Journal of Celtic Language Learning

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Call For Papers

Journal of Celtic Language Learning (ISSN: 1078-3911) is an international review for those involved with teaching or researching modern Celtic Languages. The official publication of the North American Association for Celtic Language Teachers, JCLL includes select papers presented at the association's annual conference as well as manuscripts submitted by Celtic teachers and scholars from around the world. It is also a forum in which modern Celtic language teachers can share insights into methodology with their peers, and read reviews of recent books, software, music and film relevant to Celtic languages. Manuscripts are invited in any of these categories:

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- **Learner's Showcase** in which original literary pieces of prose or poetry written by learners of a Celtic language at any level are published along with a translation in English. These may be submitted by the student who authored the piece, or by the teacher on his/her student's behalf;
- **Reviews** of books, software, websites, films or music of Celtic interest.

Submissions are accepted year round. Suggestions for books or language software to review, or offers to review such items, are always welcome.

Information for authors

- The Journal of Celtic Language Learning is published once a year.
- Manuscripts for review should be prepared in MS Word and submitted electronically in MS Word. They should be sent to Kevin J. Rottet at krottet@indiana.edu. In unusual circumstances manuscripts may be submitted on paper; contact one of the editors for details.
- Book reviews are generally by invitation, but suggestions for reviews or offers to review a book for JCLL are greatly appreciated.
- All submissions should be doubled-spaced and conform to APA style. Articles should include a 50 to 60 word abstract at the beginning. (Note that we depart from APA style in including authors' full first names, not just first initials, in lists of references).
- All articles submitted will be refereed blindly by two anonymous readers. Therefore all indications of authorship should be removed from the manuscript.
- Comments from the referees will be forwarded to the authors together with the editors' decision regarding publishing before publication date.

Contents

Manx and Livonian: Attrition and Revival in endangered languages of two European fisherfolk communities

Christopher Moseley. UNESCO.

In my work as editor of the third edition of the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger, I have encountered several controversies about the status of languages in danger, and even caused some. This third edition, in its on-line version, invites participation from its users and because language, as an emblem of ethnic identity, is such an emotive issue, some heated debates have arisen about whether certain languages are extinct – and by implication whether the nations that bear their names are extinct too.

So, first, a bit of background history on the nature of the UNESCO project.

The UNESCO Atlas grew out of the concept of the 'Red Book', which originally was meant to provide a world-wide alert to the loss of biological diversity. By the early nineteen-nineties, linguists and anthropologists were beginning to notice a parallel between the losses sustained by nature and the losses sustained by human culture. Being an organisation concerned with both science and culture, it naturally fell to UNESCO to take up the call to

safeguard cultural as well as biological diversity. The first two editions of this Atlas, in 1996 and 2001, were issued in book form, with an accompanying set of maps, but they did not cover the whole world. They only aimed to provide data about some representative areas of the world where the threat to the smaller indigenous languages was most acute.

The first edition, published in 1996, under the general editorship of Stephen Wurm, Professor at the Australian National University, listed 600 languages which were considered endangered, with 53 pages of text and 12 maps. The second edition, in 2001, was also edited by Professor Wurm, completed just before he died. For both of these editions, he gathered around him an international team of experts, who described the regional situations in texts to accompany each map, and plotted the positions of the endangered languages using a colour-coded system which we still use, basically, in this third edition, and which I will explain shortly. In the second edition the number of languages listed was increased to 800, and there were 90 pages of text and 14 maps. But it was still not complete and comprehensive.

Thanks to some generous funding from the Government of Norway, it was possible to expand the project in several ways for this edition. It's appearing for the first time in two forms: a digital, on-line edition that is accessible through the UNESCO web-site, and a printed edition. The digital version was launched in Paris in February 2009, to coincide with International Mother Tongue Day. The print version appeared a year later, as well as the printed Spanish and French versions.

One important advantage is that now that it is accessible to all users, any faults or errors of omission or commission can be rectified in the future.

The scope of the Atlas is now greatly extended, to include 2,500 languages – which is probably more than a third of all the languages in the world. Since languages are constantly dying at the rate of at least one every few weeks, naturally we had to decide to include some recently extinct ones among these,

so approximately 230 of the languages included have been extinct since 1950; and the question of what is extinct is what I want to explore further today.

The mapping itself has changed profoundly since the last edition. Previously the printed maps were simply flat outline maps in a single colour, drawn to the appropriate scale for the region being shown but with no topographical detail and few indicators of towns or other landmarks. The new maps are based on Google technology. It is still not overloaded with geographical detail, because it is important not to distract the user from seeking the location of a language. But the amount of topographical detail, the opportunity to zoom in and out of different scales, all help the user to easily get their bearings.

And of course what is very important is that users have a chance to give their feedback. Some of this feedback will lead to changes in the information provided about the languages in the Atlas.

Another important point about the mapping of languages in this Atlas is that languages are shown by points, not by polygons. Each language point is of a single standard size. The reason is obvious – very small points could easily be lost; very large points, measured by numbers of speakers, would crowd out the smaller points. Also, since we are not mapping stable or unthreatened languages at all, we cannot use polygons – shapes representing the actual area where a language is spoken – because they would border onto nothing. They would raise more questions than they would answer. So therefore we faced the challenge of placing the standard point in the most central location for each language. If the speakers are scattered over a wide area, this presents a further problem, and if there are other languages in between, naturally we do have to use several points. But we have tried to be sparing with these. Such a policy has to be applied judiciously if the speakers are nomadic, for instance – in such a case all we can do is provide a minimum number of representative points.

These points themselves are in a range of colours, and these colours indicate the degree of endangerment. The degrees are described on one of the Web pages: Safe - Vulnerable - Definitely Endangered – Severely Endangered – Critically Endangered – Extinct. There has been much discussion about these terms, and they have changed slightly since the last edition. What is most controversial is the last term, Extinct. There are of course languages whose last native speaker has died, maybe even several generations ago, and yet there are second-language speakers who are consciously reviving the language, as they claim it as part of their ancestry. We are adding a special category for "revived" or "revitalised" languages.

Each map and section of accompanying text in all three editions was the work of an acknowledged specialist on the languages of the region, and I was appointed as general editor to co-ordinate the task. And in all three editions, we have graded each language with a colour-code according to the level of danger it faces: and they are these:

Safe if the language is spoken by all generations. The intergenerational transmission of the language is uninterrupted. (Therefore such languages are not found in the Atlas.)

Stable yet threatened if a language is spoken in most contexts by all generations with unbroken transmission, although multilingualism in the native language and one or more dominant languages has taken over certain contexts. (Such languages are not usually in the Atlas, but potentially they will be in the future, and we specialists must watch them.)

Vulnerable if most children or families of a particular community speak their parental language as a first language, even if only in the home.

Definitely endangered if the language is no longer learned as the mother tongue or taught in the home. The youngest speakers are of the parental generation.

Severely endangered if the language is spoken only by grandparents and

older generations; the parent generation may still understand it but will not pass it on to their children.

Critically endangered if the youngest speakers are of the great-grand-parents' generation, and the language is not used every day. These older people may only partially remember it and have no partners for communication.

Extinct if no-one speaks or remembers the language. We editors decided to include such languages if they have been spoken in the past sixty years, approximately the lifetime of UNESCO itself. Of all the categories, we have found that this is the most controversial.

The controversy over the status of Cornish and Manx began on the very day of publication of the Atlas, 21ˢᵗ February 2009, International Mother Tongue Day. I found myself, from the BBC studios in Paris, confronting a representative of the Cornish Language Partnership, live on BBC Radio Cornwall. Later the same day the controversy over the status of Britain's minority Celtic languages spread to Wales and Scotland too. And the reaction from the Isle of Man was more heated and sustained than even from Cornwall.

There was no denying the fact that the term 'extinct' had hit a nerve, and that the term had been a blunt and unsubtle instrument. So we – that is, UNESCO and our editorial team – had to refine this instrument to take account of two situations: *language revival*, where a language has been brought back into use after falling silent for a generation or more; and *language revitalization* where a language has been resuscitated by some deliberate programme from the point of near-extinction.

The term 'generation' is important here, because, even for the previous editions, UNESCO had decided to include in its maps those languages that had fallen silent in the past two generations, or, say, about fifty years – in other words, the lifetime of UNESCO.

I am not a Celtic specialist, but I do have a concern for the linguistic

situation of the British Isles, and I would like to try to portray the situation accurately. Away from the controversy over 'extinction', I had previously been involved in mapping that situation when I was co-editor of the Routledge *Atlas of the World's Languages,* which appeared in 1994 and in a revised edition in 2007.

When I was invited by the Manx Language Officer in October last year to visit the Isle of Man and see for myself the work of bringing Manx back into viable everyday use, I was pleased and amazed at what I saw. Not only is there a network of adult learners' classes on the island (one of which I attended) supported by the Language Officer, but, crucially, education in the Manx medium is being offered at primary-school level. Julie Matthews, head teacher of the Bunscoill Ghaelgagh, the only fully Manx-medium primary school on the island, attended my lecture and offered to show me around the school the next day. I seized the opportunity. After showing me around the classrooms and introducing me to the teachers, she told me the history of the school. It's an instructive lesson for anyone engaged in the revival of a language that has almost been lost.

Primary education is arguably the most vital aspect of language revival and revitalization, but it would be idle to pretend that a revived Manx has penetrated every aspect of the linguistic life of the island. Perhaps it will one day, because classes for adult learners (who include a large proportion of incomers from mainland Britain) are flourishing.

Now, although it is said that languages are being extinguished at a rate of one every few weeks in the world at large, in Europe the extinction of a language community is a comparatively rare event. My visit to Man made me think of the obvious parallels between this situation and that of the second most recent language to face alleged extinction and possible reversal, even revival: namely Livonian, in Latvia.

Livonian, known to its speakers as *rānda kēļ* or 'coast language', is a

Baltic-Finnic language spoken on the northern edge of the coast of Kurzeme province in western Latvia. Its closest linguistic relative is Estonian, and it is not related at all to Latvian, the national language. It is thought that the Livonians have lived on and near the Baltic shores since the first half of the first millennium AD at least. They have had settlements on both sides of the Gulf of Riga, and we know this primarily from the accounts in the 13th-century Chronicle of Henry of Livonia. The eastern dialect of Livonian lost its last native speaker in 1868. The western dialect, on which I did my own field-work, has passed into history on its native soil in the past few years, but there is one 101-year-old speaker living in an old people's home in Toronto; she moved away in 1944. Does that mean the language is extinct?

The parallels I have been considering between these two languages don't concern their internal structure, but rather the outward sociolinguistic aspects of their attrition. If I wanted to compare, say, the elements of language structure, the levels – lexical, morphological, syntactic – which came under the influence of their big neighbours' language, I would not really be comparing like with like, for two important reasons.

Firstly, language affiliation: the Baltic-Finnic group, part of the larger Finno-Ugrian family, has no immediate connection with the Balto-Slavic group, which are counted within the great Indo-European family. Manx, on the other hand, is within Indo-European like its English usurper.

Secondly: the influence of puristic norms. Livonian was not a written language until the 19th century, and only then due to the work of outside scholars. By that stage in its attrition, the influence of Latvian had gone very deep. Manx, on the other hand, though it was giving way to a structurally different language, English, had already enjoyed a period as a canonical written language. Biblical Manx was classical Manx, and as the language of the church it was part of the life of the speech community. Its orthography owes a lot to English, but the norms of its usage align themselves with Irish

and Scottish Gaelic, as part of a clear continuum.

Therefore I'd like to concentrate on some specific aspects of Manx and Livonian: their *decline as speech communities, the development of orthographic norms, and language revival.*

Decline as a speech community

In the case of Manx, there are glimpses from anecdotal written evidence of the gradual decline of the spoken language. The spoken language must have been undifferentiated from Irish Gaelic at least until the arrival of Scandinavians in the 11th century and probably well after that. By the 16th century the Bishop of Sodor and Man is found remarking on a linguistic division in the island, influenced by Scottish Gaelic in the north and Irish Gaelic in the south.

There is a coincidental parallel here with spoken Livonian, which was withdrawing into Western and Eastern variants by this period.

Dialect differences persisted in Man for centuries, but by the time it was committed to writing in the 17th century it had developed away from both norms. When committed to writing, Manx was frozen as a snapshot in time in 1610, and as the spoken language atrophied in the following centuries, it came to be seen as the classical standard. The Book of Common Prayer was translated into Manx then, and it had canonical authoritative force. Although the translator was not necessarily a native speaker, he was a resident of the island in a position of authority in the church. It served a need, as the majority on the island spoke Manx.

That is not the way Livonian was frozen in time. The first written records of it are fragmentary and incidental to the Chronicle of Henry in the 12th century, but these do not capture the spoken language. The first serious attention paid to Livonian came from the Baltic German scholars of the Enlightenment era, the late 18th century. In other words, knowledge of the

earlier forms of Livonian comes from outsiders' commentaries; in the case of Manx, however, the earliest attestations are in native written Ogham inscriptions. Runic inscriptions in Old Norse also suggest that there would have been some mixing of the Celtic and Scandinavian populations.

What about absolute numbers of speakers – how does Manx compare with Livonian down the centuries? As long as both languages were purely oral, there seems to be no reliable record of speaker numbers. For both languages it is possible to roughly chart the decline in use in the 19th century. In the case of Manx, Henry Jenner noted in 1874 that 30% of the population were habitual speakers (12,340 out of 41,084), The absolute population and number of speakers were well in excess of the Livonian figures: the last speaker of the Eastern or Salis dialect was dead by 1868, and we have figures compiled by outsiders for the western dialect: 2,074 in 1835, rising to 2,929 in 1888. There seems to have been a steady rise in the number of Latvian-speaking incomers in the Livonian fisherfolk communities, and bilingualism in Latvian was necessary for trading commodities and dealing with the most immediate local authorities. By the nineteen-thirties, only half the population of the Livonian villages was Livonian-speaking. Intermarriage with Latvian speakers was occurring just as it was on Man with English speakers.

Census figures, when they acknowledge the existence of Livonians at all, have not provided an accurate picture. In both Tsarist and Soviet times, the Livonians were not distinguished from the Latvians in census statistics, yet an official figure of 866 Livonians given in 1920 differs widely from the Finnish scholar, and Livonian lexicographer, Kettunen's estimate of 1500 Livonian speakers which itself would seem a conservative estimate compared with those 19th-century figures I just quoted. (Of course this begs the question of the difference between mother tongue and ethnic allegiance.) What constituted a 'Livonian' may not have had a linguistic basis, and there is the additional fact that in 1915 the whole population was forced into temporary

exile for the rest of the duration of the First World War. In 1935 a survey showed that 820 out of 1205 people identifying themselves as Livonian spoke or understood the language. The coastal strip of the Baltic was then and later a strategically sensitive area, merging into a Latvian hinterland. The Isle of Man, on the other hand, is a coherent unit bounded by the sea.

The decline in the 20th century was just as steep in both communities, but for dissimilar reasons. I have referred to both communities as 'fisherfolk' in my title, which is a bit of a simplification in the case of Man, with its more diverse economy. But they are peoples with a long coastline to their name – in fact the Livonian name for themselves is simply rāndalist, or coastal people. When the mass expulsions occurred in conjunction with both world wars, the way of life of the people was instantly expunged. The community recovered after the First War, and the arrival of Latvian independence brought a period of friendly relations with central authority, or at least benign neglect from it, until Latvia became a one-party dictatorship in 1934, and distinct Livonian identity was seen as hostile to the nationalist ethos. From the Soviet invasion in 1940 onward, it wasn't possible for a coherent Livonian community to rebuild itself. Fishing was collectivised, the 12 villages were abandoned, the area was placed under military surveillance, with watch-towers dotted along the coastline in the atmosphere of Cold War mistrust. When I first began researching this language, it was not possible to visit the coast at all (in the middle nineteen-eighties), but with the advent of perestroika and then the independence of the Baltic countries, it did become possible – and what I found was a series of abandoned and neglected villages, the houses demolished or sinking into the undergrowth.

It was not so with the Isle of Man. What all these geopolitical forces flung at the Livonians in terms of snuffing out the language, was just as effectively accomplished by the march of English. One important factor in the steep decline of Manx was of course its eradication from the island's education

system. Mother-tongue education in Manx at the elementary level was abandoned in the middle of the nineteenth century. For any language, this is a death-knell. Even the Livonians had the advantage here – until the dictatorship, some sort of primary education in their own language was available. The pressure on Manx was different. The abandonment of mother-tongue education was symptomatic of outside pressures: immigration and emigration; the exportable nature of seafaring trades (in the Navy or the merchant navy, for instance); the growth of tourism. In more recent times you could add: the nature of its tertiary industries, such as banking. So the church and the courts became the last bastions for Manx in public use. In the professions that run the church and the courts, however, training was provided increasingly in English. Parents actively discouraged their children from learning and speaking Manx, as a hindrance to getting ahead in life. The rot spread from the towns outwards, you might say – Douglas and then the other towns became heavily Anglicised.

