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Revitalisation of Minority Languages in Britain: The Cases of Irish and Welsh

B.A. Thesis English Language and Culture

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Introduction

Over the past few decades, starting in the early 1990s, interest in the preservation and revitalisation of minority languages has grown immensely. Of the world's roughly 6500 languages, 43% have been qualified as endangered according to UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger (Moseley, 2010). Although language shift has always led to language endangerment and even language death, it has done so at an accelerated pace throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Technological advances in travel and communication have brought more previously isolated languages into contact with others, leading to language shift. The increased language contact and subsequent language shift has led to the endangerment of many languages spoken by small groups. As speakers of those languages came into contact with speakers of more commonly spoken languages or languages with a higher political or economic status, the usual response is to adopt the language of the more powerful group. This in turn has in recent history led to a rapid decline of linguistic diversity, with a decline of 20% between 1970 and 2005 (Harmon & Loh, 2010, p. 97). While thousands of languages lose their speakers and become extinct, a select few languages grow ever larger. The world's top 20 languages combined are spoken by half of the earth's population, while the top 100 languages are used by 90% of the population (Sampat, 2001, p. 34). Mandarin Chinese is the world's most common first language with 935 million native speakers, but English is "rapidly gaining ground as the primary international medium of science, commerce, and popular culture" (Sampat, 2001, p. 34-5). As of 2016, English had 400 million native speakers and 1.1 billion people speaking at as a secondary language, making it the world's most widely-used language.

The decline of linguistic diversity in recent history is a definite loss to the communities that are directly affected as a form of cultural impoverishment. Additionally, the

loss of the world's languages not only has consequences for linguistics itself, but also for fields of study related to it such as anthropology and psychology. Language loss affects our understanding of history as well, since the distribution of certain languages or words used in a language can give clues, for example, to historical migration patterns. Sampat points out that languages used in areas with a high degree of biological diversity often have more elaborate vocabularies used to describe the world around them. Language shift in those areas often leads to the loss of those terms, and as such a loss in our understanding of the biological diversity available. An example is New Guinean Pidgin English, which has only two ways to describe birds: birds seen by day (*pisin bilong de*) and birds seen by night (*pisin bilong nait*). Native New Guinean languages, on the other hand, have extensive vocabularies to describe the island's native bird species (2001, p. 40).

The recent increased decline of linguistic diversity has led to an increased interest in language preservation and the revival of extinct and minority languages. Joshua Fishman has been very influential in the field of language revitalisation and in 1991 developed a series of steps for reversing language shift, which were largely based on the revitalisation of Hebrew. The most successful example of language revival is that of Hebrew, which was expanded from a written language to one of the official languages of Israel and the native language of millions of people, with over 9 million total speakers. Fishman's steps include ones that are often unattainable for smaller languages. In response, Hinton revised these steps in 2001 to the following:

Step 1. Language assessment and planning.

Step 2/3. If the language has no speakers: use available materials to reconstruct the language and develop language pedagogy. If the language only has elderly speakers: Document the language of the elderly speakers.

Step 4. Develop a second-language learning program for adults.

Step 5. Redevelop or enhance cultural practices that support and encourage use of the endangered language at home and in public by first- and second-language speakers.

Step 6. Develop intensive second-language programs for children, preferably with a component in the schools.

Step 7. Use the language at home as the primary language of communication so that it becomes the first language of young children.

Step 8. Expand the use of the indigenous language into broader local domains, including community government, media, local commerce and so on.

Step 9. Expand the language domains outside of the local community and into the broader population to promote the language as one of wider communication, regional or national government and so on. (p. 6-7)

Hinton also identifies five general categories of language revitalization programs: school-based programs, children's programs outside of school, adult language programs, documentation and materials development, and home-based programs (2001, p.7).

Of recent language revival projects, the progression of the revitalisation of Irish and Welsh is relatively similar. Both were taken over as majority languages by English during the 19th and 20th centuries and re-popularised during the late 19th and the 20th century, respectively. In both countries, the burden of the language revival was mainly put on the education system. Despite similarities in the circumstances surrounding their decline and revival, the Welsh revival is generally considered to have been more successful than that of Irish. This thesis will examine the decline and revival of both Irish and Welsh, before comparing the two and attempting to determine which factors have caused the revitalisation of Welsh to be more successful than that of Irish.

Chapter 1: Irish

1.1 Historical Context

It is believed that Irish was the majority language in Ireland until at least 1800, when more than half the population of Ireland still spoke the language (Mac Mathúna, 1990, p. 65), although according to Hindley, monolingual Irish speakers were rare even then (1990, p. 13) At the start of the 19th century, however, the use of Irish rapidly decreased. Census reports from that period showed that by the middle of the century only 23% of the population spoke Irish (Hindley, 1990, p. 23), while English was increasingly seen as "the language of social, economic and political emancipation" (Mac Giolla Chríost, 2005, p. 107). Additionally, part of the reason why English was becoming more popular was the fact that the use of Irish was actively discouraged in daily life as well as in schools. There are a few other factors that are often pointed to as directly contributing to this decline. Firstly, the Catholic Church encouraged the use of English and used it as its "language of mission" (Hindley, 1990, p. 13). Secondly, the national school system, which was founded in 1831, only taught in English and actively discouraged the use of Irish in the classroom. Primary schools in Ireland were not allowed to teach Irish or in Irish until 1879, and not during school hours until 1900 (Carnie, 1996, p. 101). Hindley, however, does not believe the national education system could have had as big an influence on the decline of Irish as is often thought. Free education did not arrive in Ireland until the end of the 19th century and, according to Hindley, not enough parents could afford an education for their children to have a great influence on the decline of the Irish language, although it did contribute to it (1990, p. 14). A third factor that contributed to the decline of Irish in the 19th century was the Industrial Revolution, which had been on-going in Ireland since around 1780 but took off in earnest during the 19th century. The

Industrial Revolution had the same effect in Ireland that it had most places, namely greatly increased industrialisation and urbanisation. Most cities in Ireland were at that time English-speaking as a result of Anglo-Norman settlements in the 12th century that retained their language, while the settlers in the countryside adopted Irish (Carnie, 1996, p. 100). The sudden move of much of the population to these English-speaking cities and towns caused a widespread shift from Irish to English among that part of the population, and resulted in Irish becoming the language of the people in the countryside. Carnie even describes the effects of the Industrial Revolution as "the beginning of the end for the primacy of the Irish language in Ireland" (1990, p. 101). A last factor that is often cited in regards to the decline of the Irish language in Ireland is the Great Famine. The famine had a devastating effect on all of Ireland but especially on the rural areas where most of the Irish speakers lived. The Great Famine led to widespread emigration, largely to English-speaking countries such as Canada, Australia and the United States (Carnie, 1996, p. 101) as well as numerous deaths among the population of Ireland. By the start of the 20th century the number of Irish speakers in Ireland had dropped to below 15% and "were only to be found as a series of linguistically isolated, geographically marginalised and socially excluded communities" (Mac Giolla Chríost, 2005, p. 107).

