales and that it is associated with high rather than low levels of fluency.

**Seisiún / Session 1A**

Claire Nance (Lancaster University)

***Becoming a new speaker: Acquiring phonetics and phonology in Gaelic-medium primary schooling***

An important development in the revitalisation of endangered languages has been the introduction of immersion education, which is seen as one method for transmitting the language in the face of reduced family and community transmission. While previous research has shown that adolescent new speakers have different phonetic and phonological behaviour to traditional speakers (e.g. Nance 2015), little is known about the acquisition strategies and early behaviour of such individuals. This study therefore aims to investigate phonetic and phonological acquisition in Gaelic-medium primary schooled children with a view to better understanding the acquisition of Celtic languages outwith the family setting.

Data were collected in a rural primary school in the Outer Hebrides. Data were collected from ten children aged four to seven in the Gaelic-medium class, who participated in two tasks. In Task 1 they took part in a word game designed to elicit specific sounds, and in Task 2 the children were fitted with a radio microphone for half a day to elicit more free-flowing speech in the classroom and playground. This paper presents results from Task 1, and some preliminary observations from Task 2. The word game used for Task 1 aimed to elicit production data from two different phonetic/phonological features of Gaelic and their corresponding English values: word-medial stops, and word-medial laterals. These features were chosen as they differ significantly between Gaelic and English (e.g. Ternes 2006), so were hypothesised to show interesting variation across languages.

Results of an acoustic analysis suggest some variability across the sample. Younger children displayed a greater range of productions, suggesting gradual acquisition of these complex systems. There were also some differences between those who spoke Gaelic with a parent at home and those who did not in terms of the production of laterals: children who used Gaelic at home were more likely to produce a distinction between the three lateral phonemes than those who did not. These results are discussed with reference to models of bilingual phonological acquisition, sources and amounts of input in immersion school settings, and revitalisation planning for the Celtic languages.

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Siobhán Nic Fhlannchadha & Tina M. Hickey (University College Dublin)

#### ***Generational change in the use of grammatical gender, a complex aspect of the Irish language***

Examination of the trends in current language use among adult speakers of Irish is necessary given rapid sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic change. Variability and change in adult usage makes it harder to identify the “end-point” towards which children’s acquisition is progressing. Variable accuracy in the marking of grammatical gender may not unduly impede adult communication, but when offered to children as input it is likely to significantly impede their control of such complex morphology. This study presents data on the use of the same feature in Irish by child and adult speakers in order to explore generational change in an endangered minority language. Data were collected from 135 proficient Irish-speaking adults in an online/paper and pen test of grammatical gender. A sample of 306 bilingual children in the Gaeltacht (age range 6-13) were tested individually on their productive use of grammatical gender marking using the same novel measure to allow for direct comparability. The results revealed that the adult highly proficient L2 speakers of Irish were in fact the most grammatically accurate, though a significant age effect was also found, whereby the older participants aged over 55 were the most accurate and those aged under 25 the least accurate, regardless of language background. This finding is discussed in relation to the issue of differential teaching of the Standard (Caighdeán) in different school models. The children’s profile of results points to those with higher home use of Irish showing greater accuracy on those constructions where adult input to them shows more consistency (namely gender marking of third person possession), but gender marking on nouns and adjectives was very low across all child participants. The results are not indicative of gradual acquisition of accurate usage of this feature of Irish across the younger age groups, which would be expected if this was a feature of Irish acquired within the normal timeframe of acquisition, but rather of acquisition of grammatical gender being ‘timed off the map’ even for children with the most Irish input at home.

Marina Sneseva (Moscow State University)

#### ***New speakers of Irish in Dublin and their language choice***

Being the largest city in Ireland and a melting pot of different people, Dublin has developed its own variety of English which, albeit non-homogeneous, is well-recognised and identified both by Dubliners themselves and the rest of Irish people. However, English is not the only language spoken in the city as there seems to be a growing group of Irish-speaking Dubliners who, having learnt Irish in schools and universities, became fluent enough to use the language and even teach it to their children.

Their Irish is often contrasted to the traditional dialects of Gaeltacht speakers and dismissed as an instance of insufficient language competence, the speakers’ pronunciation being heavily influenced

by their first language. Indeed, my 2014 field research showed certain English influence on Dubliners' pronunciation, especially in palatalisation. This being said, while presence of 'semi-speakers' might indicate minority language decline, in contemporary Ireland new speakers can help to maintain the language by organising and participating in *ciorcail chomhrá* 'language circles', open lectures and other events where Irish is actively used.

In order to study Dublin Irish pronunciation a field study was conducted in November 2014 when thirty-six bilinguals were interviewed. All informants had English as their first language yet were also fluent in Irish, i.e. able to keep up the conversation and produce monologues on common subjects without resorting to English. The interviews, being primarily designed to collect phonetic data, provided interesting sociolinguistic information as well. In this talk I would like to put phonetics aside and focus on Dubliners' attitude towards both languages, the opportunities to use Irish in Dublin and the challenges the speakers experienced when trying to keep their Irish alive.