Before moving on to the next factor, pause to consider where the languages stand now. For Manx, since the death of the last mother-tongue speaker in 1974, the celebrated Ned Maddrell, we have the steadily growing revival movement, which I will come to later. For Livonian, the last native-born speaker to die on Latvian soil died as recently as 2010. But the language is not quite dead as a mother-tongue. There is one mother-tongue speaker, aged 101, living in a nursing home in Toronto, Canada. Grizelda Kristin is her name, and she still speaks it fluently, but she has to wait for researchers to come to her door to release her fluent tongue. Her life has been an emblem of Livonian's fate, in a way. Sent abroad to Finland as a young woman for training in home economics, she returned to Latvia and worked there until the Soviets came. In 1944, like many other Latvians, she fled with her husband in an open boat to Sweden. From there she passed through displaced-persons' camps in Germany and emigrated to Canada, where her husband died and

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she now lives out her days in linguistic isolation.

Development of orthographic norms

Here I'd like to compare the evolution of the written forms of both languages, and there are some contrasts and some similarities between the two stories. Let's start by considering Manx as a written language. I've already mentioned the sparse inscriptions in Ogham, and I've also mentioned the translation of the Book of Common Prayer in 1610 by Bishop John Phillips, who was a Welshman. In tracing the history of written Manx I've referred to the work of Mark Sebba, of the University of Lancaster in England, who has made a special study of the development of this unique orthography, so different from its neighbours in Scotland and Ireland. The idiosyncratic spelling system, even to an untrained eye, shows the influence of English. That in turn implies that its creator was at least bilingual and that he assumed the same of his readers – or simply had no linguistic training. No-one can adopt English spelling conventions and aim for the principle of one letter for one sound. The influence of Welsh on the spelling seems to be only slight – perhaps restricted to the values of the single vowels and, insofar as it's different from English, the use of ch for the unvoiced velar fricative. But I don't want to analyse letter-sound correspondences in detail here.

Phillips' translation actually remained unpublished for centuries, and so it was a later Bishop, Thomas Wilson, Bishop from 1698 to 1755, who exercised greater influence on the written word by having the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, again, translated into Manx, and the first religious work to be published was in 1707, the *Coyrle Sodjeh*, or Principles and Duties of Christianity. Wilson also took his orthographic cue from English. Between the two Bishops one has to assume there was a period of illiteracy in Manx, and general illiteracy in the language must have continued long after that. Sebba suggests that the educated clergy were using written Manx in the 18th

century as a guide for preaching to their monoglot uneducated Manx parish-ioners. This goes a long way to explaining the priority of English models in the orthography. And it is fundamentally different from the orthographic course taken by the other Gaelics. And from the monoglot Manxmen's point of view, the experience of reading is a universal one for users of small lan-guages – it's just a step up to something bigger, better and wider.

Sebba emphasises Bible reading, after the Bible appeared in print in 1769, as a social activity, the literate master of a household, or preacher, reading to his illiterate hearers. Reading was not a private activity, and could only become so when secular writing appeared. If you're familiar with Robert Carswell's excellent anthology of Manx literature, you will see that many of the earliest writings are singable, or declaimable, like the *carval* songs, and the ballads about significant events in the life of the seafaring nation. The tradi-tion of individualism in literature has not yet established itself here.

The Manxman John Kelly, introducing his 'Triglott Dictionary' in 1805, took the view that the orthography of English, as a stepping-stone out of Manx linguistic impoverishment, was a clear precept for Protestant preachers to take and lay people to follow, and that the Catholic Irish had suffered for not doing the same. English led a mission of moral improvement. As Sebba puts it, "Here we start to see an imperial and religious project which has lan-guage shift as an intermediate goal". In case after case, in my own study of orthography creation around the world, I have seen the same assumptions taking root. For orthography creation everywhere is, by and large, a mission-ary project. So Sebba concludes that Manx orthography was a kind of 'Trojan horse' designed to ensure the demise of the language.

Now that the orthography is embedded in the written body of Manx work, and has become canonical for the language revival movement (along with old sound recordings as a guide to correct pronunciation), Manx is faced with an anomaly: it is "autonomous" from its closest Gaelic neighbours, but

not autonomous from English. Modern Manx linguists like Fargher, for example, have called the writing system "an abomination".

And yet – Scottish and Irish Gaelic have different but closely related spelling conventions. If Manx had taken a different course and aligned itself with them, would we be speaking here today of a distinct language? For historical reasons to do with vocabulary and sound change, we might well be, but conceivably all of Gaelic, all the Goidelic languages, could be seen as merely a dialect continuum. If spoken languages have primacy over written languages, that might be argued. But in the modern world of the written symbol, it is that much harder to argue.

Turning now to Livonian orthography, again there is the confrontation between outsiders bent on a mission and an initially illiterate native population. My own master's thesis was on the decline of Livonian, but I can also draw on more recent work by a heritage speaker of the language, Valts Ernštreits, who actually wrote his own doctorate in the language and defended it, in Tartu, Estonia, two years ago. His thesis concentrates on the development of the written language. Again, I will not be going into detail about letter-to-sound correspondences here: suffice to say that they have always been much closer than in Manx, for the historical reasons that I can explain here.

 The medieval Teutonic Knights, as described in the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia, subjugated and converted the pagan Livonians to Christianity, but the question of converting them to literacy did not arise. What did arise, and was strengthened by the trading links of the Hanseatic League in later centuries, was the superimposition of a German-speaking educated elite over both the Livonians and their Latvian neighbours. And this did have orthographic consequences, because until 1908 Latvian itself was written in a pseudo-German orthography. Place names in modern Latvia indicate that Livonian was once far more widespread in the centuries before written records of it began.

Livonian does not appear to have been committed to writing before it

became an object of study by outsiders. The first systematic study of the language, and the first attempt at an orthography, based on the Latin alphabet supplemented by diacritics, was the work of a Finn, A.J.Sjögren (1794-1855), continued after his death by F.J.Wiedemann. This orthography was the basis of that used in the first printed book, a translation of St. Matthew's Gospel, in 1863. In other words, the work of a secular trained linguist actually provided the model for the first missionary script. The Gospel was actually printed in London by the Bible Society. Remarkably, there were separate editions in the Eastern and Western dialects. The alphabet was based on the German Fraktur in use at the time for Latvian, with modifications.

A body of work in the language has been published since then, during the first and second periods of Latvian independence – not during the Soviet era, 1940 to 1991. And it was during the Soviet era that the speaker community declined most rapidly. The year when the language can be said to have been most thoroughly codified was 1938: in that year the Livonian-German dictionary compiled by Lauri Kettunen appeared, and so did the New Testament, or *Ūž Testament*. But there is a subtle difference between the two orthographies employed in these works: in the dictionary, more diacritical marks appeared as a form of faithful transcription which would not be practical in application. Kettunen was not overtly attempting a practical orthography so much as an accurate representation of the spoken language. There were certain considerations to bear in mind: a purely phonetic transcription would be a disservice to users of the language, and more importantly, the language was already being written, in a slightly inconsistent way. Furthermore, the rounded vowels ö and ü were rapidly falling out of use as Latvian took over as a first language, replaced by the /i/ and /e/ common to Latvian. Palatalization of consonants is a strong feature of both languages, which argued for adoption of Latvian orthography. The vowel system, at its fullest extent, is more aligned with Estonian, which in any case had a more

stable and better established orthography than Latvian. But unique to the Livonian language in this context is the prevalence of the reduced schwa vowel in unstressed syllables. Various solutions have been attempted: in the early years of independence, from 1921 onwards, school readers were prepared by Kettunen and the Estonian scholar Oskar Loorits. The schwa vowel was at first represented by its own phonetic symbol; later it was replaced by the Estonian letter o with a tilde, which represents a tense central slightly rounded vowel. The school readers thus served as a kind of orthographic experimental laboratory, before the 1938 dictionary came along. There were also annual almanacs for adult readers, and even some poetry writing.

All these developments are in some contrast to the situation on Man, and certainly that on Man in the early twentieth century, by which time there was no provision for the social and public use of Manx. But creative writing, at least of songs and poetry if not of sustained longer works, was going on, and the outlet for these was in both cases periodicals. The journal Līvli (The Livonian) appeared from 1931 onwards, irregularly, and was even revived in the nineties after independence. As it was typewritten and distributed in stencilled form, the diacritics had to be inserted by hand. In the case of Man, the outlet for creative writing (rather than a combination of local news and creative writing) was in short-lived periodicals established by language activists. And nowadays this outlet is reduced to a column in a weekly English-language newspaper.

Any more ambitious publishing than this had to be subsidised and executed by outsiders. A Livonian hymn-book (or collection of spiritual songs) was published in Helsinki in 1939. Certainly Livonian cultural activity was always sponsored by 'kindred peoples', usually with a missionary purpose. Finns and Estonian sources were the usual sponsors of this – and it all culminated in the building of a cultural centre in the village of Mazirbe (Ire in Livonian), funded by supporters in the independent ethnic kindred nations of

Finland, Hungary and Estonia, and opened in August 1939, on the very eve of the Second World War, whose outcome was to dash all hopes of seeing its intended use. But it still stands today, and it is once again a Livonian cultural centre.

In the Soviet period, the Livonian-language presses fell silent. One or two small self-published items circulated in secret in single copies. Likewise on Man, during this same period, and for different reasons, the Manx language was rarely seen in print. For any newly-written language, a periodical press is essential, because the range of subject matter it necessarily covers provides fertile ground for new expressions, terminology, word coinages, which may or may not catch on among the speakers. And, for the future, if the revitalised languages are to survive, their use in the new social media will have to be encouraged as well.

Language revival

I chose to compare these two language situations not because the languages themselves have much in common or are very different, but rather because they might be seen as the two most recent admissions to the European intensive-care ward, so to speak. Transmission of the spoken language between generations has broken down, but thanks to the presence of the written language, and plenty of recorded documentation, revival is possible, and it is happening. Making them viable vehicles for communication in a community is a realistic prospect. Compared with some less well-documented ones, these languages are fortunate. Attempts at revival of a lost spoken medium have begun for other languages with starting-points much worse than these.

Different approaches have been used in each case. The Isle of Man is still a viable community, well-defined and relatively prosperous; the Manx people have existed continuously there for over a thousand years. Few of them are still fisherfolk, the economy is diverse, and most importantly for the language,

there is a measure of political independence and has been for centuries. The fate of the language rests with its own people.

As most of you will know, the House of Keys, the island's parliament, and the Manx Heritage Foundation subsidise the post of a Manx Language Officer. I had the pleasure of meeting Adrian Cain, the present officer, last year, and he introduced me to his two predecessors as well. Impressively, there is also a paid Manx Music Officer, who oversees the teaching of Manx music in schools and the holding of traditional music events. Adrian's task is not easy. He has to oversee the provision of education at the Bunscoill Ghaelgagh, the Manx-medium primary school, he has to run adult learners' classes, he has to supervise road signage in Manx, organise events that promote the Manx language, and keep up the profile of the language in the English-language press and media on the island. There are plenty of forces at work to encourage indifference to the language and its fate. It might be easy to blame incomers from England – but when I attended one of his adult classes during my visit, I found that quite a few of the interested learners were incomers. Manx Radio and the Manx Museum also get support from the Language Officer. One important medium is the Manx Gaelic Newsletter sent out by Adrian to e-mail subscribers. The latest issue discusses the use of Manx on Facebook and how to link the associated website www.learnmanx.com to a mobile telephone. There are also video clips to be seen on the site. The Language Officer's energetic work keeps the language permanently in the public eye. The annual Cooish festival is a celebration of Manx language and culture.

Here are the links:

www.org.im

Manx Language Officer's address: greinneyder@mhf.org.im

www.learnmanx.com

With Livonian, the approach has to be different. There is no base community in a state of physical cohesion to refer to. Ethnic Livonians using

the heritage language are scattered. There would be nobody for a Language Officer to minister to. Therefore an Association of interested people is the hub of activity. There have been Livonian cultural associations ever since the nineteen-twenties, when the Livonian Association or *Līvōd Īt* was established in Latvia. Nowadays the latest association, the Society of Friends of Livonia ir Liivi Sõprade Selts, is based in Tartu, Estonia, which has been the centre of Livonian studies in the Baltic lands for a long time. They organise cultural events, conferences and group excursions to places of Livonian historic interest. Publication in and about Livonian is also catered for, in Latvia, by Līvō Kultūr Sidām, or Livonian Cultural Centre. But one essential difference is that although it is subsidised, it is not actively promoted by central government in either Estonia or Latvia. Therefore the language is destined to be the focus of a minority interest group and, even on its home territory, the reminders of the language's presence are pretty weak. It is as if, to compare with Manx, the language activities were operated out of Dublin or Edinburgh. But as with Manx, there are also organised adult learners' classes in Livonian.

When I first began my research into Livonian, the resources were scanty, and the points of comparison with its situation were hard to find. The comparison that I liked to make back in those days was with Nancy Dorian's study of East Sutherland Gaelic in Scotland. From a sociolinguistic point of view, there were some points in common, notably among the attitudes of the last users. Because the geographical area was comparable, it possibly made for a fairer comparison. But seen in terms of attrition and revival as languages, Manx and Livonian seem to have walked hand in hand into the operating theatre. Let us hope for a securer future for them. Against all the odds.

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Welsh Language Learning in North America

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As most readers of this journal will know, Welsh is one of the six modern Celtic languages and belongs to the P-Celtic, or Brythonic branch of the Insular Celtic languages. At this time, an accurate number of Welsh speakers remains uncertain, but the *2004 Welsh Language Use Survey* commissioned by the Welsh Language Board indicates that 611,000, or 21.7% of the population of Wales, speak the language. In addition, some 150,000 speakers are to be found in England ("World Directory"), while several thousands more exist in Chubut, Argentina (5,000) ("Wales and Argentina"), the United States (2,452) ("Table 1") and Canada (2,200) ("2006 Census") making for slightly more than 770,000 speakers worldwide. There is no data available as to how many speakers outside of Wales are fluent, but the same 2004 survey notes that of the 611,000 speakers in Wales, 315,000 (57%) consider themselves fluent in all areas of the language. Additionally Welsh has recently made great strides politically; as of 2011 the language became an official language of the country (Welsh Language Measure). In fact it is the only *de jure* official

language anywhere in the UK.[1]

Yet as I write this article, Cymdeithas yr Iaith (The Welsh Language Society) has just celebrated its 50th year of fighting for Welsh language rights, and new data about Welsh speaking in Wales awaits the release of 2011 UK Census. Despite the apparently strong numbers of Welsh speakers, and what appears to be strong support on the surface, the perception of many on the ground, including Cymdeithas, is that the language is still critically endangered. They point to the same 2004 study by the Welsh Language Board that shows a very small percentage of children in Wales are being raised in families where both parents speak Welsh. The report also underscores the pressures of continued in-movement by people from England, while outward migration by Welsh speakers looking for better economic opportunities increases. These same points are mirrored variously in Hywel Jones's 2012 *A Statistical Overview of the Welsh Language* written under the auspices of the newly formed Welsh Language Commissioner. In recent years, political pressure groups like Cymuned (Community) and Llais Gwynedd (Voice of Gwynedd) have arisen to take up the call of linguistically sustainable Welsh language communities.

Certainly given the evidence, their concerns are not without cause, but what can still be said of the Welsh language at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, is that it is a widely spoken community language, a day-to-day language for the majority of people living in four large Welsh authorities, namely Camarthenshire, Ceredigion, Gwynedd and Anglesey (Jones 6) and a sizeable minority in the capital city Cardiff where some decades ago it was rarely heard ("Census"). Welsh medium education in the

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1 At the time this article was written, the 2011 UK Census results had not yet been released. Since that time, we have learned that two of the unitary authorities where Welsh was a majority language, namely Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire, have lost their majority status. Currently the percentage of Welsh speakers in these authorities are 47.4% and 44% respectively according to the 2011 UK Census.

country has also created a new class of young people who have learned the language through their primary and secondary education even if their first language was not Welsh. For the future of the language then, what remains to be seen is how many of these new Welsh speakers will choose the language to be the primary one in their homes, and the language in which they raise their children. The future of Welsh as a real community language then rests with these individuals and the choices they make. Jones' report, mentioned above, paints a variously cautiously optimistic picture for the next twenty years or so, but only time will tell for certain.

By contrast in North America, while there remains a strong interest in the language among some of Welsh descent, there are no longer any communities where Welsh is a spoken language. It survives among some few families, certainly mostly ex-pats and their children, among aging individuals raised in Welsh speaking communities still extant in the first half of the 20th century, and among second language learners. The number of churches where any sort of services are offered in the language has dwindled to almost zero, and these churches, among the small number of Welsh speakers in them, represent the vestigial remains of the North American Welsh speaking community. So while interest in the language continues, opportunities to learn it in a face-to-face environment are actually very rare. Even at local and national Welsh cultural events, the presence of the language is generally not substantial as a means of real communication; its presence resides largely in the singing of hymns or folk songs and recitation of poems, neither of which requires a great deal of proficiency. Having a conversation, therefore, in Welsh at a Welsh gathering is still the exception and not the rule. In some cases, however, among a small group of speakers who know each other well, or have known each other over a long period of time, Welsh may still be the favored language. Nonetheless, outside of the family, such instances are exceedingly rare, and opportunities for learners to practice their skills with

native speakers are equally so.