1.2 Revitalization Efforts in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries

Despite witnessing the greatest decline of the Irish language, the 19th century was also a time of renewed interest in the language and its revitalization. Towards the end of the century several organisations were founded to promote the Irish language and Irish culture, the best-known of which is The Gaelic League, or *Conradh na Gaeilge*, which was founded in Dublin in 1893 by Douglas Hyde and others. The Society for the Preservation of the Irish

Language was founded in 1877. It published three books to promote and teach the language and "performed a noble work in interesting many students in the language, and in arresting the decay of the language" (Monaghan, 1899, p. xxxiii). The Irish National Teachers' Organization, founded in 1868, advocated for the use of Irish in schools in Irish-speaking areas as early as 1870. However, primary schools were not permitted to teach Irish during school hours until 1900 and even then only if they met certain standards, which many schools in Irish-speaking areas did not. In 1904 schools were finally free to teach in Irish without meeting the previously required standards, partially because of influence of the Gaelic League. To return to the Gaelic League, its aims were "the preservation of Irish as the national language of Ireland and the extension of its use as a spoken tongue, together with the promotion of historic Gaelic literature and the cultivation of a modern literature in Irish" (Hindley 1990, p. 24). The Gaelic League was not founded as a political organisation but nonetheless attracted many Irish nationalists. Hyde's speech preceding the foundation of the Gaelic League in 1892 stressed both the importance of distancing Ireland and its culture from the English and at the same time stressed his belief that "this [was] no political matter" (Hyde, 1892, p. 14). However, the Gaelic League's success in re-awaking a sense of national spirit among the Irish did not stop at culture and language. It also served to inspire the separatist movement and it "became clear that the language and political struggle could not be kept apart" (Boylan, 1988, as cited in Stewart, 2000, p. 25), despite Hyde's insistence they should be. The Gaelic League finally allied itself with the nationalist movement in 1915, though Hyde still felt that the "culture of language should be above politics" and resigned his position ("A Brief History of Conradh na Gaeilge", 2013).

1.3 The Republic of Ireland

After the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922, the Irish language was still considered pivotal to the success of an independent Ireland. However, members of the Coimisiún na Gaeltachta, the commission in charge of policies surrounding the Irish language in the Irish Free State, held on to an idealised view of the status of the language and the areas in which it was spoken, the Gaeltacht[1], rather than "informing themselves of the real socio-economic conditions of that impoverished and marginalised part of Ireland" (Mac Giolla Chríost, 2012, p. 399). Revival efforts of the new state were focused on three points:

> To maintain Irish in those parts of Ireland where it continued to be the language of everyday use; to restore Irish as the language of popular use in the rest of Ireland; and to provide the infrastructure necessary for the maintenance of the language in the Gaeltacht and its revival in the rest of Ireland. (Mac Giolla Chríost, 2012, pp. 399-400)

Several steps were taken to implement these points. At the foundation of the Irish Free State, the Irish language was adopted as the state's national language, although English enjoyed a similar position until the renewed constitution of 1937, in which Irish was elevated to the nation's first official and national language and English became the second official language. This has been said to be one of the greatest victories of the Irish revival movement, however it did not seem to have much legal or practical results. In 1926 Gaeltacht areas were officially

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[1] The Gaeltacht were officially defined as those areas in which more than 25% of the population spoke Irish, but in reality Gaeltacht status was given to linguistically weaker areas as well. 15 out of Ireland's 26 counties qualified as Gaeltacht in 1926 . The Gaeltacht were redefined in the 1950s as Donegal, Galway, Mayo, Kerry, Cork, Meath, and Waterford. See figure 1 (Appendix).

defined as those where at least 80% of the population spoke Irish according to the 1911

census. It was assumed that the language would spread from those areas to surrounding areas

with a slightly lower percentage of Irish speakers and later on to the rest of the population of

Ireland. Education in the Gealtachtaí was to be entirely in Irish; in the rest of the country Irish

was made a compulsory subject for the intermediate certificate by 1928 and the leaving

certificate by 1934. Although the acquisition of Irish by adults was seen as crucial to the

revival of the language, little was done to encourage it and the main way the language was

reintroduced was through the National Education System. There were different efforts to

restore the use of Irish in everyday life such as the establishment of Irish-language radio and,

later on, television; efforts to provide street signs, official documents and the like in Irish; and

the promotion of Irish-language publications. Proficiency in Irish became compulsory for

employment in the public sector until 1974. Modernisation of the Irish language was also

considered and several developments took place leading to an official, standard version of

Irish. A new spelling norm was implemented in 1945, changes to morphology were

introduced in 1953 and 1958, and the traditional script was replaced with the roman script in

national schools in 1964 and secondary schools in 1970. All of the measures taken to

maintain the Irish language in the Gaeltacht, to improve its use among the general population

of Ireland, and to restore it as a popular vernacular in the whole of Ireland did however not

have the desired effects. Although the percentage of self-reported Irish speakers increased

from 18.3% in 1926 to 21.2% in 1946 (Census Reports, as cited in Hindley, 1990, p.23), this

was hardly enough to label Irish a popular vernacular. A response to the lack of success of the

previous measures was not visible until the second half of the 1950s, when government

policy was modified and in some cases reversed entirely. The official boundaries of the