Noel P. Ó Murchadha (Trinity College Dublin) & Colin J. Flynn (St Patrick's College/DCU)

***Prospective student teachers' engagement with target language varieties for Irish***

Researchers in various branches of linguistics, including sociolinguistics and applied linguistics, have concerned themselves with the empirical investigation of prestige language varieties and target language varieties. Studies in this area have illustrated that a level of consensus emerges in many communities of practice in relation to the manner in which language should and should not be used. Social actors are aware of linguistic variation and they evaluate it in terms of, for instance, prestige, acceptability, correctness, authenticity and legitimacy. The hierarchical organisation of language varieties often influences language policy and planning. Ideologies around linguistic variation have influenced the ways in which institutions, such as schools, deal with linguistic variation, while those same institutions often influence what language varieties count and don't count and subsequently perpetuate these ideologies. These phenomena have been attested in the Celtic languages and other lesser-used varieties, just as they have been in more dominant languages. This paper builds on previous research in sociolinguistics (e.g. Lippi-Green) and in applied linguistics (e.g. Cook 2016; Dalton-Puffer et al.; Dornyei & Ushioda 2009; Piller 2001) by investigating perceptions of language variation and by identifying the target language varieties for Irish that are deemed appropriate for the classroom context. The paper is based on an ongoing study of the ways in which student teachers engage with the linguistic variation that comprises modern Irish and on the impact that this has on their own classroom practices. Data will be presented from semi-structured interviews with prospective teachers of Irish. Throughout the interviews, the participants address their own perceptions of prestige and target varieties of Irish and respond to audio recordings of speakers selected as representative of some of the main varieties of modern spoken Irish. The data reveal that although the participants feel that they do not themselves align fully with prestige traditional varieties of Irish and that such models are not appropriate for beginners, they nonetheless represent the *beau idéal* for speakers.

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Brian Ó Curnáin (Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies)

***Apparent-time Chronology of Post-traditional Irish; New Speakers and the moving target of New Irish***

Based on extensive fieldwork with native Irish speakers of all ages in the West Conamara Breac-Ghaeltacht, and on the descriptive analyses in, for example, *The Irish of Iorras Aithneach*, County Galway (Ó Curnáin 2007) and *Analysis of Bilingual Competence* (Péterváry et al. 2014), we can trace the emergence through apparent time of Non-traditional Irish and, later, Reduced Irish, both of which can be subsumed under the term Post-traditional Irish. Speakers born since the 1960s can be placed at various points along a complex multidimensional post-traditional continuum, which is relevant to the other Celtic languages and many threatened languages. New native Speakers of this New Irish are becoming more and more dominant in English and prefer to use English more (as a flipside to their Post-traditional Irish competence). Worldwide, a significant challenge to New Learner Speakers of non-global languages is the competence in global lingua francas of native speakers of the target non-dominant language, often rendering the target language pragmatically redundant. Challenges for New learner Speakers of Irish then include:

- 1 A suitable version of the target language (Irish) to acquire.
- 2 A suitable source of that version and occasions of use for that version.

The complexities of these new realities need to be addressed in current applied linguistic analyses and interventions.

**Seisiún / Session 1B**

Bernadette O'Rourke (Heriot-Watt University) & John Walsh (National University of Ireland, Galway)

***Changing relationships between language, place and identity among 'new speakers' of Irish***

To be considered authentic, a speech variety needs to be, as Woolard (2008: 304) suggests, “from somewhere” in speakers’ consciousness, making its meaning profoundly local’. This search for authenticity and its link to place and territory is linked to what Makoni and Pennycook (2007) describe as the “metadiscursive regimes” used to describe languages more generally, firmly locating them in Western linguistic and cultural suppositions in which the notions of discrete linguistic territorialisation are embedded. Along with place, authenticity is also linked to time and nostalgia for an often romanticised past. In contemporary societies increased mobility and globalization have blurred the notion of language as fixed (Heller 2003).

In this paper we look at the ways in which such trends have impacted on what it means to speak and use Irish in contemporary society. We examine the extent to which the spread of Irish outside of traditional Irish-speaking strongholds in the Gaeltacht and into spaces previously dominated by English has unsettled the traditional ideology of sociolinguistic authenticity. In our paper we will examine specifically the linguistic ideologies of new speakers of Irish towards Gaeltacht speech and speakers. Our analysis is based on a qualitative study of a corpus of narrative life-histories collected over a three year period and based on in-depth interviews with different profiles of speakers. Although the majority of participants mentioned the Gaeltacht in some form or another, there were both positive and negative perceptions of the legitimacy of Gaeltacht speech as a target variety for new speakers. We will examine such discourses and discuss emerging notions of language, place, authenticity and boundaries and how they are shaping discourses about the Irish language in the twenty-first century.

References

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Hugh Rowland (Dublin City University)

### ***Máirtín Ó Cadhain & Misneach: Ideological overlap between Irish and Welsh language campaigns in the 1960s***

The 1960s were a transitional period in Irish society when Ireland was emerging from a period of economic protectionism into an era of new values in which the economy was exposed to external market factors. As a result, new sources and catalysts of social protest began to emerge precipitating a re-appraisal of traditional attitudes and orthodoxy. This transition in societal values spawned a complex battle of ideas and thoughts with regard to the role of the Irish language in Irish society.

Misneach, which was a radical lobby group lead by the Irish language writer Máirtín Ó Cadhain and established in 1963, was a prolific producer of discourse at this time. The organisation abhorred the so called 'respectability' of the official language movement, which comprised organisations such as Conradh na Gaeilge, who they saw as being too closely aligned with the political establishment. This deemed them, in Misneach's view, to be ineffective in their campaigning and lobbying.

Misneach was also cynical of the government's rhetoric pertaining to the implementation of the language revival policy whereby, in Misneach's view, the government was regressing from previous commitments. This was particularly clear to the subsequent members of Misneach on the closure of the Preparatory Colleges in 1960, these being a pillar in the state's policy of educating National School teachers proficient in Irish. This change in policy alerted Misneach to the hypocrisy, as they saw it, of the government's inaction and rhetoric pertaining to the revival of the Irish language. It also exposed the ineffectual nature of the official language movement's campaigns to act as a bulwark against such changes in policy. This precipitated Misneach's withdrawal from the official language movement in an effort to revitalise and to re-imagine language activism through the adoption of new methods of protest, such as civil disobedience, from Wales.