I have also observed that in areas where there is a large ex-patriot Welsh population, some of whom may speak Welsh, there often appears to be a crucial social disconnect between the natives from Wales and the descendants, such that any opportunity for learners to use their language with native speakers is hard to come by even in social spaces where it should otherwise be relatively easy. A part of this disconnect arises from the different views of Wales that members of local societies tend to have versus the image of Wales that ex-patriots bring. This seems especially true in the old Welsh societies of the United States where in some cases the immigrant community arrived more than a century ago: their image of Wales tends to be that of their grand-parents or great-grandparents, still a land of quarries and coal mines, choirs and ladies in tall hats. The result is that the two groups, the descendants and the ex-pats, have very different expectations about what a Welsh-themed discourse should be in either language.

The traditional Welsh-North American societies cannot be held in contempt for this difference in perception, however, no more than the ex-patriot community. Welsh-North Americans do have their own unique expression of Welshness which includes contributions to Welsh language song and poetry, and Welsh language literature among the popular press of Welsh communities of the 19th century. Unfortunately, this somewhat dystopian relationship between descendants and ex-pats does nothing to support the cause of Welsh language learning in North America. On the other hand, while many of these Welsh societies are fading away, at times in their wake a new group will emerge, and it appears to be most often among these new groups that Welsh language learning will blossom and flourish.

A case in point would be our own local Welsh society in the Albany area of New York. When I arrived in here in the mid-90's, there were actually two Welsh groups: the original St. David's Society founded in 1928, and the

Dragon's Egg, a splinter group that concentrated especially on Welsh language learning and Welsh cultural education since the members of the original group were mainly interested in socializing twice a year at a Cymanfa (a traditional gathering for the singing of hymns) and a St. David's Day dinner. Eventually the members of the original group realized they were no longer able to manage even those events without the help of the Dragon's Egg. The two groups agreed to re-merge under the banner of the St. David's Society, and the renewed group continued to do the work of both organizations.

At the time of my arrival, the society had three native Welsh speakers and one heritage speaker. In previous decades, there had been more native and heritage speakers, but by the mid-90's, they had already died. Before my association with the group, one of the native speakers (in her late 80's) and one heritage speaker attended the Dragon's Egg meetings, and along with one other member who had learned some Welsh, they helped foster Welsh lessons. Then, already having studied the language on my own for many years, I became the principal Welsh instructor, and we have continued to have Welsh classes ever since.

In recent years, like in so many social and cultural organizations, interest in the society has unfortunately declined, and while the society in general limps along from year to year, the Welsh classes have continued. Most years we have both a beginners and a continuing group. In fact, the Welsh classes feed into the membership of the society more than the other way around. The apparent decline in the activity of Welsh societies marks a further challenge for people wishing to learn and practice the language, but the trend seems consistent across the board, not only in cultural and social organizations, but in nearly all community organizations.

The general state of Welsh North American affairs is also reflected in Welsh media, or lack thereof. Of a once thriving North American Welsh language press, no Welsh language publications remain, and only one periodical

of Welsh interest continues publication. The paper, *Ninnau*, appears six times a year and features a "literary" section in which Welsh language articles are printed. The paper also variously continues to offer Welsh lessons and a Welsh language crossword, but the vast majority of the paper is in English and always has been since its inception in the 1970's. *Y Drych*, a former Welsh language publication dating to the 19th century, ceased independent publication in 2003 when it was purchased by Arturo Roberts, the publisher of *Ninnau* (Ninnau), but by the time of its demise, the language of publication, like that of *Ninnau*, was English.

With Welsh societies in decline, and with only one Welsh oriented publication on the continent, access to courses and even information on courses is difficult to come by. Indeed there are entire states and provinces with no Welsh society at all, and in the case of Canada where the provinces tend to be vast, Welsh societies are typically geographically isolated to one or two large cities. Learning Welsh in an informal setting through a society, then, already appears to be less common than learning a language in a formal classroom. In preparation for this article, I searched through every Welsh society I could find in the United States and Canada and found only a dozen active Welsh language courses. In fact, a person interested in learning the language through a local society would have to do the same kind of search, as searching for "Welsh lesson" online does not yield satisfactory results even if you add a geographical marker.

Of the courses available, many are to be found in some of the most vibrant and active Welsh societies on the continent. For example, the Rehoboth Welsh Church in Delta, Pennsylvania offers Welsh language services, Welsh language instruction and operates a Welsh choir. The Welsh league of Arizona offers weekly Welsh courses in both Tucson and Phoenix. Conversely, several Welsh societies profess an interest in preserving the language, but do not seem to offer any Welsh courses, quite likely because they

cannot find anyone qualified to offer them. One or two of these organizations offer links on their websites to online learning material or even courses in Wales. It is difficult to determine if the number of Welsh language courses offered through local societies has grown or declined since the last time this journal published information on learning opportunities for Celtic languages in North America, but since some Welsh societies have shuttered since then, it's quite likely that there are fewer. It is also worth noting that important differences exist between the American and Canadian Welsh societies. By large and far, American Welsh societies are relatively old. The Welsh Society of Philadelphia, for example, was founded in 1729. The Canadian Welsh societies appear to have more ex-patriots and more Welsh speakers and are more like what the American Welsh societies must have been in the early part of the 20th century, and on the whole they seem to do more with the language. Whether they have overcome the social disconnect I wrote about earlier is another question.

In contrast with community-based Welsh courses, according to the University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, there are thirteen institutions of higher learning that offer courses in Welsh, although a small number of these offer only medieval Welsh. We can push the total number to fourteen if you count my institution where I have offered Welsh twice in ten years as a foreign language special topic, the first time with ten students, the second time with twenty. There are also a few institutions that grant credit for Welsh language courses taken in Wales through study-abroad programs.

While the number of institutions that grant credit for learning Welsh has increased since the last time this journal looked at the question, two institutional Welsh language programs have all but ceased to function. Rio Grande University/Community College's Madog Center in Ohio has discontinued its Welsh minor (including language study), but the website states that they hope

to redesign the program "over the next two years." Equally regrettable is the essential shuttering of the Welsh studies center at Green Mountain College in Poultney, Vermont which once also offered Welsh language instruction. At present, the college maintains a Welsh Choir, an important collection of Welsh books, periodicals and other archival material in their library and offers a Welsh festival. They also offer opportunities for students to study in Wales. At present there are no institutions that offer an undergraduate major in Welsh in North America. UCAL Berkeley does offer an English degree with a Celtic Studies concentration in which Welsh is available as a language choice by tutorial (*Center*). Additionally, Harvard University operates a Celtic Studies Program at both the master's and doctoral levels in which students can focus on Welsh (*Center*). Welsh is not taught at any educational institution below the undergraduate level in either Canada or the U.S.

In addition to colleges and universities that offer courses in Welsh, there are two ambulatory week-long intensive non-credit language courses that move around Canada and the United States with periodic jaunts to Wales itself; these are Cymdeithas Madog's "Cwrs Cymraeg" and the Welsh Harp and Heritage Society of North America's "Welsh Heritage Week." Attendance at these courses can range from twenty to ninety students, and their geographic repositioning allows relatively close access to would-be students from most parts of both countries.

Considering then the relatively small number of Welsh courses available, both community and college, if we use extremely generous numbers, assuming all the courses run every year, and each has an average number of fifteen students, that means that fewer than 400 people per year in the United States and Canada (with a combined population of around 336 million) attend a Welsh course with a live instructor and have the opportunity to practice the language in real time. If we add the two residential courses to this number, we can add perhaps, very optimistically, another 100 students per year to the rolls.

Barring any sort of live course, the next option for individuals wishing to learn the language then is self-instruction, using traditional print material with audio supplement, going online or using computer software. To say that an individual can Cymricize his or her virtual world today is not much of an exaggeration. Thanks to the internet, there are myriad ways of reinforcing the use of the language in a virtual world whether one is pursuing self-instruction or one is fortunate enough to have a live class. *Windows* and *Microsoft Word* are available in Welsh, likewise *OpenOffice.org* and *Mozilla Firefox*, as well as several other common programs (*Meddal*). Facebook and Google are also both available in the language. Wales' largest music company, Sain, has nearly its entire catalog since its inception in the 1960's available for download on *iTunes*. Of course, for the beginning student, some of this may prove too daunting. Switching *Windows* over to a new language could be a source of great angst when error messages are incomprehensible.

For those just getting started, the BBC offers a wide range of online courses free-of-charge which can be found at their *Learn Welsh* website. Here they have archived some of their most popular online courses including "The Big Welsh Challenge", "Catchphrase" and "Colin and Cumberland." For students who prefer a book with audio, a Google search will yield a number of text books published over the last fifty years. There are also a number of Welsh language learning CD-ROMs including Rosetta Stone (no longer being published, but used copies can be found, and some websites offer the content for download) and downloadable content like *Instant Immersion* by Eurotalk (this company also sells CD-ROM courses). Beyond these, again, a simple online search will yield other possibilities for online learning, sometimes interactive. "Say Something in Welsh" is an online Welsh course claiming to have over 15,000 clients, past and present. Interestingly enough, this company also offers a live boot camp in Wales using an immersion method and has noted the presence of Americans in this course ("Learning Welsh").

Finally the University of Wales Trinity St. David also offers an online course.

Whatever method a student uses to learn the language, be it a college course, a community course, a residential course or self-study, each one presents benefits and challenges to learning the language, and moreover, to becoming proficient in it. It is my considered opinion after teaching Welsh for eighteen years, that for the average student, a traditional college class is the most promising environment. The college class will meet at regular intervals and offer traditional structure with clear goals and objectives. The course will have some form of assessment and evaluation, and the student will leave with the tangible benefit of college credit. He or she will also know how well he or she performed vis-à-vis whatever evaluations the instructor may have used. While the instructor's primary job will not be teaching Welsh, in almost all cases his or her primary job will be in the teaching profession (generally language related), so the students are much more likely to have a person guiding them with real classroom experience, and someone whom the institution believes is duly qualified to teach the language. Of course, to the student only looking for a taste of the language or only wishing to be able to sing hymns at a Cymanfa Ganu, the college course also provides a great deal of pressure, and the opportunity to fail in the course and have a transcript which says so. Nonetheless, for the serious student, a college course offers the rigors and expectations that I believe establish a solid foundation for further self-instruction as the opportunity to study much beyond the equivalent of the first semester or two in this modality is exceedingly rare.

The second best option would be one of the residential courses. The great benefit to this type of course (I have attended one Welsh Heritage Week and taught at one Cwrs Cymraeg) is the sense of community it builds among the students. Given the internet in general, programs like Skype and various forms of online chat, this sense of community can continue even after the course is over. Such technology also provides the opportunity to use the

language beyond the course, or at the very least offer each other support when students return home and in most cases to self-instruction. The course work is intensive - approximately five hours of language instruction per day at Cwrs Cymraeg, for example. This level of work offers constant reinforcement of material in a dynamic environment in which students use the language not just every day, but for multiple hours per day. For both courses, at least some of the instructional staff comes from Wales. In the case of Cwrs Cymraeg, about half the staff is native to North America, and this provides the benefit of a good example to students demonstrating how they too can become proficient. Of course, the method for neither course is immersion, and once students leave the instructional space, relatively few of them use the language in social gatherings unless an instructor comes by and forces them! Moreover, neither course has any form of assessment or evaluation of the students' work, so it would be difficult to show in any substantive terms how successful these courses really are in promoting students' proficiency. Indeed, to the best of my knowledge there is no form of assessment of the courses as a whole, and this is again one element where college courses have an advantage. Given new standards and rigors of course and program assessment in nearly all institutions of higher learning in the U.S. and Canada, measurements and mechanisms for course improvement and validation of course outcomes are generally in place for college level courses where this is not the case, obviously for community courses, nor even for the two residential courses. For those students who do not have the discipline to study on their own at the end of the program, returning to the course can mean staying at the same level year after year.

Local Welsh classes offer a fair compromise between self-study and the formal classroom, but by no means should one expect a consistent level of instruction in community-based courses. Interestingly, while there are few of them, it really is not possible to make generalizations about them. Some, like those offered by the Welsh League of Arizona are fairly formal, whereas

others, like the small courses I learned about from students at Cwrs Cymraeg this year, consist of a couple people getting together at a coffee shop and practicing reading skills with no instructor. Certainly, these are nice support groups for learning, but the objective observer would be hard-pressed to say that a great deal of critical learning actually goes on during these meetings, especially without the presence of an instructor. Other courses meet in church or community classrooms, while others meet in instructors' homes. The numbers of students vary widely as well, from just a couple to as many as a dozen.

I am unaware of any community course that offers students any form of assessment or evaluation. In fact, in our local class, the students refused the very notion of quizzes or exams (although, they do like to write and are no longer afraid of my red pen!). Much like the two residential courses, students can spend a great deal of time at one level. In our class, we had one dear lady who attended for fourteen years before she moved out of the area, but never really got beyond a very basic level. She enjoyed coming to the course, and she participated as well as she could, so I continued to allow her back. At the end of the day, few of the community courses are going to produce competent speakers, but they are good support groups, and provide a positive social experience related to, if not necessarily in, the language. They can, also, be solid sources of support for people who are in self-study, and to be fair, anyone who appears to have come out of a community course as a competent speaker has most likely done so because he or she spent a great deal of time as an individual working with the language with whatever means were available. For example, we have one student in our local class who has studied a great deal on her own, but coming to class gives her validation and a small space in which to practice and improve her skills.

That said, self-study then is the way for the rest of North America's Welsh students. I won't spend time in this article rating the various curricula

and materials available to students. Self-instruction is difficult no matter which platform a student chooses, and with no community support, the self-taught Welsh speaker needs to be extremely dedicated and disciplined. Online materials actually make this burden a little lighter, but the necessity to sit with the language on a regular basis and commit to it is the single most important element. I know this all too well because I am self-taught, and while I consider myself a very competent Welsh speaker today, when I began at the tender age of eleven, the only resource I could procure was an ancient edition of *Teach Yourself Welsh*, and that itself was a precious thing because it came from a library on the other side of the state. That said, with no one with whom to practice or to catch mistakes, learning correct patterns of writing and speech is very challenging, and the risk for fossilization is very great. Moreover, the only encouragement the self-study student gets is from a quixotic sense of accomplishment that only he or she can appreciate.

Looking then toward the future of Welsh instruction in Canada and the United States, among the goals we should set is creating stronger networks between Welsh learners and speakers so as to dissolve some of the vast isolation learners experience between classes or when they engage in self-instruction. In order to do this, we need to use social networking sites more effectively than we do, and more efficiently than we do. Rather than Welsh societies supporting language classes, spawning Welsh language meetups in large cities could see language classes or study groups supporting new or established Welsh organizations. For this to happen, however, we need to change our approach and coordinate our efforts far more than we do now. Indeed, any networking that currently goes on between Welsh groups, enthusiasts and national and regional organizations is just happenstance. The Welsh American Foundation, the Welsh National Gymanfa Ganu Association, Cymdeithas Madog and the Welsh Harp and Heritage Society of North America are the bodies best positioned to create and manage such a

network. Such cooperative planning activities could avoid unfortunate situations where we unintentionally create "Welsh language learning deserts." For example, among the greatest benefits from the two residential courses is that they offer those without a local Welsh class to have one come near them, but there are times when both courses are in the same part of the country and happen at the same time! As an aside, I would not advocate that either course go to Wales itself. For those students who want to go to Wales to study on a course, there are many for them to choose from, and there is no real reason to duplicate the work being done there. Rather, either or both organizations that offer Welsh language instruction here should work with a course in Wales and help send their students there for further study. With so few opportunities for learning Welsh in a formal setting on this side of the Atlantic, their mission really does need to stay here.

These organizations might also consider establishing multiple long-weekend courses around both the U.S. and Canada in places known to have large Welsh heritage populations. Such smaller and shorter courses might also act as feeders into the national level courses, and may even inspire learners' circles to start up in those communities. I have little doubt that interest in learning Welsh is out there, but potential students need a geographically and economically viable option for a course. With the passage of time, if enough of these regional courses were successful, they would likely become sources for more competent instructors for future community courses, and this increases the opportunities for live courses.

Unfortunately, for the reasons I have variously outlined in this article, the current culture in Welsh-North American circles fosters a disconnect between potential and actual students, and opportunities they could otherwise have to further their study and practice the language. Between the two countries there are almost 5,000 Welsh speakers as I mentioned at the beginning of this piece. With cooperation and coordination, we should be able

to access more of them and broaden opportunities for more Welsh language learning in our two countries.

In conclusion, it can be said with some certainty that the facilities for learning Welsh in North America today are better than they were twenty-five or thirty years ago. At that time, the two residential Welsh courses were just getting started, there was no internet, and learning about other Welsh speakers or classes in your community happened mostly by accident. The internet and social networking sites now provide us with more vehicles to learn the language and use it, even though we have not been as successful with that endeavor as we might. Intuitively I feel that interest in the language has not waned, rather it has grown in small increments over the years. I believe that with more cooperation between the various national-level Welsh organizations, we can provide more support and more opportunities for using and learning the language. Hopefully the next decade will engender that sense of cooperation, and the next time this publication looks at this question, we will see marked improvements.