Gaeltacht were redrawn to "reflect the social reality of the Irish language rather than the

aspirations of the [...] 1920s" (Mac Giolla Chríost, 2005, p. 123). Roinn na Gaeltachta, a new

department dedicated to the Irish language and the Gaeltacht was created in 1956, as well as

the Commission on the Restoration of the Irish Language in 1958. Around the same time,

Gaeltarra Éireann, an agency meant to promote economic development in the Gaeltacht, was

established and encouraged industrialisation of the Gaeltacht. Although the increased

industrialisation in the Gaeltacht had the desired effect economically speaking, it did not have

a positive influence on the status of Irish in these areas as it attracted English-speaking

immigrants to the area. According to Crowley, economic policies "often had more of an

effect on the language than the state's official language policies" (2008, p. 184). The

Commission on the Restoration of the Irish Language published their report in 1963, which

contained recommendations of policy changes relating to the Irish language. Most

recommendations, however, were not executed. The recommendations that did lead to

distinct policy changes had largely negative influences on the legal position of Irish in

Ireland: in 1973, Irish was no longer a compulsory subject for the leaving certificate and in

1974 a proficiency in Irish was no longer a requirement for a job in public service.

Additionally, as Ireland joined the European Union in 1973, its working language was

English, which made Ireland the first member whose working language was not also its

national and first official language. In practice, this meant that only certain treaties and

documents were translated and available in Irish. Although Irish did become a full official

language of the European Union in 2007, it is still not obligated to provide all acts in Irish

(European Union, 2011, p. 116). From the 1970s onwards, it became clear that the

population's attitudes towards Irish and its place in society were changing. The Irish language

was starting to be considered less integral to being Irish as an identity, which resulted in a

"largely undeclared state policy of bilingualism" (Crowley, 2005, p. 188). State measures

were no longer geared towards reinstating Irish as the majority language but rather to preserving it as a second language along with English. The choice of which language to use would be made individually depending on the situation. However, the 1990s signalled another period of increased interest in the revival of the Irish language. This revival was not marked by state policies but rather by the initiatives of groups of citizens and resulted in a widespread increase in Irish-language activity in the form of among other things clubs, music, and schooling. Notable is the creation of Ireland's first Irish-language television station that broadcast more than a few hours a week in 1996. Cormack points out that the creation of Irish-language television signals an end to the state's portrayal of Irish as nothing more than "nationalist achievement" (2000, p. 396). Irish had long been a symbol of the country's struggle for independence without ever becoming an integral part of society, and the advent of Irish-language television can, and should, according to Cormack, be seen as "an attempt to develop a non-political role for the language" (2000, p. 396). Work on language legislation began in 1997 and led to the Official Languages Act of 2003, which set out regulations regarding the use of Irish by public bodies, the translation of government documents in Irish, and overall ensuring public services in Irish are both more widely available and of a higher quality. This act was the first piece of widespread language legislation in Ireland regarding the Irish language. It re-established the rights of Irish speakers and served as an attempt to once again promote the language.

1.4 Northern Ireland

After the partition of Ireland, the Irish language was seen as a symbol of nationalism in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. While this was welcomed and encouraged by the government in the Republic, it was not in Northern Ireland. The use of Irish by

individuals was highly discouraged and official use of Irish, as well as the use of public signs such as street signs in Irish, was forbidden. The BBC also banned the language for fifty years. In 1933 all funding for education in and of Irish was cut, although the language continued to be taught in Catholic schools and by voluntary organizations. In response the Gaelic League set up a new branch in Northern Ireland to lobby for Irish education, which has stayed open until now. There were some efforts to preserve the Irish language in Northern Ireland during the first half of the 20th century in the form of various clubs and groups, but, being met with disdain for the language from various channels, they were not very successful beyond a small scale. In 1969, however, a group of Irish speakers started their own Irish-language community at Shaw's Road in Belfast. This was the first Northern Irish Gaeltacht, though not officially recognised as such by the government. The Shaw's Road Gaeltacht, also known as 'The Irish Houses' opened their own primary school in 1971, which became the first of the currently 86 Irish-language schools in Northern Ireland. An Irish-language newspaper called 'Lá' was established in Belfast in 1984 and stayed in business as Northern Ireland's only Irish-language daily until it shut down due to lack of funding in 2008. During the civil unrest known as 'The Troubles', which started in 1968 in Northern Ireland, Irish once again became heavily politicised. Irish started to be used by imprisoned nationalists in the 1970s and 80s and its use soon after spread to other members of the nationalist movement. Additionally, Irish became a more popular subject in schools among children from nationalist homes. During a survey conducted at that time, the reason given most often by respondents to learn Irish was "to strengthen [their] Irish identity" (Pritchard, 2004, p. 75). Although Irish became more popular among nationalists during this period, the conflation of the Irish language with an Irish national identity alienated unionists even further from the language and tended to "polarise support for the language" (Pritchard, 2004, p. 75). A response to this development

was the foundation of the Cultural Traditions Group in 1988, which sought to depoliticise the Irish language by instead emphasising its connection to tradition and cultural heritage. It also made Irish more accessible to protestants by organising Irish classes in protestant areas. The Belfast Agreement of 1998 recognised "the importance of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to linguistic diversity" (p. 24) and was the start of language legislation in Northern Ireland. In the Belfast Agreement it was agreed that the British Government would, among other things, take measures to promote the Irish language and encourage its use, remove restrictions on the use of the language, encourage Irish medium education and promote Irish language broadcasting in Northern Ireland. The European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages was signed by the British Government in 2000 and provided protection for Irish as an official minority language in Northern Ireland. Another step towards the protection and promotion of Irish in Northern Ireland was taken in 2006 with the St Andrews Agreement in which the British government agreed to "develo[p] and adop[t] a strategy to [...] protect and enhance the development of [...] Irish" (Darmody & Daly, 2015, pp. 27-28). The St Andrews Agreement also suggested the introduction of an Irish Language Act, but this was met with opposition from unionists. A new draft for an Irish Language Act was published in 2015 but has not yet been implemented due to opposition from the unionist party. According to the 1911 census, only 1,7% of the population of Northern Ireland spoke Irish. The next census that asked a question regarding the knowledge or use of Irish did not take place until 1991, at which time 9,2% reported they spoke Irish. However, this only included one question on the subject and left no room for elaboration, so it is not clear how many people were able to speak the language and how many had only some knowledge of it. The most official recent census, in 2011, reported that 11% (1% more than in 2001) have some knowledge of Irish, but only 6% were able to speak it and 0.002% used it as their home

language. Another recent study showed that in 2014, 15% of people had some knowledge of Irish with 5% using it at home occasionally (Darmody & Daly, 2015, p. 2). Attitudes towards Irish in Northern Ireland were examined by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure in 2012. While 52% of respondents believed it to be important for Northern Ireland not to lose its Irish language traditions, there were also 52% of people who did not feel that Irish was important to their personal identity. Additionally, 26% did not believe Irish to have any importance regarding the national heritage. Although the percentage of Irish speakers has been rising in Northern Ireland, attitudes towards the language do not seem to paint a positive picture for the future.