It is the aim of this paper to trace the influence the Welsh language activist Saunders Lewis had on the establishment of Misneach in the early 1960s. This paper will also assess the ideological makeup of Misneach and the various language ideologies prevalent in Ireland at this time during a decade of immense social and cultural change when economic development was deemed to be the government's main preoccupation.

Conchúr Ó Giollagáin (Soillse, University of the Highlands and Islands, Scotland)

### ***The New Speaker Agenda in Minority-Language Contexts: A Sociolinguistic Critique***

This paper sets out a theoretical framework for a sociolinguistic critique of new-speakerism.

The critique identifies six interrelated analytical categories by which the new speaker discourse (NSD) may be assessed:

1. Power: the relationship of NSD to political provision for the minority language and the mechanisms by which it has been afforded referential power;
2. Geography: NSD's synchronic approach to the territorial requirements of the language minority and its sustainability as a rooted socio-cultural transmitted identity;
3. Sociology: the conflation in NSD of networked activity with communal practice and NSD's concomitant aversion to social categorization in relation to minority language societal realities;

4. Anthropology: NSD's relativistic view of minority ethnolinguistic ascription as opposed to the uncritical scrutiny of majority identity formation in the subordinating culture and especially so in relation to the subordinating culture's disempowering dynamic among the subordinated group;
5. Cultural capital: NSD's divergent approach to normative issues of linguistic function and cultural proficiency vis-à-vis the majority and minority language groups;
6. Market support: the adherence in NSD to an economic or materialist fallacy that a marginal linguistic culture can flourish independent of a supportive socio-economic market which bestows advantage on participants in the activities of that market.

I argue that new-speakerism is a logical extension of the language rights agenda as articulated and practiced in accordance with neoliberal precepts. The neo-liberal constraints with which minority language provision has had to contend select for an individualized approach to the minority condition and hamper or de-select collectivized initiatives in support of communal challenges. New-speakerism is the discursive mechanism by which minority language policy circumvents the ideological limitations of the neo-liberal aversion to empowering minority language groups collectively. It can be portrayed as referent opportunism taking advantage of a crisis in the collective. The individualized ethic of the new speaker ideology, combined with the particular discursive conditions of its emergence and its selective articulation with key analytical categories, confer the new speaker agenda with a conceptual malleability, thus rendering it not readily amenable to critique. NSD as currently articulated is both beyond proof and conceptually unconvincing due to its adopted strategic limitations. NSD avoids suggesting a language planning model which can integrate, on the one hand, social supports for threatened minority communities and, on the other, educational and institutional provision for the learner networks, in a manner which is mutually beneficial to both.

Ingeborg Birnie (Soillse, Aberdeen University)

***"Gàidhlig ga bruidhinn an seo?" Language ideologies and practices in public domains***

After the ratification of the Gaelic (Scotland) Act by the Scottish Parliament in 2005 especially, the focus of official language management initiatives has been on the development of Gaelic language plans by public authorities in order to strengthen the provision of goods and services in the language with 'the intention that the public domain can reverse what it arguably precipitated - language shift' (Oliver, 2010: 77).

However, Spolsky has suggested that 'the real language policy of a community is more likely to be found in its practices than in its management' (2004: 222) and this presentation therefore aims to evaluate the de facto language policy of the only urban settlement in Scotland where a significant proportion of the population, 43.5%, self-reported to be able to speak Gaelic during the 2011 census (NROS, 2013) and with a wide selection of public spaces, both with and without a statutory Gaelic language plan. Based on a corpus that includes language use diaries and ethnographic interviews of both L1 speakers and new speakers of the language, the ideologies toward the use of Gaelic in private and public domains in Stornoway are analysed and compared to the self-reported as well as the observed linguistic practices in order to establish to what extent the ideology drives the practice in each of these domains. These results are then used to discuss the interplay between the ideologies and practices of Gaelic speakers in Stornoway and the official language management initiatives to establish if these three components, management, beliefs and practices, do indeed 'constitute forces which help account for language choice' (Spolsky, 2009: 5).

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Stefan Moal (Université Rennes)

***Characterising new speakers of Breton: Between ideologies, expectations and practices***

Sociolinguistic surveys - be they quantitative or qualitative - about the speakers of so-called "langues de France" or "langues regionales" are by no means regular or systematic in France. In actual fact they are very few and far between, and Breton makes no exception in that respect. The first and last time a question about the knowledge – rather than the use – of these languages was asked by the INSEE (National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, 1 on 40 households) dates back to 1999. Besides, since the relative proportion of learners or speakers among the younger generations is quite reduced, it is no easy task to approach a general profile of the new speakers of Breton. Since 2010 however, a number of partial surveys have been carried out by various institutions and their results are now available for closer analysis: the report on Breton language education for the rectorate of the Académie de Rennes (2010); a survey on the circumstances and prospects of Diwan immersion schools' ex-students (2012); a study on young Bretons and their information strategies (2013); the Breton language on the labour market (2013); the Breton language practice in the town of Carhaix (2014); the Breton language section of a more general poll by the Conseil départemental du Finistère (2014). The methodology employed will mainly involve selecting the most relevant data from each of these diverse and diffuse sources, hitherto rather underexploited in Breton sociolinguistic studies, before carefully combining and comparing their most salient results. The objective is to obtain the best possible synthetic understanding of the perceptions and opinions expressed in the second decade of the 21st century, on the one hand about the Breton language among the younger generations in general – whether Breton-speaking or not; on the other hand about the language practices, ideologies and expectations of the Breton speakers themselves, in particular those who belong to the aforementioned generations.