List of Institutions of Higher Learning in the United States and Canada that teach Welsh and Levels Offered:

(N.B. All of these institutions are listed on the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition website except for the course at my own institution. Specific bibliographical information on the Center can be found in my works cited list.)

Institutions with confirmed courses for Fall 2012 or confirmed courses in the recent past:

1. Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah: Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced

2. Cornell University, Ithaca, New York: Elementary and Middle Welsh

3. Harvard University, Cambridge Massachusetts: Elementary, Intermediate, Medieval and Middle Welsh

4. Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana: Elementary

5. University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, California: Elementary, Intermediate, Advanced and Medieval Welsh

6. University of Hawaii, Manoa, Honolulu, Hawaii: Medieval Welsh Language Learning in North America

7. University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario: Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced

Institutions listed as "independent study", "special topics" or institutions where I was unable to confirm courses for Fall 2012:

8. Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts: Elementary

9. Cincinnati University, Cincinnati, Ohio: Intermediate

10. Fulton-Montgomery Community College, Johnstown, New York: Elementary

11. Marylhurst University, Marylhurst, Oregon: Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced

12. Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia: Medieval Welsh

13. University of California, Los Angeles, California: Elementary, Intermediate, Advanced and Medieval

14. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced

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GAELIC 2.0 - Advances and New Challenges

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Since the invention of the personal computer, the digital age has advanced relentlessly. This advance, in particular in conjunction with the advent of the Internet, has created both new opportunities and new challenges for smaller languages such as Scottish Gaelic.

People in the field of language shift have long argued that the use of new technologies can benefit languages which are under pressure (Crystal, 2000). Unfortunately, in most cases these efforts are sporadic and retroactive and only rarely concerted or aimed at driving technological change and innovation to the benefit of small languages. Scottish Gaelic is a prime example of a typical "mixed case", having made some advances but also running into new challenges.

Access and usage of new technologies

Computers and the Internet have become all but omnipresent in

developed countries. In Great Britain, 80% of people across all age-groups accessed the Internet in 2011 in some form, a figure which in the age groups below 54 rises to between 86% and 95% (Ofcom 2011). Ownership of digital hardware is also high. In 2011, 96% of all people in Scotland aged between 16-24 owned a PC or laptop and 48% owned at least one other item of digital hardware such as a smartphone or console (Scotland's People, 2011). In Canada, the figures are very similar, with 79% in 2010 reporting access to the Internet (Statistics Canada 2010).

The impact of interface languages

Although this aspect of technology is still under-researched, there is some research which shows that the language used to interface with technology has an impact on the language skills and patterns of users and a high capability for self-driven learning amongst children using digital technology.

Experiments and research from the 1990s onwards, such as the *Hole in the Wall* experiment (Mitra 2005), have led to the concept of *Minimally Invasive Education.* It has been demonstrated that children, without guidance, are capable of acquiring a wide range of skills, even if they are presented with technology in a language they do not understand or only partly understand.

In other languages, such as German, computing is seen as one of the main conveyors of English loanwords into the language, especially amongst younger people where terms such as "cancel" have long ousted native terms such as "abbrechen" (Jašová 2007).

This supports the fairly intuitive assumption that the more of a given language a user sees on screen, the more likely that is to impact on his/her language patterns.

Availability

The first step towards reaping the potential benefits of the impact a

"Gaelic-speaking computer" could have on the language behavior of its users is making such tools available.

There has been significant growth in this area in the last two to three years, both in the field of Open Source and proprietary software. As this is a completely new development, we will give a slightly more detailed overview on this topic.

Office Applications

- LibreOffice
  The free office suite OpenOffice.org was first translated into Gaelic in 2004/05 but had fallen dormant by 2009. When OpenOffice.org itself fell dormant, efforts for re-translation shifted to the new incarnation called LibreOffice and version 3.4.4 was released in Gaelic late in 2011 and has been regularly maintained. It runs on all major platforms and has two spellcheckers available, one conforming to the Gaelic Orthographic Conventions (GOC), the other being an "open" spellchecker allowing both GOC and traditional spellings.

- Microsoft
  From Windows 8 onwards, Microsoft for the most part no longer provides its operating system and applications as standalone versions in a specific language. Instead, users install a base language (usually English) and then have a choice of language packs which can be downloaded for no additional charge. A Gaelic language pack for Windows was released in November 2012 (covering most of the operating system, Internet Explorer, Paint, SkyDrive, Outlook.com and most of the tiled apps), with a language pack for Office 15 in preparation.

Web Applications

- Facebook

    A "Facebook Mini" application was launched in 2012 which overlays the most common messages in Facebook with Gaelic as Facebook continues to refuse support for most smaller languages.

- Firefox

    The Mozilla Firefox browser has been available in Gaelic since 2010. It also contains a spellchecker and a variety of other tools such as the Quick Locale Switcher which allows switching between languages and Accentuate.us which automatically adds diacritics in a wide variety of languages including Gaelic. A release of Fennec in Gaelic, Mozilla's mobile browser, is putatively expected in 2013.

- Internet Explorer

    Internet Explorer is also covered by the Gaelic language pack released in 2012 (see above *Microsoft* under *Office Applications*).

- Thunderbird

    Mozilla Thunderbird, the email application, has also been available since 2010 and contains a spellchecker and a calendar application in Gaelic called Lightning.

- Opera

    The Opera browser had been available in Gaelic between 2002-2004 but also fell dormant until it was re-released in 2010. It also contains a spellchecker and is available for mobile devices under the name Opera Mini/Mobile.

Games

Research carried out on behalf of Bòrd na Gàidhlig suggested that the development of industry-standard games specifically for the Gaelic market would be prohibitively expensive (Galloway 2011), although this research was

based on a very narrow definition of what is economic and failed to take into account wider considerations and innovative approaches. Notwithstanding, a number of Open Source games of decent quality have become available in the meantime.

- Battle for Wesnoth
  A partial translation for this turn-based tactical strategy game was released in 2012.
- Freeciv
  This Open Source version of Sid Maier's classic strategy game was released in Gaelic in 2011.
- MegaGlest
  A partial localization was released for this real-time strategy game in 2012.
- Scrabble3D
  This game, including a special Gaelic letter set, has been available since 2011 and allows both local games against the computer and via the game server against other people anywhere in the world.
- GCompris
  Following a request from a Gaelic-medium school for educational games, this suite of educational programs has also been localized and several adaptations to the code have been committed to the project (for example enabling digraphs like bh, ch, dh etc in the letter and word games) to improve the handling of some Gaelic-specific aspects. It is slated for release some time in 2013.

Other Applications
- Adaptxt
  Dictionaries for this free predictive texting tool for the Android platform (both smartphones and tablets) were released for Gaelic, Irish and Manx in 2012 and enjoy comparatively healthy download figures.

- Indigenous Tweets

  While Twitter itself is not available in Gaelic, a project has been set up which allows users of smaller languages to more easily identify Twitter users who tweet in their languages. It currently lists more than 650 Gaelic twitterers of which about 150 are regular/high volume users.

- phpBB

  The front-end of the phpBB forum software has been translated into Gaelic and is distributed free of charge via the Fòram na Gàidhlig site and used by a number of Gaelic forums.

- WordPress

  The blogging software and platform WordPress.org has been available in Gaelic since 2011, WordPress.com since 2012.

- VLC

  VLC is a popular open-source media player which has been available in Gaelic since June 2012.

Various other tools and applications are also available in Gaelic including Joomla!, MediaWiki, Skype and various smaller games.

Many popular systems and tools continue to lag behind for various reasons. For instance, in the case of Apple products, support for smaller languages in general appears to be highly sporadic. While Android technically is an Open Source project which could be translated, there is little reason to do so while manufacturers remain unwilling to adopt a more inclusive or flexible approach to interface languages.

Due to the fluid nature of software and software translation, two dedicated sites have been set up to collate information and support users. All Gaelic programs known to exist are collated at www.iGaidhlig.net, with plans for a digital "dashboard" to simplify the installation and maintenance for users. Technical support for any software issue relating specifically to Gaelic

is provided by volunteers on Fòram na Gàidhlig (www.foramnagaidhlig.net).

Dormancy

The issue of projects falling dormant is inherent to many medium to small languages, not just Gaelic. For example, Firefox in Mongolian has been dormant since 2009 and since 2011 in Georgian (Mozilla 2012). The two most common scenarios which result in software translation into such a language either involve one-off funding with no long-term funding plan or a single dedicated volunteer. As a result, once the funding comes to an end or the individual for some reason can no longer maintain the language, the project falls dormant.

Uptake

The uptake of such tools is hard to judge in most cases. Mozilla's usage data indicates the number of regular users of Firefox in Gaelic in the US and Canada remains consistently low. Approximately a dozen regular users were recorded in 2012, with user numbers in the UK hovering around 100, suggesting that more must be done to encourage individuals and organizations towards Gaelic software.

Amongst Gaelic organizations, the uptake varies. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig offers various Gaelic programs, including Firefox, Opera, LibreOffice and VLC on the college computers although the exact offering varies from location to location within the college. Several schools, such as Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu, have also expressed interest in using Gaelic software.

This appears to be a common problem for minoritized languages. Although Firefox for example has a market share of approximately 20-25% (Netmarketshare, 2012; W3Counter, 2012), the uptake amongst languages such as Irish, Welsh, Breton, Scottish Gaelic or West Frisian is less than 1% in relation to the number of speakers (Mozilla, 2011). The uptake amongst Catalan and Basque speakers is only slightly better (1.5% and 2.5% respectively). This suggests that in order to achieve reasonable uptake, the challenge

for these communities is to find better ways of promoting software in these languages and to support its users.

Interestingly, there seems to be a marked difference between the uptake of software tools which are in Gaelic versus those which provide some sort of capability for the language. Comparing the uptake of Firefox (approx. 100 regular users as of early 2013) with the usage figures for the Gaelic spell-checker for Mozilla products (approx. 400 on average since its release) and the download figures for the predictive texting tool Adaptxt (452 downloads between 31 Oct and 31 Dec 2012), there is a remarkable difference. It is not clear what the governing factor for this difference is, but as it is repeated in other languages (cf. 500-700 users of Firefox in Irish vs approx. 2,700 users of the Irish spellchecker for Mozilla), this seems a question worth investigating.

Promotion

Some factors have a negative impact on uptake. These include (in no specific order):

1. A higher level of adult illiteracy (in Gaelic) amongst older speakers (recent research in Shawbost (Lewis) reported that 66% of the community are speakers, 64% readers but only 21% writers (Munro 2012))

2. An ageing group of speakers (in Shawbost, 87% of speakers were over the age of 35 (Munro 2012)) - bearing in mind the uptake of new technology is generally lower whatever the language in these age groups

3. Low confidence in "experimenting" with software in all but the youngest age groups

4. No simple means of informing the target audience without incurring significant costs

5. In organizations, the outsourcing of ICT services to third parties, resulting in complex procedures when trying to change the software/

settings on offer

6. A predominance of mixed language households even in many Gaelic speaking areas. According to the 2001 census, only in the Western Isles did households where both adults speak Gaelic (70%) out-number such where only one adult speaks Gaelic; in the Highland Region and Argyll and Bute, all-Gaelic households are in the minority (34%) and elsewhere in Scotland, the figure is even lower (MacKinnon 2009).

Some steps are being taken to address this issue. Two language plans (The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh University) have recently included targets for promoting Gaelic software to their staff/students and some Gaelic organizations are beginning to include links to relevant Gaelic software.

Many of the issues are outside the control of any organization attempting to increase the uptake but based on two small pilot projects, it would seem that the single most successful means of encouraging uptake is to hold face-to-face sessions where people are shown how to install and use the various programs.

Media, Old and New

With increasingly blurred borders between digital technology and publishing, this aspect is also relevant in the sense that it can provide Gaelic content, if not interfaces. Using the term media in the loosest sense, this field has seen the biggest changes in the last 10 years. At the "traditional" end of the spectrum, a new publisher and retailer of Gaelic books, CDs and DVDs has established itself in Nova Scotia. Based in St. Andrews, Antigonish County, Sìol Cultural Enterprises offers an increasingly wide range of both local and imported materials in and about Scottish Gaelic. This increased offering has benefited substantially from developments in print-on-demand publishing. Blurring the boundaries between authors and publishers, this new technology

has lowered the bar for new publishers, removed the age-old conundrum of the advantages and disadvantages of large vs small print runs and in some cases reduced the cost of importing books from overseas as many print-on-demand houses allow remote print runs.

With Gaelic eBooks being planned by several Scottish publishers, the book scene promises to become more diverse in the coming years. In terms of local educational and material support, most still hail from Nova Scotia but the spread of fast Internet connections has opened a variety of options for learners both in Canada and the United States for individual learners, classes and groups alike.

At the most basic level, it has eased communication between distant individuals and groups with an interest in learning or teaching Gaelic and opened up access to digital resources. Groups such as *An Comunn Gaidhealach* now have digital newsletters and online forums, allowing users to ask questions, learn, teach, practice and communicate. VoIP tools such as Skype have also created the opportunity for inter-continental communication at zero or very limited cost, giving rise to Gaelic over Skype classes and suchlike. The Atlantic Gaelic Academy also offers five levels of Gaelic instruction with a certified instructor using VoIP. Digital resources can be roughly grouped into three categories: media, educational resources and heritage resources. Heritage resources have grown significantly and give unprecedented access to textual, audio, visual and audiovisual records of Gaelic on both sides of the Atlantic. This includes the Canadian projects *Cainnt mo Mhàthar* (www. cainntmomhathar.com), *An Drochaid Eadarainn*, Highland Village, Iona, Cape Breton (a joint project with the Nova Scotia Gaelic Affairs Office); and *Gaelstream/Sruth nan Gàidheal*, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, N.S. and Scottish projects such as *Am Baile* (a digital archive of Highland culture; www.ambaile.org.uk), *Tobar an Dualchais* (the digital project of the School of Scottish Studies; www.tobarandualchais.co.uk) and *Pròiseact*

MhicGilleMhìcheil MhicBhatair (the Carmichael Watson Project; www.car-michaelwatson.lib.ed.ac.uk). In addition, some of the larger digital online archives such as the Internet Archive (www.archive.org) also hold significant numbers of digitized out-of-copyright Gaelic books.

BBC Alba, a channel broadcasting in Scots Gaelic only, was launched in the UK in 2008 and is a source both of rebroadcasts and new program-ming. The BBC currently has IP blocks in place to restrict access to its Gaelic programs to UK residents only, although there are hopes that these will be lifted in the near future. However, the existence of a significant community of British expats has given rise to tools such as ExpatShield which circum-vent such blocks, including Gaelic programs available on the BBC's digital platform, the iPlayer. While the offering of Gaelic radio programming has not increased, BBC Radio nan Gaidheal continues to be available via the Internet.

Significant digital educational resources are created by educational insti-tutions, those in charge of the media and occasionally private individuals and organizations. Part of the BBC's offering includes many learning resources available via their website, from basic phrases with accompanying sound clips to interactive games to daily news with definitions for specific Gaelic vocabu-lary. Also available on the BBC site and on iTunes are podcasts by Roddy MacLean, who shares stories, proverbs, and folklore with clear accompanying explanations of key vocabulary and grammar concepts. He offers two different podcasts: *An Litir Bheag* (The Little Letter) and *Litir do Luchd-Ionnsachaidh* (Letter to Learners). The former is aimed at learners in the earlier stages of Gaelic acquisition while the latter is for those more comfortable with slight-ly more advanced structure and grammar. In a joint project between many Gaelic organizations, many of these resources are currently being brought together on a new site called LearnGaelic.net (www.learngaelic.net). It includes a digitized version of the Speaking Our Language program, a global

map of Gaelic courses for adults, a dictionary, information on Gaelic and on learning Gaelic, and a wide variety of other tools and materials for all age groups. Phase 1 of the project has been implemented and there are plans for new features and new programming in Phase 2, due to begin in 2012.

In addition to the *Stòr-dàta*, an online database of technical terminology, which has existed since 1994, the most significant new dictionary resources are the online searchable version of Dwelly's classic dictionary (www.dwelly. info) and *Am Faclair Beag* (www.faclair.com) which brings together both Dwelly's dictionary and modern terminology, idiom and examples of usage. In addition, the *Faclair Beag* also contains some sound files and indicates native/fluent speaker judgments on how well known a given word is and a map feature indicating geographical usage of words especially in Scotland but also abroad for additional guidance. A version of this dictionary has also been incorporated in the LearnGaelic site.

New Challenges

While the above certainly points to a significant improvement of, at the very least, the availability of tools, many old and some new challenges remain. While Open Source tools such as LibreOffice offer free, good quality office applications which welcome new translations, there is at the same time an ongoing shift to cloud computing and mobile devices.

The provision of office applications online via services such as GoogleDocs thus provides a new challenge as few of the big commercial providers such as Google currently cater for smaller languages, be it via in-house or community based localization.

In addition, the technological bar for new developments is continually being raised. For example, while there are now Open Source predictive texting projects which are willing to enable smaller languages, the emergence of voice recognition tools on smartphones, should it become the norm, would raise the bar beyond the capability and capacity of most community-based efforts.