1.5 Current Status and Efforts

According to the 2011 census, 41% of the population of the Republic of Ireland said they were able to speak Irish, 4.3% of which said they used Irish daily outside of the education system. In the same census 69% of the population in Gaeltacht areas were reported to speak Irish, while 24% spoke it daily outside of education. Although the overall number of Irish speakers has been increasing, those who speak Irish daily in the Gaeltacht has been decreasing (Darmody & Daly, 2015, p. 16-7). Increased use of the language is still being promoted in a number of ways. Irish is a compulsory subject in schools, although outside the Gaeltacht there are few opportunities to use Irish outside of school. An online and mobile language-learning application called Duolingo released an Irish course in 2014, which currently has 2,44 million learners and shows there is still a large amount of interest in the language worldwide. In 2010, a 20-year strategy for the Irish language was released by the Republic of Ireland. Its aims are to increase daily use of Irish and the number of people who speak Irish, as well as make Irish more visible in Ireland, both as a spoken language and in

the form of literature and signage. The ultimate goal of the strategy is "the development of a bilingual society, where as many people as possible can use Irish and English with equal ease and facility" while "maintaining the linguistic identity of the [...] Gaeltacht" (Government of Ireland, 2010, p. 3). In other words, the focus in the Gaeltacht will be the maintenance of Irish as the primary language, while the rest of the country will be following a policy of bilingualism. Through this strategy, the Irish government hopes to increase the number of people with knowledge of Irish to 2 million and those who use Irish daily to 250,000 (from 83,000 in 2010) by 2030, as well as increase the number of daily speakers of Irish in the Gaeltacht by 25%. Additionally, they aim to increase the use of state services in Irish, as well as the use of Irish-language media such as radio, television and print media.

Chapter 2: Welsh

2.1 Historical Context

When Wales became a part of the Kingdom of England under the Act of Union of 1535, the language was adversely affected. The Act of Union specified that English was to be the only language of the courts and no person speaking Welsh would be employed in public office. Although it took over 300 years for English to overtake Welsh as the majority language in Wales, the language legislation in the Act of Union started the process. This legislation was not fully repealed until the Language Act of 1993. In 1901 Welsh was spoken by 49.9% of the population, 30% of which were monolingual speakers of Welsh. By 1991, however, the percentage of Welsh speakers had dropped to 18,6% with virtually no monolingual speakers. There were a number of reasons for this decline. The First World War led to increased contact with English speakers and a decrease in both monolingual and bilingual Welsh speakers. Between 1911 and 1921, around 25% of monolingual speakers of Welsh became Welsh-English bilinguals, while 10% of bilingual Welsh speakers between 15 and 25 became monolingual English speakers (Jenkins & Williams, 2000, p. 4). There was a boost in Welsh language activity with the creation of the Welsh League of Youth in 1922. This organisation promoted the use of Welsh among the younger generation through voluntary activities conducted in Welsh. In 1925 the nationalist party Plaid Cymru was founded, whose primary objective was to keep Wales a Welsh-speaking country and restore Welsh as the official language, though later aims also included home-rule for Wales. The 1930s saw some petitions for a Welsh parliament and a legal status for the Welsh language, but these did not have much effect as other matters were more pressing at the time. The period after the First World War was one of tremendous migration out of Wales to escape the economic circumstances of the time. Over 240 mines were closed in South Wales between 1921 and

1936, leading to mass unemployment and poor living conditions, which in turn led to mass emigration, largely to the industrial Midlands and South East of England. This, combined with English immigrants at the start of the century, lead to a sharp decline in the number of Welsh speakers in the country. Due to the extensive emigration, the language was also passed down to younger generations less often and an entire new generation of potential Welsh speakers was lost. The Christian Church in Wales had a big influence on the spread of the language, since its services were conducted in Welsh. As such, the declining popularity of the Church, especially among younger generations, added to the decline of the language. On the other hand, in certain parts of Wales and among those groups where the Church was still a big part of daily life the use of Welsh in churches did help halt their Anglicization. The arrival of the Second World War sped up developments that were already taking place and led to an increase of English even in remote areas of Wales. This increase was due to improved infrastructure and a spread of mass media in English. As a result of this, only 28.9% of the population in 1951 were able to speak Welsh. Additionally, there were no public signs to be found in Welsh or any official forms distributed by central or local governments in Welsh.

2.2 Welsh Language Society

The 1960s brought a new era for the Welsh language. In 1962, Saunders Lewis, Welsh poet and founder of the nationalist party Plaid Cymru, held a radio lecture titled 'Tynged yr Iaith' or 'The Fate of the Language' in which he predicted that if no changes were made regarding the use of Welsh, it would no longer be a living language by the start of the 21st century. This lecture greatly influenced popular and political stances on the language and inspired the formation of The Welsh Language Society (*Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg*) in 1963. To start with, the Welsh Language Society campaigned for an increase in official status of Welsh in

the form of Welsh-language education, access to government forms in Welsh as well as English, and bilingual signage. In the 1970s the Welsh Language Society fought for the creation of Welsh-language radio and television stations with mixed success. A Welsh-language radio station was launched in 1977 in the form of Radio Cymru, but it took until 1982 for a Welsh television channel to be created. According to Morgan, the Conservative government of the time promised the creation of a Welsh television channel in 1981 but soon after withdrew that promise. The reaction of a retired member of Plaid Cymru, who announced a fast to the death against this decision, shocked the government into the eventual creation of the promised Welsh-medium television station in 1982 and kept them from making similar mistakes in the future (Hinton & Hale, 2001, p. 111-2).