**Seisiún / Session 2**

Michael Hornsby (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań)

***Transmission as a 'metastance': Claims to speaker authority in Brittany***

The Breton language community is often portrayed as deeply divided, with older, native speakers on one side speaking highly dialectalized varieties, while on the other, new speakers (néo-bretonnants, brezhonegerien nevez) are said to speak a 'neo-Breton xenolect' (Jones, 1998), and never the twain shall meet. Recently, however, Ó hIfeárnáin has called this divide in minority language situations into question, or at least its supposedly stark, oppositional quality and has pointed out that 'whether or not new speakers need affirmation from traditional speakers is moot. Native speakers are not the only groups of fluent regular speakers that hold linguistic authenticity and legitimacy in the eyes of the new speaker' (Ó hIfeárnáin, in press).

Despite this, claims to linguistic authority still continue to reference the native speaker in a variety of ways, and often posit the idea of (intergenerational) transmission as the authentic way to ensure continuity of a language community; Fishman (1991), for example, considers that '[t]he road to societal death is paved by language activity that is not focused on intergenerational continuity' (1991: 91). This paper examines how new speakers can ascribe greater legitimacy to traditional/native speakers and how this consensus reveals the extent to which the 'mother tongue

ideology' (Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson, 1989) has taken root in many minority language contexts. Taking Breton as a case study, the paper investigates published data which, in particular, demonstrates how 'native authenticists' (Hornsby & Quentel, 2013), align themselves with (imagined) native speaker positions and stances (which native speakers might not actually share) and compares it with recently acquired data which shows how, within new speaker communities of practice, a hierarchy can emerge in which certain trajectories of language acquisition are privileged over others, ranging from 'restored' intergenerational transmission practices, to immersive and other formal educational input.

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Stuart Dunmore (University of Edinburgh)

#### ***New speaker attitudes to language change and the Gaelic community: Metalinguistic discourses among participants in the CLAG project***

This paper, drawing on data from the CLAG (Comasan Labhairt ann an Gàidhlig / Gaelic Adult Proficiency) project based at the University of Glasgow, will provide an interim assessment of attitudes to perceived language change and the traditional speaker community among a sample of new Gaelic speakers in Scotland. The CLAG project aims to provide an empirically-derived means of assessing and describing proficiency in Gaelic adult learners with a framework resource on par with those for other European languages, linked to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The project will ultimately describe proficiency scales in Gaelic from beginner to advanced level and will also be used by language teachers and learners alike to gauge language learning and ability in spoken Gaelic.

As a part of the methodology used to assess speaking proficiency among 120 adult participants, all interviewees were invited to engage in several tasks, including an informal interview, a narrative task, and grammar elicitation tasks, in order to build a corpus of spoken L2 Gaelic. For the narrative component of the study, participants were asked to respond to one of a number of statements, several of which pertained to Gaelic language policy and planning in Scotland. This presentation will focus on a subset of 15 advanced learners and new speakers who undertook this task as part of the CLAG research, and whose metalinguistic discourses in relation to Gaelic revitalisation provide a rich dataset for the analysis of their language attitudes. In particular, we will draw attention to these new speakers' perceptions of morphosyntactic and lexical change in contemporary Gaelic, the importance of the traditional speaker community in revitalisation initiatives, and the prospects for the long-term survival of Gaelic as a spoken vernacular in light of these issues.

Wilson McLeod (University of Edinburgh) & John Walsh (National University of Ireland, Galway)

#### ***Pan-Gaelic connections: A preliminary study of student perceptions***

Linguistic and cultural connections between Gaelic Scotland and Gaelic Ireland have been important through the centuries, and particularly since the 1970s a range of cultural initiatives, now underpinned by the Colmcille programme, has sought to strengthen these links. Nevertheless, it remains doubtful how strong the awareness of this 'wider Gaedhealtacht' actually is among speakers

of Irish and Scottish Gaelic. This preliminary study sought to examine the knowledge and attitudes of first-year students of Gaelic in the four Scottish universities that teach the language (Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and University of the Highlands and Islands) and first-year students of Irish at five Irish universities (Limerick, Maynooth, NUI Galway, Queen's and University College Dublin). Students were asked (i) to answer four elementary factual questions about Gaelic Scotland and four elementary factual questions about Gaelic Ireland; (ii) to evaluate their speaking and reading ability in the other variety; and (iii) to indicate their level of interest in visiting the other country and their assessment of the importance of the other country for a thorough knowledge of their own country. Results for both the Scottish and Irish students showed very low levels of knowledge of the other country. There were clear differences on the linguistic question; while the Scottish students generally claimed low or very low ability, a majority of Irish students responded that they had never even heard spoken Scottish Gaelic or seen Scottish Gaelic written down. The attitudinal questions produced seemingly incompatible responses; the Scottish students were somewhat more interested in visiting an Irish-speaking area of Ireland than vice versa, but were somewhat less accepting of the proposition that a knowledge of Irish Gaelic culture was necessary for a full understanding of Scottish Gaelic culture.

## **Aoiléacht / Plenary 2**

Timothy Currie Armstrong (Sabhal Mòr Ostaig)

### ***Linguistic Naturalism and Language Activism***

Linguistic naturalism is an ideology where real or authentic language is understood as a natural behaviour, as something that native speakers acquire in early childhood and use without artifice (see Eckert 2003). In this talk, I will examine linguistic naturalism as it is expressed in discourses around the revival of Scottish Gaelic. I will propose that language revival is best theorized as a project that succeeds or fails primarily as a social movement, as a collective project prosecuted by self-aware actors that is entirely artifice. In this regard, ideologies of linguistic naturalism may lead language activists to misunderstand the ideological work required to alter language behaviour, to set inappropriate goals for the revival movement, and to fetishize some speakers as they delegitimize others, all potentially limiting the impact of the revival on the continuing vitality of their language.