Conclusion

Given the role of technology in modern life and its impact on the language usage patterns of the end user, small languages can no longer afford to ignore this issue or engage in sporadic activity. It requires a sustained effort with the aim of creating a broad range of tools and games and ensuring maximum uptake, in particular amongst young people. Scottish Gaelic has made good progress in terms of availability but much work remains to be done to ensure that the use of Gaelic software and other digital offerings becomes as commonplace as the reading of a Gaelic book or listening to Gaelic radio.

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METAPHORS WE LEARN BY: LEXICAL RESOURCES FOR IRISH SPEAKERS

Séamas Ó Direáin
Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge, Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh

Abstract

Strong concerns have been raised in recent years concerning the quality of the spoken Irish of the younger generation of speakers, particularly in the Gaeltacht[1], as Irish comes under the pervasive influence of English. At the base of these concerns is a fear of the long-term effects of linguistic change over time on spoken Irish thoughout Ireland as new generations of bilingual speakers of Irish reshape the language – particularly in the direction of English, with young speakers adopting not only English vocabulary but English idioms and structures in their conversational Irish. Are there ways in which conscientious speakers of Irish both inside and outside the Gaeltacht can draw on the rich vocabulary, idioms and structures of traditional spoken Irish when speaking Irish in everyday situations? Noting in particular the crucial role of metaphor in the growth of spoken languages throughout history – especially in the elaboration of the lexicon, we will examine three powerful lexical tools of Modern Irish –

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1 By the term "Gaeltacht", I refer here to the officially designated Irish-speaking areas of the Republic of Ireland. The term "Gaeltachtaí" is the plural form.

Foclóir Póca/Foclóir Scoile, Gearrfhoclóir Gaeilge/Béarla and *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla* – to see how these lexical resources could be used jointly in order to expand a speaker's understanding of spoken Irish. We will see how such resources can enable advanced adult learners of Irish both to explore the metaphorical content of the Irish language more systematically and to enrich their spoken (and written) Irish wherever they speak it – in the Gaeltachtaí or in the wider world.

The Purpose of This Article

This article is directed to a particular readership – adults who are relatively fluent in Irish. It matters little whether they are native speakers of Irish or whether they have learned their Irish through formal education. It matters not whether they live in the Republic of Ireland or outside the Republic. The article is not directed to children, to those adults who have not yet acquired some fluency already in the language, to teachers teaching Irish on any level or to designers of courses to teach Irish.

This article, furthermore, is directed at adults prepared to exercise initiative – to improve their Irish on their own, outside the educational system. More specifically, this article aims at encouraging such adults to use three powerful lexical tools in order to enrich their spoken Irish – not simply to improve their reading or writing of Irish. The ultimate objective of this article, in fact, is not to encourage use of these lexical resources so that isolated speakers of the language may develop a deeper knowledge of Irish simply for their personal satisfaction. It is to encourage committed speakers to use these lexical tools to enrich their conversation in Irish with other Irish speakers. There is, therefore, an intended social context for the activities recommended in this article. The author hopes that individuals, by using these powerful tools to increase their individual spoken competence in the language, may improve the quality of the Irish spoken in the networks of Irish speakers in which they participate. Such networks may exist far outside educational institutions and far outside the official Gaeltacht – in fact, far outside the Republic of Ireland,

since Irish now – as in the time of the Great Famine – exists in a clearly global context. The objective, then, is to see that the Irish spoken in networks of Irish speakers wherever they may be found today reflects not only the rich spoken Irish of the past centuries, but also the new, positive developments in the language which have occurred more recently.

Concerns over the Quality of Spoken Irish Today

In his article "Mionteangú na Gaeilge"[2], Brian Ó Curnáin illustrates the linguistic changes occurring in the spoken Irish of the younger generations in the Connemara Gaeltacht under the powerful influence of English, a language which is encroaching on these tiny linguistic communities from all sides – especially through the modern mass media, which are as prevalent today in the Irish-speaking areas of Ireland as they are anywhere in the English-speaking world. Aidan Doyle speaks of similar phenomena in the Irish of speakers throughout Ireland, but cautions against quick judgements concerning linguistic phenomena which have been occurring in fact for centuries in Ireland, and which are often surprisingly complex in their nature.[3]

Michael Cronin also describes the long tradition of multilingualism and translation in Ireland, extending back at least to the time of the Christianization of Ireland, and including strong influences from Latin and French in addition to English, to say nothing of yet other languages acquired by Irish scholars from time to time[4]. But of course, those earlier times were times in which the Irish language was in a vigorously healthy state and was spoken in a chain of historically related dialects from Cork to Inverness and united by a written language from the 13th century to the middle of the 17th

2 Cf. Ó Curnáin (2009). Feargal Ó Béarra has also given warning of rapid linguistic change in the Connemara Gaeltacht. Cf. Ó Béarra (2007). The term "mionteangú" itself is a term coined by Ó Curnáin and may be interpreted as meaning the social marginalization of a language to the point where it functions simply as a minority language, regardless of its legal status within a state.
3 Cf. Doyle (2000).
4 Cf. Cronin (1996).

century[5]. In those times the language could absorb influences from other languages with ease, without losing its basic characteristics.

However, as the founders of the Gaelic League pointed out over a century ago, the health of the language is in a very delicate state, and as a spoken language, it is never far from death's door, though significant gains have been made in many domains of language use in recent years, especially outside the traditional Irish-speaking areas, as even Ó Curnáin points out. Nevertheless, the Gaeltachtaí have continued to shrink, and the future of the language still hangs in the balance, especially among the youngest speakers of Irish in the Gaeltachtaí. Therefore, even if the Irish language survives, there is concern over the quality of the language which survives. Will the language, spoken and written, reflect the Irish of the best speakers of the language in past centuries, or will it be profoundly affected by the English language, so that its very idioms and turns of speech will be largely loan translations of English idioms?

In providing translations of foreign works as a means of making literature in Irish available quickly to a new generation of Irish readers who were learning the language in schools, those in the government of the Irish Free State who were responsible for the provision of such reading material were acutely aware of the problem of loan translation when translating literary works from English to Irish. As An tAthair Peadar Ua Laoghaire had advised those translating into Irish as far back as 1899:

> Read over the English matter carefully. Take all the ideas into your mind. Squeeze the ideas clean from all English *froth*. Be sure you allow none of that oozy stuff to remain. English is full of it. You must also get rid of everything in the shape of metaphor.

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5 For example, the Scottish bishop John Carswell's Reformed liturgical work *Foirm na n-Urruidheadh*, published in Scotland in 1567, was written in the classical Irish of the Irish poets of the period.

> Take instead of it the true idea which the metaphor is intended
> to convey. When you have the ideas cleared completely of foreign
> matter, put them into the Irish side of your mind and shape them
> in the Irish language, just as you would if they had been your own
> ideas from the start.[6]

The problem is that we cannot "get rid of … the … metaphor"! As we shall see, languages swim in an ocean of metaphor. In fact, Guy Deutscher describes any language as a "reef of dead metaphors", in which layer upon layer of metaphor grows constantly over the centuries.[7] What Fr. Ua Laoghaire probably meant to say was "Try to cut through to the basic thought in English, however it might be expressed, and then allow your native sense of the Irish language free play in translating that thought into natural Irish idiom." In other words, translate the thought, stripped of its English idiom, into natural, idiomatic Irish.

It may sound contradictory to speak of thought as something distinct from language, but as Steven Pinker maintains, the language of thought and language in its spoken and written forms are distinct entities in the brain. That is why we tend to remember the content of what is said rather than the linguistic form of the utterance. Because of this independence of thought and language, we can convey a relatively abstract thought from one system of metaphors (Language A) to a completely distinct system of metaphors (Language B) without much distortion of meaning. In fact, abstract thoughts are normally expressed through metaphor, and when we express a thought, we can usually choose one of several metaphors in which to clothe that thought.[8]

In sum, then, in handling two languages at once, we are inevitably juggling two complex universes of metaphors. This explains the emphasis – in

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6 In Cronin (1996), 147.
7 Deutscher (2005), 118.
8 Cf. Pinker (2008) for a full discussion of the issues involved, especially Chapter 5. Pioneering work was on systems of metaphors in languages was done by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. For example, see Lakoff and Johnson (1980).

the advice normally given to translators – on maintaining intact the rich system of traditional metaphors in any given language and especially on not swamping a minority language with inappropriate metaphors from a dominant language.

However, in striving to keep two systems of metaphors (in two languages) separate from one another, we may encounter difficulties in ascertaining which metaphors are "native" to a language and which are "foreign". When we say in Irish *Ní chuirfidh mé suas leis sin!* ("I won't put up with that!") or *Cé a chuir suas leis é?* ("Who put him up to it?"), are we dealing with an Irish idiom which entered the English language centuries ago, or are we dealing with an English idiom which entered the Irish language centuries ago? Insisting on so-called "linguistic purity" as a goal, therefore, may be a pointless task.

Leaving questions of linguistic purity aside, it seems sensible to demand that an idiom, whatever its provenance, make sense in the language in which it is expressed. In other words, if a borrowed idiom makes sense in the recipient language only when one knows the equivalent idiom in the donor language, it shouldn't be used, since it is not enriching the system of metaphors in the recipient language. Similarly, it seems reasonable to demand that a borrowed expression not distort the syntax of the recipient language.

Having raised these general issues, how do we – whether as relatively fluent native speakers of Irish or as advanced learners of Irish – provide ourselves with a rich body of Irish metaphor which we can use in our spoken Irish?

Exploring the World of Metaphor in Modern Irish

Certainly the learner of Irish today has access to a rich assortment of materials for learning the language that were not available to learners even 40 years ago, when I began learning Irish. Native speakers still exist both inside

and outside the Gaeltachtaí – including cities of the Irish diaspora over the globe. Raidió na Gaeltachta[9] can be heard online anywhere in the world, and its archives are now online as well. A rich body of written modern Irish literature now exists as well. Insofar as idioms and metaphors can be extracted from live and recorded conversations with fluent speakers of Irish and from written texts of all sorts, it seems safe to say that the learner is well supplied with material embedded in its natural context.

But beyond this, materials now exist that allow the learner to explore the rich networks of metaphor and idiom much more systematically than ever before. I refer to three dictionaries in particular: the massive *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla*, its abridged counterpart *Gearrfhoclóir Gaeilge/Béarla,* and the little *Foclóir Póca/Foclóir Scoile*[10], which allows us to clothe the written expressions with phonetic content.

As reference works, they were revolutionary additions to the language learning materials of the time. I remember my helplessness as a beginner in Irish confronted with a sentence relating that a character in a story went to the poorhouse *i leaba a mháthar* (literally, "in his mother's bed"), and I wondered why on earth he went to the poorhouse in his mother's bed. Only when the *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla* became available did I realize that the phrase could also be interpreted as an idiomatic construction meaning "instead of his mother"! This dictionary was of immense importance to me in decrypting some of the most puzzling passages in the literature.

But here in this discussion I wish to emphasize the importance of these three reference works to the speaker of Irish rather than to the reader of Irish – as a rich source of metaphor and idiom for learners of Irish – especially advanced learners – conversing with one another in conversation groups

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9 The national radio service in the Irish language in the Republic of Ireland, broadcast primarily for the Irish-speaking areas, but available throughout the Republic.
10 In English, the three titles would be "Irish-English Dictionary", "Short Irish-English Dictionary" and "Pocket Dictionary/School Dictionary".

outside the Gaeltachtaí. To make Irish live in non-Irish speaking areas, the speech of Irish speakers must reflect the richness of the language as native speakers speak it and as it appears in the written literature. In my experience this is an achievable goal.

Beginning with the *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla*, this is the finest dictionary that I have ever seen in terms of dealing with the various senses of a lexical entry – and I am familiar with dictionaries of many languages – from Swahili to Lithuanian. The longer lexical entries run over several pages of material in double columns. For example, the lexical entry for the verb *cuir* ("put, place, etc.") runs through six pages – including subsections for collocations such as verb-plus-prepositional phrases (*cuir ar …* ["put on…"]) or verb-plus-directional adverbs (*cuir amach …* ["put out…"]).

Starting with the simple root of the verb, we can observe the semantic development of a core concept. For example, the section for the simple root itself, *cuir*, contains a series of 12 subtly differentiated senses, and we perceive a sense of semantic development as we move from sense to sense. The precise definitions of each sense are supplied with examples of the verb embedded in phrases and sentences, so that we can intuit meanings beyond the bare definitions. By the end of a subsection, we tend to have a global feel for the semantic scope and complexity of the lexical item – as well as handy phrases which can be "plugged into" a conversation. Even proverbs are often included among the examples, so that phrases can be memorized for their value as part of the oral literature of the Irish traditional culture – and as a deeper insight into the collective mind of older generations.

Other subsections under the same lexical entry *cuir* are devoted to constructions composed of the verb followed by an adverb or a prepositional phrase: *cuir amach*, *cuir ar…*, etc. Many of these constructions are highly idiomatic.[11] The importance of these kinds of constructions cannot be stressed

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11 Recall the constructions mentioned above: *Ní chuirfidh mé suas leis sin!* ("I won't put up with that!") and *Cé a chuir suas leis é?* ("Who put him up to it?").

enough; they are at the core of idiomatic expression in Irish. They were the focus of an earlier work by Tomás Ó Domhnalláin and Dónall Ó Baoill, *Réamhfhocail le Briathra na Gaeilge*, published by the Linguistic Institute of Ireland in 1975.[12] Fortunately, the fruits of that research are to be found in *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla* in even more abundant form.

Note here that we are putting emphasis on learning phrases, rather than on learning words as individual vocabulary items. To use once again the language of metaphor, on the "tree" of living language, words are the "leaves" of the tree, but they grow at the ends of "twigs" – which are the phrases in which individual words are naturally found. The "twigs" join to form larger "branches", which are the clauses and sentences of the language. Thus, all words should be learned in their linguistic context. If you prefer to look for detached leaves, you can find them at the base of the tree, but in that case they are no longer a part of the living tree.

I emphasize these verbal collocations because they are at the heart of metaphor in the Irish language, but there is a mass of interesting material – including many, many useful examples – to be found under all the lexical entries in *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla*.[13] And again I emphasize that the examples can clarify usage in ways that definitions in English cannot – as well as supplying pithy phrases for the learner.

As an example of another part of speech which presents similar complexities, think for a moment about adjectival expressions in Irish. If we use an adjective to modify a noun, we may find little difference between English and Irish, except that in Irish the adjective follows the noun that it modifies: *scéal brónach*, "a sad story". If, however, we want to use the adjective in a predicatival construction, such as "I am sad" in English, to form the Irish equivalent we normally find ourselves using an abstract noun expressing the quality

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12 Cf. Ó Domhnalláin and Ó Baoill (1975) The title of the work in English would be roughly "Verbs in Irish with Following Prepositional Complements.".
13 Henceforth, I will refer to *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla* as *FGB*.

expressed by the adjective followed by a prepositional phrase, e.g., *Tá brón orm*, "There is sadness on me". In other words, Irish has used a spatial metaphor to describe the emotional situation – a situation in which sadness has literally descended on me like a dark cloud. And such expressions to express emotions and mental phenomena are endemic in Irish[14].

Fortunately, *FGB* again comes to the rescue for the learner, and a wealth of expressions may be easily found under the lexical entries for the individual prepositions as well as for the abstract nouns expressing emotions, mental states, and similar phenomena. Here, though, the handy lists of expressions illustrating metaphorical use of prepositions found in more detailed Irish grammars will direct the learner to the lexical entries in *FGB* for the most useful abstract nouns, and these entries will contain the prepositional constructions normally used with such abstract nouns.

Now it may seem that the mass of material in *FGB* is simply overwhelming for any learner of the language. Fortunately, a shorter version of the dictionary appeared soon after the first edition of *FGB* which gave a "bite-sized" version of the lexical entries – *Gearrfhoclóir Gaeilge-Béarla*[15]. For the learner, all the essential material found in *FGB* is found in *Gearrfhoclóir Gaeilge-Béarla*, though there are fewer examples and no cross-references to dialectal equivalents of the lexical items. In fact, for learning the verb-plus-prepositional phrase constructions and the verb-plus-adverb constructions, the "bite-sized chunks" of material in *Gearrfhoclóir Gaeilge-Béarla* would be far more easily assimilated by the learner than the much larger masses of material in *FGB*. Of course, the larger *FGB* would be available as well to provide more examples of a construction for use in conversation or for clarification of an ambiguity

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14 Note the wide range of situations covered, both physical and metaphorical, in such expressions as *Tá cóta orm* ("There is a coat on me"), *Tá dath aisteach orm* ("There is a strange color on me"), *Tá smál orm* ("There is a stain/moral blemish on me"), *Tá smúit orm* ("There is smoke/gloom on me"), *Tá pian orm* ("There is pain on me"), *Tá galar orm* ("There is a disease on me"), *Tá ionadh orm* ("There is wonder/surprise on me"), etc.
15 Cf. An Roinn Oideachais (1981).

found in the shorter list of examples in *Gearrfhoclóir Gaeilge-Béarla*.

How do We Pronounce Words We May Never Have Heard?