2.3 Language Legislation

Since the Laws in Wales Acts of 1535 and 1542, the use of Welsh in courts had been banned. This was amended for the first time in 1942 with the Welsh Courts Acts, which made legal transactions in Welsh valid. This was later supplemented with the Welsh Language Act of 1967 which made it possible to use Welsh orally in court and gave Welsh equal validity to English, though not yet equal status. Welsh was not given official equal status to English until 1993, with the introduction of the Welsh Language Act of 1993. This Act gave Welsh a standing equal to English in court rather than only allowing people to use it if they had no other possibility, as well as requiring all organisations operating in the public sector to provide equal accommodations in Welsh and English. It also included the establishment of a statutory Welsh Language Board, which was designed with the function of "promoting and facilitating" the use of the Welsh language ("Welsh Language Act", p. 1). A voluntary Welsh Language Board had previously been established in 1988 (McLeod, 2012, p. 1). The Welsh Language Board was tasked with ensuring that language schemes set out by public bodies to

fulfill the promise of the Language Act, namely to treat English and Welsh on the basis of equality in the public sector, were carried out satisfactorily. In 1998 the Language Board concentrated their efforts on improving Welsh-medium education and approved a number of local Welsh education schemes, as well as aiding Education Learning Welsh in developing a national strategy for Welsh for Adults (Williams, 2014, p. 245). In 2004 it was announced that the Welsh Language Board would be dissolved, which eventually took effect in 2012. Its responsibilities were transferred to the Welsh Language Commissioner and the Welsh Government.

2.4 Welsh-Medium Education

During the Second World War, several thousand children were evacuated to rural Wales to protect them from aerial bombings. Although many of them quickly adapted to their new environments and new schooling and learned Welsh, others instead improved the English of the Welsh children. One teacher's reaction to this was to found his own primary school in 1939 in order to protect Welsh interests (Hinton & Hale, 2001, p. 110). After the end of the war, it became clear that there was still a demand for Welsh-language education. The Education Act of 1944 enabled local education authorities to provide Welsh-medium schools supported by public funding, the first of which was opened in 1947. The increasing number of Welsh-medium schools were especially popular in the industrialised northeast and south, where Welsh children were struggling to maintain their Welsh identity and language against a majority of English speakers. By 1953, there were 15 Welsh-medium primary schools across the country. While this meant only a tiny percentage of Welsh children were receiving an education in Welsh, the increasing number of such schools shows that there was a demand for them. This in turn shows that there was still interest in the Welsh language, despite the fact that at that time only 29% of the population aged 3 or older were able to speak it. Soon after

it was recognised that although those attending the Welsh-medium schools were taught in Welsh in primary school, their Welsh education came to a halt upon entering secondary school. This led to the opening of the first Welsh-medium secondary school in 1955, a second in 1962, with others following. By 1973 there were 6 Welsh-medium secondary schools in the country, all of which achieved good results. Apart from primary and secondary education in Welsh, Welsh-language toddler groups for children under 5 also became more popular from the 1970s onwards, as well as Welsh language classes for adults. The increasing popularity of Welsh-medium education prompted English-language secondary schools to introduce a Welsh stream in their classes, where pupils could follow the same classes in Welsh, while others were following them in English. A further step in favour of Welsh-medium education came in the form of the Education Reform Act of 1988. This Act specified a national curriculum for schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In Welsh-medium schools this included Welsh as a core subject, making it compulsory until the age of 16. Welsh became a foundation subject in other schools in Wales, which, although given less teaching time than it received as a core subject in Welsh-medium schools, made it compulsory until the age of 14. In 1990 Welsh became a compulsory subject in all schools until the age of 14; it became compulsory until the age of 16 in 1999. In 2000, 52 out of a total of 229 secondary schools were Welsh-medium or bilingual, 71 secondary schools taught Welsh a first or as both a first and a second language, and the remaining 158 schools only taught Welsh as a second language. The percentage of students being taught Welsh as a first language has been steadily rising in the 21st century. In 2013, 17% of those up to age 14 and 15% of those up to age 16 were being taught Welsh as a first language (Jones & Jones, 2014, p. 34-5). 26% of schools in Wales in the school year 2014/15 were Welsh-medium, while a

further 7% either provided bilingual English-Welsh education, offered dual stream education or provided "some Welsh language provision" (Huws, 2015, p. 113).

2.5 Current Status and Efforts

The most recent census on the Welsh language was held in 2011. It found that 15% of the population age 3 and over were able to speak, read, and write Welsh, while 19% said to they were able to speak the language (Darmody & Daly, 2014, p. 39). According to a survey carried out by the Welsh Language Board in 2008, over 80% of respondents thought the Welsh language was "something to be proud of", while 75% said the language belongs to everyone in Wales ("A Living Language", 2012, p. 10). In recent years, the Welsh government has released several initiatives meant to promote the Welsh language and increase its use. In 2011, the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure was enacted. It gave Welsh official status in Wales and established the role of the Welsh Language Commissioner. The Welsh Language Commissioner took over the responsibilities of the Welsh Language Board to promote the Welsh language and improve opportunities for people to use the language through a variety of initiatives. A 5-year plan to promote the language was released in 2012 and is set to end in March 2017 (A living language: a language for living. Welsh Language Strategy 2012–17). The plan outlines ways to achieve the government's vision for Welsh: to see the Welsh language thriving in Wales. Among the goals set in this plan are an increase in Welsh speakers and an increase in daily use of the language; more opportunities to use Welsh; increased awareness of the value of the Welsh language both as part of Wales' national heritage and as a skill in modern-day life; and strong representation of Welsh in digital media ("A Living Language", 2012, p. 14). A five-year Welsh-Medium Education Strategy was released in 2010 with the goal to develop an education system in which it is possible "for more learners of all ages to acquire a wider range of language skills in Welsh"

("Welsh-Medium Education Strategy", 2010, p. 4). The main focus during implementation of this strategy was to "strengthen planning mechanisms across all phases" ("Welsh-Medium Education Strategy: Next Steps", 2016, p. 2). In 2016 a follow-up plan spanning a year, April 2016 to March 2017, was released. It aims to use the infrastructure put in place through the original 5-year strategy and implement it further; ensure there is "a sufficient workforce for Welsh-medium education" with the "skills and resources to deliver high-quality education" (p. 7); and ensure "young people [...] are confident to use their Welsh language skills in all walks of life" (p. 9). Welsh is also available to learn for free on Duolingo and currently has around 421,000 learners.