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Dé hAoine / Friday 14/10/16

### Aoiléacht / Plenary 3

Anna Ní Ghallachair (Maynooth University)

#### ***'Mother tongue plus two': chimera or attainable objective?***

The European Union's (2003) stated long-term language competence goal (European Commission 2003), based on the Barcelona Objective, 'is to increase individual multilingualism [or plurilingualism] until every citizen has practical skills in at least two languages in addition to his or her mother tongue'. The paper will consider how successful this monolingual approach to language education has been, particularly in light of the fact that English has become the de facto vehicular language of the European institutions themselves. It will examine the challenges posed by it, with a particular focus on countries or regions with populations of speakers of lesser-used languages such as Irish, Welsh, Catalan and Finnish. Finally, it will discuss the role of lesser-used languages in the linguistic diversity debate and whether modern education systems can successfully accommodate both indigenous linguistic heritage and modern foreign language learning.

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### Seisiún / Session 3

Pádraig Ó Duibhir (DCU Institute of Education) & Laoise Ní Thuairisg (National University of Ireland, Galway)

#### ***The role of Irish-medium schools in generating new speakers of Irish***

Recent research on the use of Irish as a community language in Gaeltacht or Irish heartland areas has revealed that there is a continual decline in usage (Ó Giollagáin & Charlton, 2015). Other research reveals that native Irish-speaking pupils have a greater vocabulary knowledge in English than in Irish by age 11 (Péterváry, Ó Curnáin, Ó Giollagáin, & Sheahan, 2014). In a context where language maintenance efforts are failing in the Gaeltacht, it is worth investigating what contribution the Irish-medium schools can make to the future viability of the language. The Irish Government's 20 year strategy for Irish sets very ambitious targets for increasing the number of daily speakers of Irish from 80,000 to 250,000 by 2030 (Government of Ireland, 2010). If this target is to be met, the education system in general would need to greatly increase the number of active bilinguals currently generated.

This study investigated the language behaviour of Irish-medium pupils and their parents in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland and the issues which affect their use of Irish. Findings based on questionnaire responses reveal very positive attitudes towards the Irish language on the part of pupils. The patterns of Irish language use inside and outside the school environment highlight the challenges faced in normalising minority language use where the main exposure to the language is confined to the school.

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Eugene McKendry (Queen's University Belfast)

***Irish in an emerging context of Linguistic and Social Diversity in Northern Ireland's Schools***

Modern languages are in decline generally in the UK's post-primary schools, including in Northern Ireland, and examination entries can be considered a proxy for a language's standing and health in education and society, particularly in the case of the Celtic languages in the UK where there are few if any monolinguals beyond early childhood and the education system is considered vital to the maintenance and transmission of the languages.

In parallel to the decline in the local take-up of modern languages, Ireland, North and South, changed from being a country of net emigration to being an attractive country for immigration during the years of economic growth, only to revert to increased emigration when the bubble burst. While schools in Great Britain had a long experience of receiving pupils from diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds from the British Empire and Commonwealth countries, Northern Ireland did not attract many such pupils due to its weaker economic condition and the conflict of the Troubles.

The influx from Accession Countries following the expansion of the European Union in 2004 has led to a sudden, significant increase in pupils of a non-English speaking background in our schools. While this is a particular challenge across the islands of Ireland and Britain, this paper will focus on Northern Ireland where the discussion about a diverse democracy has hitherto concentrated on the historical religious and political divide, and Unionist antipathy led to the Irish Language being dubbed the 'Green Litmus Test' of Community Relations. Nevertheless, the increasing diversity can hopefully 'have a leavening effect on a society that has long been frozen in its "two traditions" divide' (OFMDFM 10).

This paper will consider the situation in policy and practice of Modern Languages education, and Irish in particular, in Northern Ireland's primary and post-primary schools, with appropriate reference to other regions of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. A particular case will be made to revisit the role and potential of Irish (and indeed Welsh and Scottish Gaelic) within the cross-curricular themes of Cultural Heritage and Citizenship. An argument will also be made for the importance of language awareness, interculturalism and transferable language learning skills.

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Charlotte Selleck

***Only bilingualism matters: A discussion of 'foreign' language learning in Welsh secondary education***

Within a political climate largely attuned to bilingualism, modern foreign languages are increasingly becoming marginalised in the Welsh curriculum (British Council 2015: 4). Meanwhile, the ever increasing mobility of people triggers new language needs and practices. This study seeks to re-examine the place of 'other' or 'foreign' languages in the Welsh curriculum through the eyes of a 'new' or 'learner' speaker of Welsh.

The following research questions will be addressed:

- What linguistic varieties are capitalized by students at the English-medium school?
- How are new speakers positioned in relation to mobility and the new globalised economy?

This study draws on research that was carried out in two contrasting secondary schools in south-west Wales; an English-medium (EM) school and a designated Welsh-medium (WM) school. This study investigates the interplay of linguistic practices, linguistic representations, language ideologies and social inclusion between students at these two schools. The data for this study came from periods of fieldwork carried out between September 2008 and January 2011. This research is characterised by the use of three principal methods: ethnographic observational fieldwork, ethnographic chats, and audio recordings.