Of course, since our focus is on use of these materials in spoken Irish, all this lexical material is of little use if we do not know how to pronounce the words on the pages of the dictionary. Here our third main tool comes into play: the *Foclóir Scoile*.[16] Each lexical entry or headword comes with a phonetic transcription of the sounds of the word. The transcription is in a modified form of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and is relatively straightforward. The idealized dialect which forms the basis for the phonetic transcriptions is the *Lárchanúint don Ghaeilge*[17], devised so as to provide a common spoken form of the language for learners of Irish in non-Irish-speaking areas.

For learners who choose to base their spoken Irish on the Irish heard in one of the three main dialect areas in Ireland, the dictionary is still of great use, since many of the newly coined terms have no dialectal equivalents as yet, and certain older terms may have a pronunciation that could not be predicted from the Standard Irish spelling, e.g., *maidneachan* ("dawn(ing)") – which may be pronounced with or without the "d", or *máguaird* ("around, about"), where the stress falls on the second syllable rather than the first.

Speaking of stress, the phonetic transcriptions are of great help in dealing with an enormous number of newly-coined terms. These neologisms present two distinct kinds of problems for the learner. First, they may present general problems of phonetic interpretation in that the learner may never have heard them before in any context – even on Raidió na Gaeltachta, where large

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16 Cf. Foras na Gaeilge (2006). This is essentially the *Foclóir Póca* (cf. Foras na Gaeilge, 2004), but the print is much more legible. See Koster (2007) for a comparative review of the two dictionaries.
17 Cf. Ó Baoill (1986). The title translated into English could be rendered as "A Spoken Standard Dialect for Irish". There are tapes which accompany the booklet which are invaluable in familiarizing the learner with the phonetic transcription used.

numbers of neologisms are regularly in use in news and discussion programs. Second, their stress patterns may prove to be quite complex for the learner, since the different prefixes on morphologically complex words may require distinctive stress patterns over the whole word.

For example, if we refer to the section in the rear of the *Foclóir Scoile* called "Stress in Compound Words"[18], we find that though most words listed in the dictionary have the primary stress on the first syllable, those with the prefixes *do-, so-* and *in-* (meaning "possible") take the stress on the second syllable. A third group, which is rather large, since it includes nine prefixes, requires a strong stress on both the first and the second syllable, giving the impression of an insistent stress repeated. Yet a fourth group, nearly as large, since it includes seven prefixes, may take any of the patterns just described.

In fact, though the section on stress seems challenging, the patterns are in the main quite regular, and the learner will soon get used to the principal stress patterns used in association with the different prefixes. This is certainly better than trying to memorize the stress patterns for individual words – one by one – which contain the prefixes. A careful combing of the entire diction-ary revealed very few words which could truly be called exceptions to the rules given in the section.[19]

It may seem as though too much emphasis is being placed on the learner learning the proper stress patterns associated with the different lexical items, but a moment's reflexion will reveal the difficulties that young learners in non-Irish-speaking areas – youngsters who are otherwise fluent in modern Irish – have with stress patterns on the word and phrase level of spoken Irish.

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18 Cf. Foras na Gaeilge (2006), 416-417.
19 For example, though the prefix *comh-*, as in *comhbhrón* ("condolence, sympathy"), normally demands a strong stress on both the first and second syllables, the words *comhthéacs* ("context"), *comhréir* ("syntax") and *comhthionól* ("assembly") are shown as taking stress on the first syllable. Likewise, the word *gnáthdhuine* ("ordinary person") is shown as taking stress on the first syllable only, in contrast to the stress normally expected in such items as *gnátháit* ("customary place"), etc..

Note the bizarre assignment of emphatic stress to simple pronouns such as *é* or *í* rather than the use of the emphatic pronouns such as *eisean* or *ise*[20]which take strong stress naturally. Similarly, note the assignment of stress to the simple possessive pronoun *mo* in a phrase such as *mo cheann*[21](spoken contrastively) rather than use of the traditional emphatic construction *mo cheannsa*, with the emphatic particle *–sa* suffixed to a noun, which can take contrastive stress easily.

Increased confidence in the use of stress patterns on both the word and phrase level should have at least two main benefits for learners. First, it should contribute to the intelligibility of spoken Irish in non-Irish-speaking areas – particularly in the rapid production and comprehension of more complex sentences, and secondly, it should increase the self-confidence of learners engaged in earnest discussion with others, learners who would be justifiably uncertain of the pronunciation of words they may never have heard before even though the words might be familiar to them in a written context. In other words, the correct stress patterns would help to clarify for the listener what is being heard in rapid conversation, and at the same time, they would allow the speaker to present his or her views forcefully without hesitation or misgivings. As for the importance of the natural rhythms of speech in any language, imagine the most potent lines from the works of Shakespeare spoken with no clear indication of stress!

For that reason, then, learners would do well to pay attention to the information given on the stress patterns of the lexical items in the *Foclóir Scoile* in addition to the information presented on the phonological segments in the IPA transcriptions.

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20 The pronouns *é* and *eisean* are the non-emphatic and emphatic forms, respectively, of the third person singular masculine direct object pronoun (= "him"), and the pronouns *í* and *ise* are their feminine counterparts (= "her").
21 "My head"

On Which Material Should We Focus?

Finally, I would like to raise a question which is perhaps fundamental in all discussions of lexical resources for learners of any language: how much vocabulary is suitable for a learner of a language at a given level? Of course, for purposes of our discussion, we as adult learners would have to consider our own personal needs. What do we need for spoken conversation? What topics are we likely to be discussing in such conversations? Certainly we do not need to have the wide and varied vocabulary necessary for extensive reading in Irish on the tips of our tongue no matter what we discuss, since whatever the topic up for discussion, we would not likely be "talking like a book" to our friends or lecturing pedantically even to those we consider our academic colleagues!

Of the three lexical resources just discussed, it is clear that even the smallest of the dictionaries – the *Foclóir Scoile* – contains far more material than we could hope to include in our active vocabulary for conversational purposes. Nevertheless, for expansion of our spoken, active vocabularies, the *Foclóir Scoile* is the place to start. We would be selecting small subsets of vocabulary for general use and for special purposes, but with the focus on providing material for use in our conversation. The range of vocabulary normally found in learners' grammars and in children's picture dictionaries– especially those terms especially useful for dealing with the modern world around us – would be especially helpful. More specialized reference works, such as the dictionaries published by Roinn an Oideachais[22] for the different disciplines in second- and third-level education in Ireland, would be useful if our interests took us in those directions. For more traditional terms – the

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22 The Department of Education in the Republic of Ireland. The Irish Language Commissioner in a recent report on the Irish-language capabilities of public servants in the Republic of Ireland reported that only 1.5 percent of the staff in the Department of Education felt capable of doing their work through Irish. A member of the department jokingly referred to his department in a conversation with me as *Roinn an Éadóchais*, "Department of Despair".

stuff of traditional metaphor, books such as *An Béal Beo* by Tomás Ó Máille[23] would be invaluable.

What I have just said applies mainly to the enormous mass of nouns to be found in Irish. When it comes to adjectives and verbs, we can be much more parsimonious in our selection. Beginning with adjectives, certainly we would want to include those adjectives normally found in beginner's materials for Irish. But if for every adjective we include, we add an adjective which contrasts in meaning with that item, we will find our list growing rapidly. In other words, if we include the adjective *mór* ("big"), we make sure that we add *beag* ("small") as well. In my experience, the contrasting pairs will also help us in clarifying the meanings of the individual items.

Verbs will present a much more complex situation, but here again we can procede with relative confidence. In selecting those verbs of most importance to the ordinary speaker of Irish, we can begin with the 115 verbs which are presented with full verbal paradigms in A.J. Hughes' *Leabhar Laghdaithe Bhriathra na Gaeilge/The Abridged Irish Verb Book.*[24] Of course, one cannot simply set out verbs in contrasting pairs as we did with adjectives since verbs contrast semantically with other verbs in many different ways – simple bipolar contrasts such as *ard/íseal* ("high/low") or *bog/crua* ("soft/hard") among the adjectives do not find easy counterparts among the verbs, e.g., *siúil/rith/léim/ eitil/snámh/sleamhnaigh/sciorr/*... ("walk/run/leap/fly/swim/slide/skid…")

In selecting verbs for use in conversation in Irish, it is especially useful to select "light verbs"[25], which have broad semantic ranges and can be used in a wide variety of semantic contexts. In "light verbs", the semantic content

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23 Cf. Ó Máille (2002). The literal translation of the title would be "The Living Mouth", or more idiomatically in English, "The Living Tongue". Each chapter on this unique work provides a view of a segment of the traditional life of the Irish countryside, along with the Irish vocabulary associated with activities in that sphere of life. As a representation of the world-view predominant in rural Ireland over the past few centuries, it is unparalleled.

24 Cf. Hughes (2009). This is an extremely useful book for any learner of Irish exploring verbal morphology. Even the "abridged" version of Hughes' work contains an index with some 3,300 verbs cross-referenced to the different verbal subcategories.

25 For a brief discussion of "light verbs" in several languages, see Jackendoff (2002), 147, 258.

of the verb is so vague that a verbal complement of some sort is needed to convey the specific sense of the verb itself – a prepositional phrase, an adverb or a simple noun phrase. As it happens, both Irish and English are saturated with "light verb" constructions.

For example, in English "do one's homework", "make one's bed" and "take a vacation" are all "light verb" constructions. Think a moment about the literal expressions: What does "doing" one's homework really involve? Is it like "doing" a number on someone? Does "making" one's bed mean constructing a bed? Where does one "take" a vacation to? Can one "take" a vacation to a friend as a gift? It should be clear from these examples that the exact nature of the "doing", "making" and "taking" activities are specified by the following verb complements, and that the verb by itself contributes little to the meaning of the phrase.

Returning now to the verb *cuir* in Irish, we have seen that it is a very "light" verb indeed. But of course it is far from alone in the Irish verbal lexicon. Entries in *FGB* for the verbs *déan, tabhair, bain, faigh, lig, tóg, téigh*, and *tar* ("do, give, remove, get, let, take/lift, go" and "come"), to name just a few of the verbs, are replete with the same types of idiomatic constructions that we have seen in the entry for *cuir*. And the importance of these kinds of constructions for learning natural conversational Irish has been stressed again and again in pedagogical grammars, including *Graiméar Gaeilge na mBráithre Críostaí*.[26]

Some might object that in learning such constructions we are engaging in "sloppy thinking", and that it would be better to aim for a wider range of verbs – verbs that would have a sharper semantic focus. But we must remember that the focus here is on providing lexical material for conversational purposes – and that the very generality of semantic content in such verbs

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26 Cf. Christian Brothers (1999), 234-236. The title of this grammar could be translated as "The Christian Brothers' Grammar", but it is far more complete than the *New Irish Grammar*, also published by the Christian Brothers, but in English.

and in such constructions allows us to converse on a wide variety of topics without having to search very often for the right word. Interrupting the flow of thought to search for the proper word or expression may be what the conscientious writer does, but it is disastrous in conducting a lively conversation.

My Galician students who are learning Irish were surprised that a single verb is used in such expressions as *teacht isteach* ("to come inside") and *teacht amach* ("to come outside") for actions as distinct as entering and leaving a place, since in Spanish there would be a distinct verb for each action – *entrar* and *salir*, respectively.[27] But in fact, for the learner engaged in conversation, being able to use a few verbs in a wide variety of constructions can be a great advantage – especially where such common expressions can cover such a broad semantic range of human actions and feelings.[28] It's a case of doing a lot of things with comparatively few tools.

Considering the difficulties caused by the initial mutations of verbs, being able to use relatively few verbs with their *correct* mutations can help boost the morale of learners of Irish engaged in conversation with one another. A wider range of verbs exists for the adventurous!

And since the motivation for this discussion has been to find a way for enriching the metaphorical content of the spoken Irish of learners in a systemic way with the lexical tools we have discussed, why not take the bull by the horns and happily learn the more idiomatic verbal constructions?

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27 In fact, the situation is more complex than it appears. Irish has a strong tendency to use a relatively complex system of spatial adverbs to complement the verb in order to show location or movement – something which is not so true of the Spanish verbal system. Note, for example, the complex semantics of location and movement in the command *Tar amach as faoin mbord!* "Come out from under the table!" English echoes Irish in its reliance on locative adverbs, but has little to match the sets of locative adverbs in such expressions as *Gabh suas!*, *Fan thuas!*, *Tar anuas!* ("Go up!", "Remain up [there]!" and "Come down!", respectively), involving the complex interplay of simple verbs and morphologically complex adverbs which contain prefixes encoding patterns of position and movement systematically.
28 Note, for example, the expressions *Chuir sin brón orm* ("That saddened me") or *Níor chuir mé aon suim ann* ("I took no interest in it") where the very same verb *cuir* is employed for very different purposes than those already discussed.

How Can the Material be Internalized?

One last consideration – we have spoken of the learning of material with rich metaphorical content in this discussion. What of the *acquisition* of that same material – the internalization of the material learned so that the material is available in both long-term and in short-term memory to the speaker of the language in a way similar to that of a native speaker who has been learning the same language since birth? In other words, can reading material in lexical entries guarantee that at least some of that material will be on the tip of the tongue of a learner in a conservation and not buried somewhere back in his long-term memory – if it has not been completely forgotten?

Fortunately advances in the field of cognitive linguistics in recent years have allowed us greater insights into the processing of linguistic information in the brain. And the work of linguists such as Steven Pinker and Ray Jackendoff in particular has given us greater insights into the storage of linguistic material in long-term memory. If Ray Jackendoff is correct in his sketch of the lexicon that we store in the brain for each of the languages we have acquired, our mental lexicon is far more complex than many linguists suspected even relatively recently. According to Jackendoff, not only words but affixes, set phrases, idioms, proverbs, poems, songs – even the entire texts of written dramas – can be stored in long-term memory, available to be retrieved and used by speakers in interaction with other speakers.[29]

What does this mean in connection with our discussion of the material in the three dictionaries we have been discussing? It means that the material found in the lexical entries in *Foclóir Gaeilge–Béarla* and in *Gearrfhoclóir Gaeilge–Béarla* can be deposited neatly in our own mental lexicons for Irish – and all neatly arranged for us through the courtesy of Niall Ó Dónaill's editorial team. Naturally we cannot swallow the dictionaries whole, but by regular exploration of the different entries in the works we can absorb a good deal of

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29 Cf. Jackendoff (2002), especially Chapter 6.

what is interesting for us, so that at least some of the material will be available to us as we converse in Irish with others.

Some readers may baulk at the idea that learners of a language could absorb such a mass of material – even over an extended length of time. But this has been my own experience with the material. For 16 years in California I learned Irish in complete isolation from the Gaeltacht and from Raidió na Gaeltachta – outside of occasional recorded material from RnaG – but by "reading the dictionary", my comprehension of the syntax and lexicon of the language grew by leaps and bounds. For the latter half of that time, two close friends from Carna helped me to put to use what I was absorbing, but *FGB* and *GGB* remained my closest counselors – and with them I conducted my real "pillow talk".

My own strategy has always been to select an entry – long or short – and to read the material throughly, absorbing every example. If the entry is a very long one, then one of the demarcated sections of that entry will do, since the mind must be able to comprehend and absorb what is being presented. I value the examples more than the definitions, since after all, a phrase or sentence stored in Irish can serve me well in a future conservation, whereas a definition in English will be of little help in a conversation in Irish.

I practice the phrases and sentences as an actor would learn his lines, changing the shapes of the forms and expressions to fit new contexts. I make an effort to bind the expressions I am internalizing to poignant experiences in my own life, linking expressions found in the examples in the lexical entries to people and situations in my own past life, weaving expressions in Irish into the warp of the deep emotional experiences in my long-term memory. For instance, terms referring to people – adjectives especially – refer to people I have known; if I come across the term *cáinteach* ("faultfinding"), *nimhneach* ("spiteful") or *binbeach* ("venemous"), believe me – I will soon have someone in mind!

For verbs, especially those with adverbial or prepositional complements similar to the examples discussed earlier, I will try to use commands, either positive or negative. For example, *Ná cuir suas leis an tseafóid sin!* ("Don't put up with that nonsense!"). Expressions which can be delivered with real feeling are favorites of mine.[30]

Noam Chomsky's revolutionary proposition that, as children, we grow language naturally in the brain when supplied with the materials of language in a natural setting has been born out in my case as an adult language learner. Recent linguistic research has demonstrated that those of us who have been exposed as children below the age of puberty to other languages or even to other dialects of our mother tongue retain a certain linguistic flexibility for our entire lives. And this has certainly been borne out in my own case[31], where I retain the use of at least a half-dozen other languages I have learned besides English over the course of my life, so that inevitably, with use, I move toward the fluency of a native speaker – including command of the phonology of each language. For language learners who have not been been raised in a monolingual, monodialectal linguistic environment, this should be good news.

Consequently, though the idea that a learner can absorb large masses of material from selected lexical entries in a dictionary as large as *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla* may be intimidating, it is indeed possible over time – and it can be fun.