Chapter 3: Similarities and Differences in Language Revival

3.1 Decline

The decline of both the Irish and the Welsh languages was a result of a shift to the use of English as the majority language in both countries. Ireland had been under the political control of England since the Norman Invasion of the 12th century. Although Irish is thought to have been the majority language until as late as 1800, it rapidly made way for English over the course of the 19th century. At the start of the 20th century the number of Irish speakers in Ireland was less than 15% of the population. Wales officially became part of the Kingdom of England in 1535, after which English was established as the language of the courts and public office. At the start of the 20th century, nearly 50% of the Welsh population still spoke the language. By the end of the century, however, this number had dropped to 18,6%. Although the decline of Irish took place a century before that of Welsh and although the specific circumstances of their deterioration differ, it is safe to say that in both situations English was increasingly seen as having more potential socially and professionally. At the start of the 20th century, Irish was largely seen as the language of the countryside as that was where most Irish speakers lived. Speaking English was necessary for most jobs and the majority of the population simply could not speak Irish at that point. By the end of the 20th century, the situation in Wales was comparable. The Act of Union made it so that speaking English was a requirement for jobs in public office and Welsh was not recognised in courts until the Language Act of 1993. English was everywhere and it was hard to get by without some knowledge of the language both in Ireland and Wales.

3.2 Revival

Increased interest in the Irish language started in the 19th century and led to the formation of several organisations meant to promote the Irish language and culture, the most famous of

which is the formation of the Gaelic league in 1893. The Gaelic League helped increase the national pride of the Irish, which culminated in the founding of the Irish Free State in 1922. The Irish language was at that time seen as something pivotal to the success of the state and has long served as a symbol for Ireland's struggle for independence (Cormack, 2000, p. 396). It became the nation's first official language in 1937. Similarly to Irish, Welsh has also served as a nationalist symbol. Wales' first nationalist party, Plaid Cymru, initially aimed to keep Wales a Welsh-speaking country and restore Welsh as the national language and only later on campaigned for home-rule for Wales. The Welsh Language Society was founded in 1963 and fought for an increase in the use of the Welsh language in official capacities such as education and government, as well as the creation of Welsh-language radio, television and signage. Progress in terms of language revival seems to have been less successful in Ireland than in Wales. Although Irish was the official language and considered an integral part of Ireland's identity, not much was done initially to promote it. Irish was taught in schools from the 1930s onwards, but was no longer compulsory for the leaving certificate in 1973 and there were few opportunities to use Irish outside of school. The general thought seems to have been that Irish would naturally spread through the country from the Gaeltacht to the surrounding areas and eventually to the entire country. There were no considerable initiatives to improve Irish in adults, nor were there many provisions made for Irish speakers in public services. Irish-language television was not established until 1996, after nearly a century of Irish-language promotion. The first piece of Irish language legislation was starting to be developed in 1997 and enacted in 2003. In contrast, since interest in Welsh-language revival started in the 1960s, the movement has rapidly gained ground. Before the end of the century Welsh-language radio and television had been established, as well as provisions for Welsh-language government documents and signage. Welsh language legislation started in

earnest in 1993 with the creation of the Welsh Language Act, which established Welsh as the official language of Wales and established a Welsh Language Board tasked with making sure the Act was upheld. The Welsh Language Board also focused their efforts on the improvement of Welsh-medium education and Welsh language education for adults.

3.3 Education

In both Ireland and Wales, the main focus of the language revival was the education system. Education in Irish was prohibited in Ireland until 1900, and heavily restricted until 1904. After the foundation of the Irish Free State Irish-medium education was expanded. Schooling in the Gaeltacht was to be entirely in Irish, while Irish was made a compulsory subject in schools in the rest of the country. By 1928 Irish was a compulsory requirement for the intermediate certificate and by 1934 for the leaving certificate, though the last was reversed in 1973. Irish-medium education has become more popular outside the Gaeltacht in recent years and there are currently 86 Irish-medium schools with a total of over 5000 pupils outside of the Gaeltacht. Although the use of Welsh in schools was never banned, it was heavily discouraged and at times punished. Welsh-medium education was first re-popularised during the Second World War through the efforts of a school teacher who established his own Welsh-medium primary school. This was followed by the education act of 1944, which enabled the creation of Welsh-medium primary schools through public funding. Soon after, Welsh-medium secondary schools followed and in the 1970s non-Welsh-medium schools introduced a Welsh stream in their curriculum. By 1999 Welsh was a compulsory subject in all schools in Wales until the age of 16. In the school year 2014/15, 26% of secondary schools were Welsh-medium or bilingual. The Welsh government have published strategies to promote and improve Welsh-medium education, while similar plans in Ireland are included in their 20-year strategy for the Irish language.

3.4 Current status

By the start of the 21st century the Irish and Welsh revival were at a relatively similar stage in their revival. Both were the official languages of their respective countries; both were taught in schools at multiple levels, as well as there being Irish- and Welsh-medium schools; and provisions for both were made in government and public service. Additionally, both had made advances with regards to language legislation. The Irish language revival had, however, taken about 60 years longer than that of Welsh to arrive at the same point. The 2011 census shows that 19% of the Welsh population age 3 and over were able to speak Welsh, while 41% of the population of Irish were able to speak the language, although only 4,3% used it daily. The National Survey for Wales in 2015 found that 23% were able to speak Welsh, and 11% spoke it daily. The Irish government released a 20-year strategy for the increased use of the Irish language in 2010, the aims of which are to increase daily use of Irish as well as the number of speakers. It also aims to make Irish more visible in Ireland as a spoken language and in literature. Ultimately, the strategy seeks to implement a policy of bilingualism of Irish and English, with a primary focus on Irish in the Gaeltacht. The Welsh government has opted for 5-year strategies both for the language in general and for Welsh-medium education. The ultimate goal of Wales' first five-year plan, which was introduced in 2012 and is set to end in March 2017, is to see the Welsh language thriving in Wales. Among its goals are an increase in the number of Welsh speakers, an increase in the daily use of the language, increased representation of Welsh in the media and increased awareness of the value of the Welsh language in daily life and as Wales' national heritage. Attitudes towards both languages are positive: 67% of the population of Ireland felt positively about the Irish language according to a 2015 survey, while 64% believed Ireland would lose its identity without the language (Darmody & Daly, 2015, p. xii). 80% of respondents to a 2008 survey in Wales thought the

language was something to be proud of ("A Living Language", 2012, p. 10).