I broadly adopt the dichotomy presented by Blackledge and Creese (2010) – that of ‘flexible’ and ‘separate’ bilingualism (with the former referring to the English-medium school). ‘Flexible’ and ‘Separate’ bilingualism will be discussed in relation to their ideological underpinnings and corresponding institutional arrangements. Arguments will be put forward around the place of modern foreign languages in the Welsh curriculum. It will be suggested that students at the English-medium school question whether or not to include Welsh as a ‘foreign’ language - with the distinction seeming to stem from whether you know or are learning the language (with issues of authenticity coming to the fore). It emerges that the flexible conceptualisation of language at the English-medium school, seems to give rise to an aspiration to learn more languages (not just English and Welsh), with students suggesting that they have an apparent desire to be multilingual, not just bilingual. Students at the ‘English’ school seem to question the emphasis on the Welsh language, seeing it as limiting their opportunities. They suggest that their school should adopt a more ‘flexible’ approach towards language, moving beyond the limits of a narrow construction of bilingualism in Wales, instead adopting a position that is reflective of ‘modern’ international concerns and changing global sociolinguistic needs.

Brendan MacMahon & Sinéad Ní Ghuidhir (National University of Ireland, Galway)

### ***Irish Language Literacy: Issues for teachers and teaching at second and third level***

The current policy focus on literacy in schools now requires all teachers to be “teachers of literacy” (Department of Education and Skills, 2011, p.47). While this has significantly impacted on wider educational policy and Initial Teacher Education at second level in Ireland (Department of Education and Skills, 2012a; 2012b; The Teaching Council, 2011), what are the implications for Irish-medium teachers and for the teaching of Irish at second and at third level?

This paper draws from both recent and ongoing research studies conducted by lecturers/teacher educators on the Irish-medium, second-level initial teacher education programme in NUI Galway, an Máistir Gairmiúil san Oideachas (MGO), to identify issues regarding teachers’ competence in all aspects of Irish language literacy and the implications for developing students’ ability to “speak, read and write in Irish” within second-level schools (Department of Education and Skills, 2011, p.12).

Among the issues identified in this research are concerns among principals in Irish-medium schools regarding the supply of teachers competent in teaching through Irish, as well as lack of satisfaction with the level of Irish of some appointed teachers; anxiety among teachers in Gaelcholáistí regarding their own Irish language competency and about written competency in particular; criticism by Gaeltacht teachers of the lack of support available to enable development of students’ literacy, as well as a tendency in this sector to conceptualise Irish language literacy in terms of spoken language only. The Department of Education has proposed the “extension of supply” as a simple solution to the issue of teacher supply for Irish-medium second-level schools (Department of Education and Skills, 2015b, p.18). However, research findings presented in this paper also suggest that achieving degree qualifications in Irish is no guarantee that student teachers have acquired a satisfactory level of written proficiency in the language.

At a time when Teaching Council expectations are that student teachers “demonstrate an acceptable level of proficiency in literacy” (2011, p.15) as well as a B2.2 standard on the European Language Framework to register as a teacher of the relevant curricular language, this paper will make recommendations relevant to initial teacher education providers, to teachers of the Irish language, and to those teaching through the medium of Irish.

Michelle Macleod & Marsaili MacLeod (University of Aberdeen)

### **Experiences of learning and teaching Gaelic in a community environment**

There is growing academic discourse on minority language learning among adults: in language revitalisation situations adult learners are often highly valued and are the focus of policy intervention. This is true, to varying degrees, in Scotland where Bòrd na Gàidhlig, the Government organisation tasked with promoting Gaelic, has made serious financial investment in adult learners, particularly through the Ùlpan community teaching programme. The success of such schemes (measured by numbers of successful adult learners) and the appropriation of Gaelicness by learners of the language have been discussed elsewhere (e.g. McLeod *et al.*, 2010; Milligan *et al.*, 2011; Curry, 2013; Carty, 2014); this paper differs from what has gone before as it attempts to identify and unravel what Gaelic learners and tutors in the community find particularly challenging about learning and teaching the language.

Does the myth that ‘Gaelic is a difficult language to learn’ still prevail? The promotion group *Gaelic4parents* address this myth in recent publicity (<http://www.gaelic4parents.com/isnt-gaelic-a-difficult-language-to-learn>); *Gaelic Edinburgh* also attempt to refute the insinuation in their promotion material (<http://gaelic-edinburgh.net/LearnGaelic.html>). What are the attitudes of current learners and tutors in the community towards successful learning? This paper will discuss student and teacher reflections on acquisition and will consider examples of particular grammatical features, items of vocabulary and the production of ‘authentic’ sounds (as noted by both learners and teachers). These comments will be contextualised by researcher observation and relevant academic discourse on the necessary fluidity of a learning environment, e.g. Wray warns against seeing “learners or teachers as static entities,” and that we should not “assume that what works at one stage in the learning process will necessarily work at every stage” (2011: 8). Similarly Cook has explained “[t]he reasons why a technique works or does not work depend on many factors”, which include “what it [the technique] implies in terms of language learning and language processing, the type of student for whom it is most appropriate, and the ways it fits into the classroom situation” (2008: 9). The teaching methodology prescribed to the tutors interviewed relied very much on sticking to the same formulaic pattern with no room for deviation.

This paper draws on interviews with twenty one adult learners of Gaelic who participated in the Bòrd na Gàidhlig supported learning activity in the community (Ùlpan); a substantial online survey of 282 of these learners (the questionnaire had 12 sections and approximately 40 questions); on interviews with fifteen tutors and on lesson observations.