Conclusion

There is no need to resign ourselves to the loss of the richness of the

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30 My father insisted that the very first utterance he ever heard from me was the expression "Jesus Christ almighty!", articulated clearly and uttered repeatedly with real emotion as I played with my toys in the corner. Obviously, I had been impressed with something I had heard, and was delighted to put the expression to use. As the saying goes, "Little pitchers have big ears".
31 My father spoke the Bostonian dialect of American English, but my mother spoke Brooklyn English – both sharply different dialects. I was born in Boston, but I was raised in California. I arrived in California just before my seventh birthday, and had to quickly adjust to several different dialects in California. I learned no foreign language until I began to study Spanish in secondary school at 15 years of age.

traditional Irish language. In addition to all the written, recorded and live material in Irish more widely available than ever before – both inside and outside the Gaeltacht, we have three powerful lexical tools to aid us in exploring the Irish language systematically and in storing a large mass of material in our own heads for use in conversation with friends. If we speak the language with others, we can present that richness to others. Since we don't want to outdistance our listeners, we can work on being clear and direct in our speech, avoiding esoteric words or phrases. There is so much material in *FGB* and in *GGB* which can be "plugged in" directly to a conversation with friends! And the *Foclóir Scoile* allows us the choice of a standard Irish pronunciation for new vocabulary which won't confuse listeners whose exposure to dialectal forms has been limited.

Conversation groups of three to five people work beautifully. The relatively fluent speakers will tend to "carry" the conversation, and if they don't dominate the conversation, less fluent speakers will feel encouraged to contribute their "two bits" to the conversation from time to time. But this means that the more fluent speakers must be sensitive to the shyness of less fluent speakers.

In such a setting, if the fluent speakers have been "doing their homework", the quality of their spoken Irish will be high, and their speech will be characterized by the richness of their idiom. *Sáraíocht* – or verbal competition, "one-upsmanship" – tends to happen whenever fluent speakers gather in any language, and it was the driving force behind the bardic contentions of the Gael. It is this natural tendency which will spur speakers to lard their speech with rich metaphor, usually drawn from great speakers of the past.

In nineteenth-century USA, powerful speakers – often with little formal education – entered the public arena with forceful rhetoric drawn from sources as disparate as the Bible, Shakespeare, Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations* and Noah Webster's dictionary of American English. During the same period,

many an Irish orator drew inspiration from *Speeches from the Dock*. Democracy and free speech tend to spur such activity. Wouldn't it be a fine thing to hear the likes of Máirtín Ó Cadhain, Seán Ó Ríordáin, Cathal Ó Searcaigh and Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill echoed in spirited discussion of current affairs in Irish?

The quality of spoken Irish will be what the energetic speakers make of it. *Níonn fonn fiach!* [32]

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32 "It is desire that produces the hunt", or, to say it in a slightly different way, *I gcosa cú a bhíos a chuid* ("A hound depends on its speed for food" or, more literally, "A hound's dinner is in its feet").

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Live The Life You Love: Revisiting Pádraig Pearse's Approach to Education for Adult Learners of Irish

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Introduction to Pearse's Pedagogy

In December 1912, Patrick Pearse (1879-1916) aka Pádraig Mac Piarais, also Pádraig Pearse, delivered a lecture called "The Murder Machine" in the Mansion House, which is the official residence of the Lord Mayor, in Dublin. Although remembered primarily as a political activist and subsequent revolutionary, Pádraig Pearse was also a barrister, a poet, a writer of essays and plays in both English and Irish, a translator, but above all an educator who was initially motivated into the political arena by his enthusiasm for the Irish language. His final writings consisted of four poems written between Saturday April 29th and Tuesday, May 2nd, 1916 as he awaited execution, which took place at 3 a.m. on May 3rd in Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin (Ó Buachalla, 1979). His famous lecture in 1912 was a criticism of the education system established in Ireland under the British administration. Pearse's major criticism was that Irish schools did not represent Irish culture; the lecture was first

published as "The Murder Machine" in *The Irish Review* of February 1913 and was republished in 1916 and 1924.

> Into it is fed all the raw human material in Ireland; it seizes upon it inexorably and rends and compresses and re-moulds; and what it cannot refashion after the regulation pattern it ejects with all likeness of its former self crushed from it, a bruised and shapeless thing, thereafter accounted waste.

Strong words indeed, yet what Pearse wanted to achieve was the goal all good educators profess: to give students the tools with which to learn, so that they may follow their dreams—not the dreams of their teacher. Pearse's objective regarding the Irish language in Ireland was bilingualism, with individual schools and teachers having autonomy over how that might be accomplished within their own communities. He believed that nurturing a love of learning within the classroom was the fundamental role of the teacher but that how this might best be achieved would differ depending on the needs of the particular students. His thought on education was to move the impetus for the design of curricula to focus on the student. This change in focus from teacher-based knowledge to student-based need, considered radical at the time, was the result of his studies of teaching practices in Ireland in comparison with innovations in methods of education in Europe (Lee, 2009). Pearse, who was particularly interested in language as the repository of culture, had studied language education policies in Belgium where the multilingual population impressed him and the bilingual approach to education throughout the country was successful (Ó Buachalla, 1998). However, his ideas on education and on how to achieve bilingualism in Ireland were not implemented outside St. Enda's School, which he established in Dublin in 1908. He is remembered due to his key position in the revolution and his execution in 1916 rather than for his research and adoption of radical ideas on education.

Irish Language and Language Pedagogy in the 20ᵗʰ Century

In Ireland it was always believed that Spanish, French and German were second languages in that they were foreign, but that Irish was different, it being the language of the country before colonization. Therefore the language was identified in the nineteenth century as an important, even crucial strand in the Irish cultural tapestry. Due to its association with culture and identity the emotional connections to the language have always run very deep with the citizenry, but should this make the teaching of it any different to the teaching of any other second language in Ireland or anywhere in the world? For the majority of Irish people who have learned the language over the last one hundred years it has not been transmitted to them from their parents, therefore it has really been a second language rather than a first language, but this fact has only recently been truly acknowledged. There is reluctance to consider that Irish falls into the same category as foreign languages. Some language enthusiasts have circled this problem by using the descriptive term Native Language for Irish even if it is not their mother tongue, because using the term "second language" seems to relegate Irish to the level of a foreign tongue. In addition, students of Irish know few, if any, fluent speakers apart from their instructor[1], and they have little chance to actually use the language outside the classroom environment.

In the case of students in Ireland, Irish is a second language although it is certainly not foreign. It is part of the fabric of the environment, visible in placenames and directional signs moreover the underlying linguistic patterns of Hiberno-English reflect the patterns of the Irish language. The relationship of Irish learners in Ireland with the language, which has been a thorny matter for generations, continues to be complicated.

The teaching of Irish has undergone many changes since it was first championed as an important component in the Irish national cultural movement

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1 In the United States many instructors are not fluent speakers of the language, but are dedicated enthusiasts.

of the late 19th century. In many respects the teaching of Irish lagged behind theories on second language acquisition and teaching due to this reluctance in recognizing that the language belonged in the second language category. However, this is now beginning to change.

The original texts used in teaching second languages in the 19th century emphasized the importance of *Grammar and Translation,* and this approach continued to be used in Ireland even when, by the end of the nineteenth century, linguists were recognizing that speech patterns were much more important than the written form in second language acquisition (Leonardi 2010). The Grammar and Translation method can be seen in the early text-books in Irish. At the beginning of the 20th century the *Direct Method* learning approach had become widespread in Europe in which it was believed that only the target language should be used in the classroom so that the learner would be totally immersed. Language learning had become more scientific in approach with the development of a series of guides based on the importance of speech and phonetics rather than *Grammar and Translation* (Leonardi 2010). *Situational Language Teaching* (SLT) gradually came to the fore in the mid twentieth century where scenarios constructed to reflect real life became the focus of language teaching and learning. Its limitations were that learners could not progress outside the structures that had been designed for them for use in the classroom. The *Audio-lingual Method* (ALM) emerged towards the end of the 1950s in America. This teaching was based on drills with structures being memorized through repetition. This method eventually reached Irish learners in 1967 when *Buntús Cainte* was launched by the Irish government, and followed in 1974 by *The Irish Course* by the Linguaphone Institute and Gael-Linn. The problem with this method which was a form of SLT was that students could only work within the constraints imposed by the material under consideration. However, SLT did lay the basis for *Communicative Language Teaching* (CLT) in the late 60s, which focused on two strands, one

being language acquisition through communication and the other emphasizing a more systematic teaching of communicative competence. Both of these strands focus on interactions necessary in order to accomplish tasks.

The Total Physical Response (TPR) was introduced as a new method for language teaching in 1965 in California. It combines repetition and physical action with physical connection if possible to objects or vocabulary being considered. This method is sentence-based and is promoted as "internalizing the patterns and sounds of the target language" as in the case of a newborn infant[2]. The *Communicative Language Learning (CLL)* methodology proposed by Charles Curren in 1972 allowed the student to drive the learning process by an almost one to one relationship with the teacher. The student would indicate what he wanted to learn, sentence by sentence, the focus shifting completely to the learner's needs and desires, but this is rather unworkable in the modern classroom. Whether it was the cost of infrastructure, training of staff or other reasons,, neither (TPR) nor (CLL) innovations in language teaching and learning were ever established in the Irish school systems in the teaching of Irish, although CLT was employed in the teaching of *foreign* languages such as French, Spanish and German[3].

In the 1930s, DeValera's Government in Ireland[4] recruited and trained young native speakers of Irish to teach in schools, the idea being that students were to be immersed in Irish whilst at school. It was thought that teachers who were native speakers of Irish from

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2 Asher, James, J. (Dr.) http://www.tpr-world.com/what.html accessed May 23, 2012.
3 I recall hearing spoken French from a tape player in my high school in the late 1970s ….but never Irish. Neither were we ever taught grammar in Irish as we were assured that we would absorb it.
4 Éamon de Valera was President of the Executive Council from 9 March 1932-29 December 1937 and Taoiseach from 29 December 1937-18 February 1948

specific areas called Gaeltachts[5] would be the best sources of the language for the youngsters growing up in the new free state, soon to be a republic. These very enthusiastic teachers were positively motivated as part of the renewing and re-imagining of the culture of the new Ireland, governed by the Irish. Unfortunately they were not renewing connections to a language but introducing a new language to the children. They were second language teachers. The children's parents had little or no Irish language skills and so the language became a school experience completely remote from the real lives of the students. The burden of re-establishing the native tongue, considered by the revolutionaries and their followers to be one of the most important strands of Irish culture, fell onto the shoulders of schoolchildren and their teachers. Adult education in the Irish Language in 1930s Ireland was limited to volunteer organizations such as Ais Éirí and Gael Linn. Even those adults who were enthralled with the idea of connecting to their language for the first time would have had difficulty in finding classes and moreover in getting to them. The great enthusiasm for the language was, in reality, subdued by a weakening economy; the majority of parents had little resources at this time. They also had large families, many located in rural communities. Few had cars, and from a practical perspective leaving children to attend night classes would have been a difficult proposition. It is difficult to measure the relevance of the Irish language to the lives of ordinary Irish people over the past 100 years. Despite it being taught in all schools, the availability of books for all ages, journals, newpapers, radio and television and the development of first, second and third level education through the medium of Irish there are still negative attitudes to the language

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5 Regions in Ireland where the vernacular language at this time was Irish. The statutory definitions changed between 1926 and 1956 because responsibility for different aspects of life in the areas was divided between different state bodies and orginizations. In 1956 the government decided to establish the Department of the Gaeltacht and the regions were officially designated for economic and language planning purposes.

outside small cohorts of enthusiasts and in many cases a reluctance to learn it for its own sake. It is still studied primarily as a stepping-stone to college leading to jobs in education or for entry into the civil service. Waves of enthusiastic young speakers of Irish coming out of colleges often find little chance to use the language outside their established language circles and few employment opportunities outside teaching and media, both of which industries are largely state-sponsored. The emphasis now must be to develop greater employment opportunities while maintaining a high level of competency and thereby widen language circles. Despite the positive signs of increased interest in Irish during the economic boom period of the Celtic Tiger, even the most enthusiastic can suffer from moments of anguish at the growing levels of emigration of young educated people in recent years. The best way forward must be to foster a relationship between the learner and the language that gives the language a connection to the learner's life.

Realising Pearse's Approach in the Contemporary Classroom

The development of the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR 2001) (developed over 1989 -1996) has provided common teaching goals and assessment methods for all European Languages including Irish, and the six reference levels have become accepted as a standard for grading an individual's language proficiency, providing a benchmark for each learner on his language journey. From these reference level requirements has grown a syllabus that teachers can use to design their courses. The syllabi can be used as a guide in the teaching of any language.

If one accepts that this framework is the best way for a student to progress in foreign language acquisition one can see that the emphasis has shifted again to the needs of the learner. The instructor's role is how best to design a course so that an individual student can progress through the levels described in detail in the framework. The question facing instructors is not "What do I

teach?" as this is answered by the syllabi, but "How should it be taught?" The focus returns to pedagogical methodologies with the learners' needs paramount, recognizing that teaching in itself does not imply that learning is taking place, that there is more to a language than a series of rules, regulations and vocabulary.

In considering second language teaching methods it is clear that language teaching is never static. Variables which affect the learning environment range from student interest and innate ability to age, personal goals, cultural background and creativity whether university, continuing education or any other category of student is present. How can an instructor respond to these variables in designing a course and planning classes that are learner-centered and at the same time nurture in the student an understanding that the language can have a context in his real life outside the classroom? How much of a role does enjoyment in the classroom play? Language learning can be laborious for one in comparison to another despite the fact that each speaks his mother tongue without difficulty.

Every student has a personal relationship with language; it informs his thought processes and helps him understand his emotions. Language is one of the supporting structures underpinning his life, its pleasures, pains and relationships. An instructor assists in creating authentic new language connections through the supply of vocabulary, new grammatical rules and the means to use them.

In considering the question of how best to build courses on the topic-based syllabi presented in the CEFR, in addition to what is available from other historical sources along with my own teaching experience, it is clear that it is worthwhile stepping back and giving more initiative to the students as soon as they have grasped the fundamental elements of the language in an introductory course. Instead of basing pre-class questionnaires on the Irish language and what the student hopes to learn, this approach can be revisited

entirely and structured to suit the student by basing questions on what he loves to do and what energizes him in his life. Where there is a range of ages in classes a variety of subjects may emerge, for example, from caring for grandchildren to running marathons. Discussion before new material is studied is a valuable way of including students in the planning process. They can decide what they believe is necessary for this topic to make sense and enable them to interact with others in the group and share their life. Members of the class learn from one another and the instructor facilitates this learning process. Discussion about topics, conducted in English, successfully engages the students in their learning in a positive way and considers their worldview first. The class as a whole benefits from the variety of material brought into focus.

Students can be shocked at first when they are asked to suggest what they should do as an assignment. They are used to being told what they must learn, to which they can react, but letting students design their own assignments opens the door to creative and positive response.

There is a saying in Irish, *ní lia duine ná tuairim*, which can be interpreted as *there are as many opinions as there are people*. In applying this to the teaching of Irish, or any language, it is true to say that there are as many methods as there are teachers and there can be as many methods as there are learners. No one size fits all in the teaching of language and one of the most important roles of an instructor is to recognize the objectives and individuality of the student and to teach accordingly, even within a group situation.

In my classes at New York University, students in their second semester of Irish language classes are given the freedom to choose their own homework/project. They are encouraged to think about something they love doing or a subject that is meaningful in their lives or studies and design a project using Irish. While at first causing panic, the students invariably end up

enjoying this project and many of them exceed my expectations and their own in their commitment to the job. These projects have included: translating a popular children's book, *Sam I Am*, from the Dr Seuss collection which was presented in Powerpoint to the class; a techno–rock song, where the student composed the music on his computer, wrote the song and recorded it along with backing vocals, and taught it to the class; a powerpoint presentation about a student's life; a puppet show enacting the story of how Fionn gained his powers of insight; a presentation about a recent vacation; a short comedy movie about student life in the dorms and the danger of leaving favorite food, Pringles, unguarded, called The Potato Famine; a folk song about Irish class and specifically about learning prepositional pronouns in Irish; a short movie celebrating favorite moments in classic films all perfectly dubbed into Irish.

It is almost 100 years since Pádraig Pearse was executed. By many he is remembered as a national hero, not unlike those characters he would engage from Ireland's mythological tales and sagas to energize and instill cultural confidence in his young charges at St. Enda's school. Others might consider him to have been misled by his own unrealistic visions of an Irish Ireland. Whatever the truth is, his writings in the field of education, though less famous than his political activities, clearly indicate that his vision was inclusive, not exclusive; that education should be flexible and that curricula should consider the socio-cultural parameters of students; that Irish speakers should embrace the language's variety in dialects rather than reject variety; that Ireland, as part of Europe, could celebrate and appreciate her own culture by recognizing the diversity of her neighbors; that being part of Europe and modeling bilingual education on European pedagogy was the way forward rather than retreating into isolation in order to safeguard a culture which was in the throes of rebirth; that it was unrealistic to reject the English language but realistic to advance bilingualism. His name continues to elicit response.

Pearse claimed in 1912 that two things were necessary for learning : "first, freedom for the individual, and, secondly, an adequate inspiration. Without these two things you cannot have education."

And in response to the father of one of his pupils, who, concerned about his son's prospects, asked

> " 'He is no good at books, he is no good at work; he is good at nothing but playing a tin whistle. What am I to do with him?' " Pearse reported "I shocked the worthy man by replying (though really it was the obvious thing to reply): 'Buy a tin whistle for him' (Pearse 1916)."