3.5 Steps towards Reversing Language Shift

In 2001, Hinton published a revised version of Fishman's steps towards reversing language

shift[2]. The revised steps expand on earlier stages of language revival and put less emphasis on

steps that bring the language into national use. The order in which the steps are implemented

during language revival can differ according to the language's specific circumstances, and

not all steps have to or can be implemented in all situations (p. 6). The revitalisation of both

Irish and Welsh have been relatively successful so far, but not many of these steps have been

completed. In some cases, such as step 2 and 3, reconstruct the language or document the

language of the elderly speakers, it has simply not been necessary due to the number of

speakers still available. Other steps, such as step 4, develop a second-language learning

program for adults, has been more successful in either language. Although there are currently

several initiatives available for Irish language courses for adults, there was no strong

emphasis on its importance at the start of the Irish revival. While the government of the

newly formed Republic of Ireland at the start of the 20th century considered the acquisition

of Irish by adults crucial to the success of the language revival, there were few opportunities

for adult language learning. The Welsh revival has been more successful in that respect: after

the Second World War, when interest in Welsh was growing and the number of

Welsh-medium schools was increasing rapidly, a wide range of classes for adult learners of

Welsh became available, largely sponsored by local government (Hinton & Hale, 2001, p.

111). Despite not offering a large amount of opportunities for adult learners, there has been

great emphasis on the acquisition of Irish by children, and has as such been taught in schools

in Ireland since its independence. Apart from the emphasis on the language in schools, there

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[2]See the introduction for a full list of Hinton's steps.

have not been many other intensive second-language programs for children (step 6) in Ireland. Welsh-medium education has been a large part of the language revival as well, and the number of Welsh-medium schools has been growing since the first one opened in 1939. In the cases of both Irish and Welsh, initiatives to expand the use of the language into local government and media (step 8) and into larger domains such as regional and national government (step 9) have been more successful than those to encourage the use of the language at home (steps 5 and 7). Language legislation for both Irish and Welsh have made them their respective countries' first languages, and have made it mandatory to offer equal accommodations in Irish and Welsh as in English. Although 41% of the population of Ireland was able to speak Irish to some extend according to the 2011 census, only 2% used it daily (4,3% of those able to speak Irish). In Wales, those who are able to speak Welsh do so more often than is the case with Irish in Ireland - 19% of the population were able to speak Welsh in 2011, but the National Survey for Wales in 2015 found that 11% used the language daily. The Welsh-Medium Education Strategy for April 2016 to March 2017 also includes initiatives to help young people be more confident in using Welsh in all situations. Although Hinton's steps for reversing language shift can be seen as a useful starting point in language revival, specific circumstances make it impossible to complete all steps. Hinton specifies that not all steps will be attainable or necessary for all languages. As such these steps could be more useful not as a model for language revival, but as an example to build a personalised strategy on for each language, in which steps are excluded or added as necessary. In most cases, however, it seems that language revival is less of a planned procedure than these steps suggest, although similar concerns will come up in each case and are addressed in Hinton's steps.

3.6 Discussion

Despite the similarities in the progression of the revival of Irish and Welsh, one is generally considered to have been more successful than the other. The revival of Irish has been in progress for about 60 years longer than that of Welsh and a larger percentage of the population has knowledge of Irish than is the case with Welsh in Wales - 41% compared to 19% in 2011 (Darmody & Daly, 2014, pp. 16, 39). However, Irish is more often seen as a dying language, while Welsh is sometimes considered to be a model for language revitalisation. There are several factors that can be singled out to explain why the Welsh revival is seen as more successful than that of Irish. While both languages are important components of their respective countries cultural heritages, language has a bigger influence in Wales. While the Welsh "assert their difference by speaking Welsh", and bring the language into culture and music, the Irish have focused on traditional music and sports alongside the language (Ni Chonchuir, 2015, n.p.). From the formation of the Welsh Language Society, Welsh language revival has been linked to protests and public disorder. A result of this is that the Welsh language revival has been more public from the start, which has made it more prominent in daily life. A lot of the advances made in the Welsh language revival were made through the contribution of individuals, rather than through government officials. Examples are all advances made in the 1960s as a direct result of campaigning by the Welsh Language Society; the establishment of the first Welsh-language television station after a proposed hunger strike from an ex-politician; and the establishment of the first Welsh-medium primary school by a teacher, which prompted more Welsh-medium schools to appear as well as government funding for those schools. Although large-scale advances were naturally a result of government policies, the Welsh language movement is a very personal endeavor for many participants. Government policies regarding language development have been more

successful and more plentiful in Wales than in Ireland. Wales' first piece of language legislation, the Welsh Language Act of 1993 was enacted a decade before Ireland's Official Languages Act of 2003. Ireland had previously established government commissions to promote the Irish language, such as the Commission on the Restoration of the Irish Language, but most recommendations by the commission were not executed, while those that were had a negative effect on the promotion of the language. Although Irish has been the official language of the Republic of Ireland since its formation, that fact did not have much effect on its popularity and use. Irish had been inextricably linked to the nationalist movement and had been a symbol of independence without becoming an integral part of society (Cormack, 2000, p. 396). Additionally, the Irish government had too much faith in the idea that Irish would naturally spread from the Gaeltacht to neighbouring areas and other parts of the country and too long held on to an idealised idea of the Gaeltacht and the language for too long (Mac Giolla Chríost, 2012, p. 399). Although the Irish language revival has been in progress for over a century, it has really only started to make headway in the last few decades with the arrival of language legislation and a renewed interest in the language from the 1990s onwards. In contrast, the Welsh movement has been in progress for a shorter period of time but has been making advances at a constant pace. Finally, while the revival of Welsh is seen as more successful than that of Irish, the Welsh language has simply not lost as much ground as Irish has in its history. At its lowest point, Irish was spoken by less than 15% of the population, while the lowest percentage of Welsh speakers was 18%. Although the current percentage of Welsh speakers is lower than that of Irish, 41% compared to 19% in 2011, Welsh is used more in daily life than Irish. Only 2% of the population of Ireland used Irish daily in 2011, but 11% of the population of Wales used Welsh daily in 2015 according to the National Survey for Wales.