### **Seisiún / Session 3A**

Stephen Joyce (National University of Ireland, Galway)

#### ***New Speakers of Irish: The Creation of New Spaces of Language Socialisation***

The demand for new and innovative social spaces for new speakers of minority languages is widely recognised. Ortega *et al.*, for example, identify the importance of ‘ample opportunities to use Basque’ for new speakers that consider themselves *euskaldun* (2015). In a recent report on new speakers of Irish, Walsh, O’Rourke and Rowland present a number of proposals and recommendations, including the need for ‘safe spaces’ for the social use of Irish (2015) and the importance of a wide variety of new social spaces in cities and large towns (2015) to facilitate the significant number of new speakers of the language. Furthermore, the report expressed the need for further research into the ideologies and attitudes of these new speakers and their potential role in the future development of the Irish language (2015). This paper will present data collected primarily by means of participant observation and semi-structured interviews in several new social spaces for the use of Irish in urban environments in Ireland. This data has been collected during the preliminary

fieldwork stage of my doctoral research project, entitled Spreagthaí, Féiniúlachtaí agus Idé eolaíochtaí Teanga: Staidéar Comparáideach idir Nuachaintoírí na Gaeilge agus na Bascaise. Innovation, creativity and active participation are crucial to the formation and success of these groups, and the activities and attitudes of those involved will be examined. An analysis of the importance of these spaces of language socialisation to new speakers of Irish will also be put forward.

Ben Ó Ceallaigh (University of Edinburgh)

***Language shift and neoliberalism – The Irish language in the wake of Ireland’s recent recession***

Much of the literature on language revitalisation makes passing reference to the capacity of economic orthodoxies and market forces to contribute to language minoritisation. Authors such as May, Phillipson and Romaine have all drawn a link between language shift and the economic imperatives placed on speakers of minority languages by the hegemony of globalised, neoliberal capitalism. With only a very small number of exceptions, however, much of this commentary remains largely rhetorical and lacking in an empirical foundation.

Based on an ongoing PhD project which uses participant observation and ethnographic interviewing in the Donegal and Galway Gaeltachtaí as its primary data source, this paper will examine how the community vitality of the Irish language has been impinged in light of the 2008 economic crisis, and in particular the punitive austerity measures which have constituted the State’s response to the crisis.

Preliminary findings suggest that the unemployment crisis that effected the entire country has been even more pronounced in the geographically peripheral Gaeltacht. The resultant surge in emigration has greatly reduced the social density of Irish speakers, especially in the key 20-35 age bracket. The demographic vacuum thus created is in turn contributing to the sociolinguistic collapse of Irish in its remaining core communities, it increasingly becoming the preserve of only the oldest generations.

Furthermore, as important community infrastructure is dismantled under the guise of increasing State efficiency, what limited potential these areas had for creating employment and thus maintaining their population is greatly reduced, a cycle which will be extremely difficult to break without significant investment from the state, which recent trends would suggest is unlikely to be forthcoming.

Drawing on Shohamy’s distinction between overt and covert policies, I will examine the differential treatment of Gaeltacht based institutions, which, as will be shown, have been hit much harder by austerity measures than comparable institutions that operate solely through English. This discussion will be linked to the broader neoliberal project of state withdrawal from such “culturalist” endeavours as minority language promotion. In doing so, it is thus hoped that this paper will take some tentative steps towards broadening our understanding of how macro- and meso-level economic policies can intersect with language shift on a micro scale.

Kevin Petit (Université de Lyon)

***‘As Gaeilge !’ : Enforcing Irish-only rule in an Irish summer college***

Irish summer colleges in the Gaeltacht aim at providing total immersion experiences to pupils and in this regard an Irish-only rule is usually implemented. This means the use of English is prohibited and not complying with the rule may result in different types of punishment ranging from a simple warning to being sent home. The overt justification is a relatively uncontested belief that total immersion situations favour the learning of a language by imitating natural language acquisition. But the implementation of monolingual-rule can also have unwanted results, for example students remaining silent. As a matter of fact, “the way the L1 is treated depends both on a pedagogical ideal and socio-political ideologies which can combine and translate into classroom practices” (Gajo, 2001: 166, my translation). Thus, communicative practices in the classroom can provide us with “a window on education-based processes of social and cultural production and reproduction” and on

how this social order is “quietly reproduced or vociferously challenged” (Heller & Martin-Jones, 2001: 5-6)

Based on data gathered last year during a three-week Irish summer college in the Gaeltacht, this presentation will discuss the following questions:

- how are assumptions of immersion engaged with by participants, and to what ends?
- what interactional strategies do participants deploy to overcome their difficulties, or alternatively how do they resist the monolingual rule?

The set of data that will be used consists of observations of interactions in and out of the classroom, interviews of pupils and staff, and questionnaires.

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## Seisiún / Session 4

Rob Dunbar (The University of Edinburgh)

### ***Gaelic language policy and economic development: Do the two intersect?***

Since at least the early 1990s, there has been a considerable amount of attention given to the ‘Gaelic economy’, with a focus on issues such as the contribution which Gaelic-related goods or services make to the economy, particularly that of the Highlands and Islands, the numbers of jobs which investment in Gaelic has created, and the contribution which investment in Gaelic can make to levels of self-confidence and initiative. Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) has played an important role in supporting this research: it was one of the sponsors of the ground-breaking 1993 research report *The Economics of Gaelic Language Development*, prepared by Alan Sproull and Brian Ashcroft, and, most recently it commissioned the May 2014 report *Ar Stòras Gàidhlig: The Economic and Social Value of Gaelic as an Asset*, prepared by DC Research. The concept of the ‘Gaelic economy’ has, however, been criticised, in part on the basis that, from the perspective of language planning for language revitalisation, it fails to engage with the question of the social use of Gaelic in the workplace and in commercial settings.

As with Gaeltacht policy in Ireland, the primary concern of policy-makers for the Highlands and Islands for the last half century or more has been the economic malaise, rural poverty, and depopulation which the region has experienced. Addressing these issues was one of the main motivations for the creation in 1965 of the Highlands and Islands Development Board (HIDB), which in 1991 was succeeded by HIE. Unlike Ireland, relatively little attention has been given to the impact of various strategies for, and forms of economic development on Gaelic language vitality itself, particularly in those communities, now primarily located in the Western Isles, Skye and Tiree, in which Gaelic is still widely spoken.

In this presentation, the extent to which the impact of economic development policy-making engaged in by HIDB and HIE, as well as other important regional actors involved in economic development policy-making—most notably, local authorities such as Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Highland Council, and Argyll and Bute Council—on the linguistic vitality of Gaelic communities has been considered by such policy-makers will be considered. The question of the extent to which language policy considerations have been incorporated into regional economic development policy-making will also be examined. In addition to Gaelic language plans, created under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005, other significant policy documents produced by such policy-makers will be considered, as will the work of Bòrd na Gàidhlig itself. Reference will be made to recent developments in Wales, most notably as a result of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, which introduced a system of standards to guide language development in Wales. It is notable that one of the five types of standards set out in the legislation is ‘policy-making standards’, which,

among other things, will require policy-makers to consider the impact of policy decisions of all sorts on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on the treatment of Welsh on a basis that is no less favourable than the treatment of English.

Sara C. Brennan (Heriot-Watt University)

***The Non-Economics of Language Commodification: A Critical Sociolinguistic Look at the Mobilisation of Irish in the Private Sector***

Centred on what would appear to be textbook examples of a minority language being commodified as a source of added value under late capitalist conditions (Heller 2010), this paper will examine the non-economic aspects of language commodification through a focus on the promotion of Irish as a commercial asset in the Republic of Ireland. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in two non-Gaeltacht towns where community-level language advocacy organisations attempt to position Irish as an economic resource for the private sector, I will seek to show that the local business communities' engagement with the language cannot be reduced to cost-benefit calculation, but instead draws on a complex array of values invested in Irish that extend well beyond the purely profitable. In doing so, I will highlight the importance of non-economic considerations in the contemporary integration of Irish into commercial activity, as well as in the tensions this process can generate.

Both of the language promotion organisations discussed here foreground the economic advantages of Irish as a visual marketing tool and differentiating unique selling point. Discussions with private sector owners and managers who engage with this promotion, however, suggest that the profit potential of Irish was not necessarily of primary concern in their decisions to integrate the language into their businesses. Although some individuals framed their involvement with Irish chiefly as efforts to capitalise on the authenticating distinction afforded by the language, many intertwined the economic benefits of visually mobilising Irish with decidedly less profit-oriented aims: contributing to language revitalisation, raising awareness of Ireland's neglected cultural heritage, and taking part in a return to 'real' Irishness after the social and economic upheaval of the Celtic Tiger and subsequent financial crisis. Such considerations sat comfortably with the commodification objectives promoted by the two organisations for many members of the business communities; other merchants, however, distanced their use of Irish in business from any attempt to derive profit from the language, laying the foundations for tensions over the perceived exploitation of Irish. Working within a critical sociolinguistic framework, I will draw on these observations to shift the focus from purely economic aspects of language commodification and to highlight the complexity of situated arguments for integrating Irish into the commercial sphere, where commodifying the language would indeed not always appear to be the main objective of involving Irish in economic activity.

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Cassie Smith-Christmas (University of Limerick)

***'Liminal' New Speakers of Scottish Gaelic?: The Case of Boarded-Out Children and World War II Evacuees***

This paper takes a sociohistorical approach to exploring the concept of new speakers of Scottish Gaelic and centres on two groups of speakers whom, in many ways, can be considered 'liminal' new speakers of Scottish Gaelic: World War II evacuees and boarded-out (i.e. foster) children. These speakers' liminality is argued to derive from the fact that although these speakers were socialised in Gaelic-speaking homes at a young age, for some of them, Gaelic was not seen as 'belonging to them' (cf. Ó Murchadha et al., forthcoming) due, in many cases, to the fact that these speakers were not born in Gaelic-speaking areas (and in the case of the evacuees, the fact that after the war, they

returned to urban, predominantly-Anglophone environments). Using life-narrative interviews recorded in 2013, this paper examines how for the boarded-out children who stayed in their host communities, their acquisition and use of the minority language mirrors the community norms of language shift: i.e. the older the interviewee, the more likely they are to use Gaelic presently. The evacuees' Gaelic trajectories, however, differ considerably, even from sibling to sibling who were raised in the same household. The paper demonstrates how these differences can largely be attributed to individual speakers' experiences with the minority language over their lifetimes. The paper also demonstrates how for both groups, affective factors played a large role in their use (or lack of use) of the minority language both presently and throughout their lifetimes. The paper concludes by relating this discussion of the affective dimensions of language maintenance to current Family Language Policy research and concludes with an analysis of the wider policy implications of this integrated discussion.

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#### Aoiléacht / Plenary 4

Iarfhlaith Watson (University College Dublin)

##### ***The Irish Language and the Irish Nation: from mass production to individualism***

The connection between the Irish language and the Irish nation and between the Irish nation and the Irish state might appear to serve the interests of the Irish language, but I will argue that although it has some advantages it can also be counter-productive. The Irish language has been used to validate the Irish nation and justify an Irish nation-state. There are identifiable phases of the national project, in the context of which the landscape of Irish language can be understood, from the more explicit national project in the early years of the State, through the liberalising and minority-rights phase in the second half of the century to the more individualistic phase of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, and perhaps a more cosmopolitan future.