Conclusion

Interest in the preservation and revitalisation of minority languages has been rapidly

increasing over the past few decades. Of recent language revitalisation projects, the

progression of both the decline and subsequent revival has been relatively similar for Irish

and Welsh. Both lost ground to English during the 19th and 20th centuries, as English was

increasingly seen as a more prestigious language with more potential politically,

professionally, and socially. Interest in the revival of Irish was re-awakened in the late 19th

and early 20th centuries, and increased further after Ireland gained independence and Irish

became its first official language. Irish-medium education followed soon after, as well as

other initiatives to support the use of Irish such as the promotion of Irish-language

publications and the establishment of Irish-language radio and later on television. Fluency in

Irish also became a requirement for positions in public office. There had not been many

successful government initiatives to promote the language in Ireland's early years, but recent

strategies seem promising. The Welsh revival began at the start of the 20th century and

developed further during the second half of the century. Welsh-medium education, together

with citizen initiatives, has been an integral part of the language revival.

Despite the similarities in their development, the revival of Welsh is generally seen as

more successful than that of Irish. There are a number of factors that help explain this.

Firstly, Welsh has reached a similar state in its revival as Irish has in a shorter time frame: the

Irish revival started approximately 60 years before that of Welsh, but by the start of the

current century both had reached a relatively similar stage. Secondly, Welsh language

legislation has been more plentiful and more successful Irish language legislation.

Additionally, Wales' first piece of language legislation, the Welsh Language Act of 1993 was

put into effect in a full decade before a comparable piece of legislation in Ireland, the Official

Languages Act of 2003. Finally, although the Welsh language revival is seen as the more successful of the two, Welsh has not lost as much ground over the years as Irish has, and as such it has been simpler to revive. Although Irish is spoken by a larger percentage of the country's population compared to Welsh, Welsh is spoken more often. According to the 2011 census 43% of the population of Ireland was able to speak Irish to some extend, with 2% using it daily outside of education. Only 19% of the population of Wales was able to speak Welsh in 2011, but 11% used it daily according the National Survey for Wales 2015.

Current efforts regarding the preservation and promotion of both Irish and Welsh seem promising for the future. The use of both languages has been increasing in recent years, and both governments have running strategies to promote the use and image of the languages. [3] After both strategies have run their course, it will be possible examine the results of the current language strategies to determine whether they have reached their intended effect, as well as examine what governmental strategies of language promotion are the most successful. Additional research could also further examine the exact relationship between language revival and politics, and compare political influence on the language revival in Ireland and Wales in detail.

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[3]Ireland: 20-year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030; Wales: A living language: a language for living. Welsh Language Strategy 2012–17; Welsh-Medium Education Strategy: Next Steps (April 2016-March 2017).

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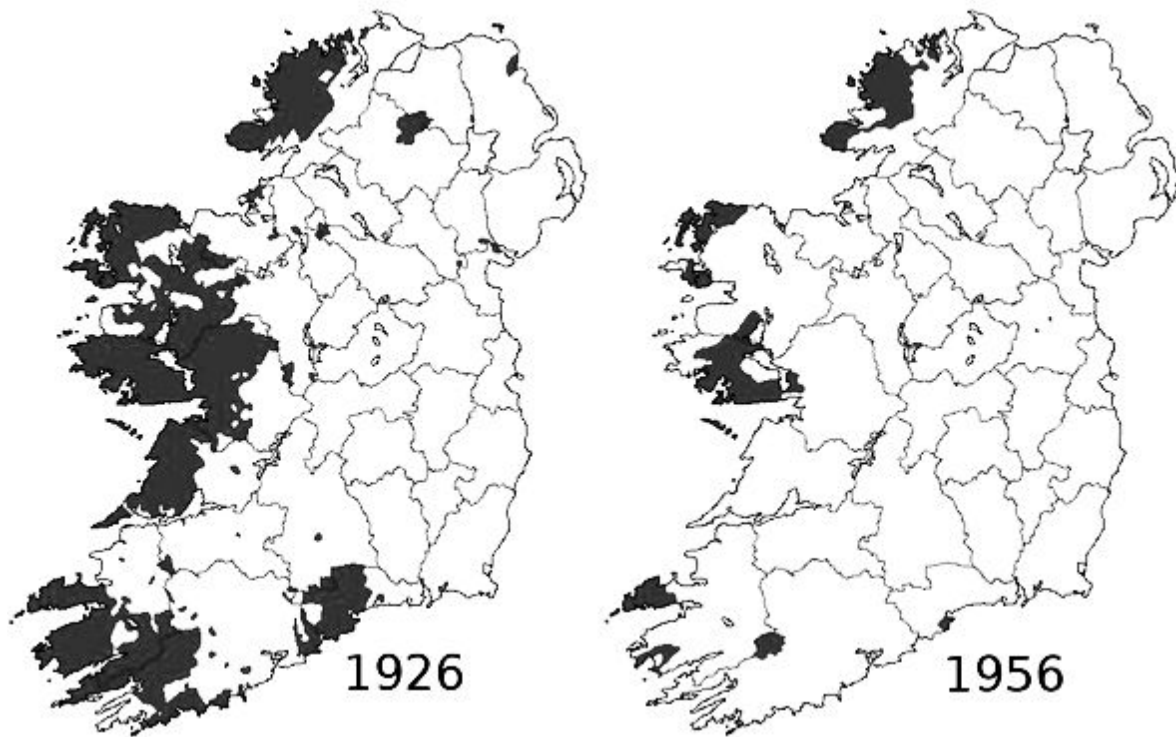
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Appendix

Figure 1: The Gaeltacht in 1926 and 1956. (D.de.loinsigh, 2008. Public Domain.)