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The Importance of Using Narrative as a Tool for Language Acquisition with Bilingual Children

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Abstract

This is a personal account of how the author used narrative as a teaching tool when her bilingual children were acquiring language. She explores how she used narrative to extend their lexicons, to teach grammatical structures, to develop and strengthen memory, to develop a sense of sequencing and order, to build self esteem, to empower her children by enabling them to describe events in their daily lives and to ensure they had the language they needed to express their needs, wants and desires and their own opinions.

Background, Advantages and Disadvantages of my situation as Lone Irish Language Model and the Foundations of my Irish language home pedagogy

This paper is an account of the ways I used narrative, both in the sense of narrative as a form of story, and, as a recapitulation of events, while my children were acquiring language. In other words, I will be exploring how I

read stories to my children to help them acquire language, and how I revisited and referred to those stories in order to help them construct their own accounts (narratives) of their daily activities. This is a personal account rather than a research article. My children, now 9 and 7 years old were born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. We are now based in Shaker Heights, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland.

My husband and I had decided to raise our children bilingually; he was to model the English language and I was to model Irish for them. I realized from the beginning that I had to create a "communication need" for my children, if I was to succeed in my primary goal, which was to have them speak to me exclusively in Irish. When my son was born, I therefore spoke only Irish to him, regardless of where we were. I realized I was creating an alternate linguistic reality for him, as we lived in an English-speaking environment, and I resolved to go about it to the best of my ability. Any conversations I had in his presence in which I spoke English, e.g. arranging to meet people at the playground, I then reiterated to him in Irish, immediately. I wanted him to feel that Irish was an equally valid language in which to communicate and that it was on a par with English, even though we lived in an English-speaking environment. I was lucky in that all the people I befriended while my children were babies and toddlers were very supportive of the language choices my husband and I had made for our children. Many of them wished that they could impart two languages to their own children.

When my son was born, I happily babbled away to him but gradually I began to question how I could better enrich his linguistic experience. I found myself becoming more aware of the lack of a "pobal cainte" or Irish language speaking community in Milwaukee, and I felt keenly the responsibility of being the "lone Irish language model" for him. I sought to fill that gap with something. From a very early age (5/6 months old), my son loved books, and, as I read with him, I gradually realized that I could use narrative in story form

to help me bridge the gap created by the absence of fluent Irish language speakers where I was living.

After my "aha" moment with narrative, I mentally made a list of the advantages and disadvantages pertaining to my situation as "lone Irish language model" for my son. The disadvantages were, of course, headed by the lack of an aforementioned "language community". Initially I worried that my son had to figure out how to have a conversation with me in Irish, without seeing and hearing me converse with another person in the Irish language. Luckily I went to Ireland every summer for several weeks and my parents, brothers and sisters spoke Irish to my son and later, to my daughter to support my efforts.

 The advantages of my situation as "lone Irish language model" were that:

1. I could be with my son all day as a language model, as at that time I was not working full-time outside the home. When I began teaching Irish at UWM when my son was ten months old, and two years later, when my daughter arrived, I was only away from my children two mornings a week.

 I also had the trump cards of:

2. "My son's emotional developmental age" (toddlers are notoriously egocentric, the world is always all about them!)

3. The toddler's innate desire and need for repetition in all activities (reading, pouring water, sand, etc.)

4. The toddler's sense of fun and love of the absurd.

As my background is in Irish Language and Literature, followed by a career in Education, I decided to root my Irish language home pedagogy, as I had always rooted my classroom pedagogy, firmly in the principles of the Psychological Models of child development set out by the constructionists (Jean Piaget, John Dewey, Maria Montessori). Their belief that the child constructs his/her own reality is central to their theories, and, in the case of Maria Montessori, to her philosophy and pedagogy. I identify even more with the

work of the social constructionists, like Vygotsky, who recognized the unique role of the adult caregiver in "scaffolding the child's development", as he/she created his/her own reality, as well as providing him/her with a stimulating environment à la traditional Piagetian approaches to child development. (Vygotsky's work has been further developed by Bruner in the U.S.)

I saw my role therefore, as being to "scaffold" my children's language acquisition as well as their emotional, social and intellectual development in a responsive, flexible, mindful and fun-filled way. I was determined to extend their use of their vocabulary in any way I could, as opportunities presented themselves.

My Aims for my Children and Myself

My aims for my children were:

1. That they would be able to name the objects and activities in their environment.

2. That they would be able to be able to communicate their needs/wants/desires.

3. That they would be able to express their own opinions.

4. That their perception of the Irish language was that it was equal in status to English and that it could be spoken anywhere, not just in the home.

5. That the vocabulary in both languages would grow at the same rate insofar as possible.

6. That even though I was constantly assessing my use of narrative and reflecting upon it at an abstract level, that I would turn off the "brain" part of myself while interacting with my children and just be a mother, having fun with language, albeit mindfully.

Narrative

Narrative is a very powerful tool, as all of us who are avid readers know. As Elliot Oring reminds us in his essay on "Folk Narratives" (Oring, 1986), it is intellectually and emotionally engaging. It encourages us to question the "hows and whys" of events within a story and to identify with the emotions of the protagonists. What better way to augment language acquisition than when the intellect and the emotions are engaged! (Psychological studies attest that engaging both the intellect and emotion improves memory function.)

Variety of Narratives, Self-Expression, Memory and Grammar

Factual Books

I read a huge variety of books with my children through the baby and toddler years. I used factual books like "A Trip to the Dentist", "Going Shopping", "Getting Dressed", "Taking a Bath" and wonder of wonders, the all time favourite "Words in my Day", a dictionary of a day in the life of a Bunny Family, from breakfast to bedtime! Books of this type really appealed to my children. To adults they might seem boring, but to a child they give an account of the ordinary activities of every day, which we participate in automatically, but which are fresh and new, and really important to a child. What could be more important than wanting to brush your teeth like Daddy, or spread butter on a piece of toast like Mammy? And to be able to talk about it! They are also really important as a source of vocabulary in the immediate environment for children. These books, as basic vocabulary builders, empower the child to name the objects and activities in his/her own environment.

Fictional stories

I also read non-factual stories of all sorts. On a daily basis. Many stories, daily. And many collections of poetry. Rhyme is very important to children.

They find it very amusing. They are much more sophisticated in their grasp of nuances in language than we might think, and at a very young age.

Each story was read approximately four times at each reading, often more than four times. By the third reading, I would start to bring my own children into the story, replacing the characters' names with their names. I also asked them questions about what was happening in the story to check their comprehension and to allow them to express their own opinions and ideas.

As the day progressed I would make frequent reference to the stories we had read earlier. I would ask the children questions about the stories, about plot (who did what, and when, and why did they do it?) This encouraged the children to rehearse any new vocabulary that had been introduced in the stories. It also helped develop their memories for vocabulary, plot and plot sequence. Constantly referring to stories or parts of stories re-presented the narrative, allowing it to be rehearsed and allowing the vocabulary to be rehearsed, thereby increasing the chances that the story and/or the vocabulary/grammatical structure would be remembered. (Rehearsal and repetition lead to retrieval from memory)

Often I would read a story in a tense other than that in which it was written, e.g., if a story was presented in a book in the past tense, I would tell it in the present tense.

Dialogue in stories introduced the children to *"dul na cainte"* (aspects of Irish language syntax) and demonstrated how certain things worked in the Irish language like "reported speech".

I repeated the above-outlined use of story the following day. And the next… and the next…

My husband's role

My husband, as well as funding the acquisition of all Irish language books, children's song CDs, posters and games, without question, spoke

English to our children. He read children's books to our children every night. All of the books he read were printed in English. In 2002, when my son was born, the selection of books available in the Irish language that were attractive, child-friendly and which resembled "real books" (books in which a child could imagine him/herself being the protagonist or which he/she could relate to his/her own personal experience) rather than graded reading books was, sadly, quite limited. This situation has vastly improved in the past decade, thank goodness.

Due to the dearth of Irish language books when my children were very young, we built up a considerable collection of children's books in the English language which my husband read to them, faithfully. In order that the children would acquire the equivalent Irish language vocabulary presented in the stories my husband read to them in English, and understand the concepts being introduced in them, I read these same stories to them in Irish, translating them spontaneously as I read. Before the children could read it made little difference to them what language the story was printed in. As the children grew older, the vocabulary grew more challenging in the English language books, the sentence structure became more complex and the sentences grew longer! Just the thing to give my brain a work-out!

Narrative...... and Then What?

For me, the logical progression to using narrative in story form as a way to introduce new vocabulary or tenses was to extend the idea of narrative to the child's own daily life. The children and I co-constructed mini-narratives of their activities over the course of a day on a daily basis, referring back to stories we had read in order to draw comparisons between the characters in the stories and the activities of my children. Often we recorded some or all of these narratives in pictorial form or as mini-cartoon strips. We also discussed our emotional responses to events in the stories we read so that they learned,

over time, to name emotions they were feeling.

I used two phrases over and over again as "hooks" to make connections to stories we had read together. They were: *"An cuimhin leat?"* and *"Samhlaigh"*.

1. *An cuimhin leat.......nuair a tharla seo do .... sa scéal...?* (Do you remember... when this happened....?) And now we are going to the dentist, (climbing a tree/baking a cake etc.) what do you think will happen there?

2. *Samhlaigh dá mbeadh eireaball ag Dadaí!..... Ar tharla sin in aon scéal atá léite againn cheana? /Ar chuala muid trácht ar a leithéid riamh roimhe seo?* (Imagine if Daddy had a tail....?.......Did this happen in any other story we read before?.......)

The construction of a daily narrative of their day with my children was one of the most important habits I developed with them. It culminated with my son and I "singing" a narrative of his day at bedtime, as a reflection on all he had accomplished. We called it *"Scéal an Lae"*/ "The Story of the Day" and we sang it every night. We sang it to the tune of *"Mná na hÉireann"* and it included all sorts of details that would be of the utmost importance to a two, three or four year old child, like a detailed description of the clothes he wore and what he ate for breakfast, lunch and dinner, when we went to the park, which of his little friends he got to play with, etc. *"Scéal an Lae"*, as a daily habit, played into the emotional age of the child and leveraged one of the "advantages" I possessed in my role as "Lone Irish Language Model" as I outlined earlier, namely, that the day revolved around him!

When our daughter was born, our son was two years old and he was speaking in sentences. Our daughter was lucky enough to have two Irish language models at home with her.

But What About the Sense of Fun and the Sense of the Absurd?

We, as adults, know that there are different ways to explore/recreate/ extend/retell and perform narratives. Surprisingly enough, once the idea of

"acting out" a story or using puppets or soft toys to retell a story is introduced to children, they take to it like ducks to water! You may find yourself using shoeboxes as mini-stages to facilitate the re-enactment of *"Cuaichín Óir agus na Trí Béar"* (Goldilocks and the Three Bears) or *"An Sionnach Glic agus an Chircín Rua"* (The Sly Fox and The Little Red Hen). You will become an expert at making lollipop stick puppets so that they can retell the story again and again. I am a big fan of using any of the Expressive Arts whenever possible as a teaching tool or as an enhancement to learning.

Young children love dressing up and they especially love wearing cloaks and masks. How better to spend your day than by being the "big bad wolf" while your children outsmart you by being the "little pigs"?

To Summarize:

I used written narratives in the form of stories to be the "other voices" I needed to help me model the Irish language in the most comprehensive way possible. Using narratives allowed me to help my children learn new vocabulary and to introduce them to new concepts within the context of a story. I used a combination of presentation of a narrative, repetition of the narrative, re-visiting of the narrative, deconstruction of the narrative, drawing comparisons between the narrative and daily life, and construction of the child's own daily narrative to rehearse, retrieve and retain new vocabulary and grammatical structures.

I faced many challenges. There was not a wide selection of Irish language books for children readily available when my son was born. This situation is much improved now. Many beautiful picture books have been published and there are new publishing companies producing high quality products. I am currently reading the just translated "The Hobbit" (*"An Hobad"*) to my children. I bought many children's books in English and translated them as I read them. My husband read these stories to our children in English and so, the vocabulary of both languages grew at the same rate.

I utilized elements of the "Expressive Arts" to help my children re-construct and re-tell narratives whenever possible. Pretending or make-believe play, acting, singing, and making and using puppets all took their place in extending the use of narrative into real-life activities for my children.

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An American Abroad: My adult language immersion studies in Brittany

Madeleine Adkins

Abstract

This article, an overview of Breton language immersion programs for adults, provides a first-hand account of a North American taking part in such a program. Program selection, the application and visa process, housing issues, the program structure, the daily life of a student, and being a foreigner in the program are all addressed.

In 2010, I relocated from the U.S. to Brittany to attend a six-month intensive Breton language program for adults. I had first encountered Breton in a university course I had taken six years earlier, and had subsequently attended a number of one-week immersion courses while on research trips to Brittany during my graduate studies since then. My Breton language conversational skills were minimal, so I decided that I would enroll in one of the long immersion courses that I had heard of—this would allow me to increase my level of fluency, as well as offer me a more experiential understanding of the language revitalization movement in Brittany.

Selecting a program

There are four schools—Mervent, Roudour, Skol an Emsav, and Stumdi—that offer six-month Breton language immersion programs for adults. Each program is somewhat different in character, but all of them are designed to give students a solid, basic competence in spoken Breton—enough fluency to be able to work in a Breton language or bilingual work environment. The program fees, course hours, and course dates (fall to spring, and some also have winter to summer programs) are roughly the same. This is by design: the students who attend the program receive government funding to attend these programs, as employed workers or job seekers who would benefit professionally from Breton language study. As such, these programs are structured around a normal French workweek schedule, and attendance policies are strictly enforced. There are some differences in pedagogical approach, as discussed below. However, the most obvious difference is that each program offers these six-month intensives in different locations.

Each of the schools also offers other types of language programs, such as week-long language intensives, weekly language courses, and profession-specific shorter courses. I had previously taken one-week language intensives with both Roudour and Stumdi, so I had a sense of the general organizational and pedagogical approaches, as well as where the courses were offered. This all helped me to decide where—and with whom—to study.

I selected Stumdi for a number of reasons. First of all, I preferred their curriculum and methodologies over Roudour's. Roudour's pedagogical approach incorporates more non-traditional language teaching styles. To some degree, these less traditional approaches can be beneficial to kick-start conversational ability. However, I disliked some of the teaching materials used in their programs, and I also found that one of the methodologies that they used was frustrating for me as a native English speaker: it involved listening to a short dramatic text in Breton while reading along in French, and that was too much

linguistic work for a non-native speaker of both languages. Secondly, at that time, Roudour only offered six-month intensives in the center of Brittany, and I preferred that my Breton stay be near the coast.

Stumdi, the largest of the adult Breton language schools, has programs in a variety of locations, and I had already visited two of them: Landerne[1] and Plañvour. There were tradeoffs, depending upon which location I chose. If I had chosen Landerne, I would have benefited from the fact that it is Stumdi's headquarters, and I would have been able to arrange a home stay (via another Breton language organization) with a Breton-speaking farm family in the area. Naturally, the chance to live with Breton speakers would have been great for my Breton language skill development; however, given that the home stay would have been in a rural area, I would have needed a car to commute to school, and that was not an option for me. Plañvour was appealing for a variety of reasons: it offered sparkling white sand beaches, an urban bus system, a fairly large Breton city (An Oriant) nearby, and a milder climate. Perhaps the key deciding factor, however, was that a Breton friend of mine lived in the area, and I knew that having her nearby would make it much easier for me to find a placed to live and to settle in when I arrived.

I was, apparently, one of the few foreigners who had ever participated in the Stumdi six-month intensive program—I knew of only two others—and I am the only one who was neither a resident of Brittany nor a person of Breton ancestry with French citizenship, and thus I was the only one to need a visa. Stumdi could not sponsor me, as it is not a university program, so I was on my own in getting a long-term stay visa for France.

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1 I have written all city names in Breton, as a matter of principle. French equivalents are as follows: Landerne = Landerneau, Plañvour = Ploemeur, An Oriant = Lorient, Brest = Brest, Kemper = Quimper, Ar Gerveur = Guermeur, Kerroc'h = Kerroch, An Arvor = Larmor-Plage, Lann ar Ster = Lannester, Gwened = Vannes, Karaez = Carhaix, Roazhon = Rennes.

French—the gateway language

For anyone considering attending a Breton language immersion program, French skills are important. If I had not already been competent in French, it would have been extremely difficult to plan for and to survive the program, socially and academically. For the first few months, most of our instruction and social interaction was in French; in addition, most tests and some classroom practice exercises did involve French-Breton and Breton-French translation. I do know one graduate of the Roudour program who had not spoken French before she arrived in Brittany, so it is possible: however, she was already an EU citizen and a native speaker of Welsh, so she had other factors working in her favor. If your French is weak or non-existent, working on your French competency would be a good first move.

Applying for the program, getting a visa, and moving to Brittany

I applied in the spring for Stumdi's fall program. This allowed enough time for Stumdi's process to be completed before I began the visa process and all other necessary planning. After submitting my Stumdi application, I was interviewed via Skype by the head of the school and a Stumdi instructor. This turned out to be extremely brief, as their main objective was to confirm my French language abilities. In addition, it was a chance for us to talk about the program, and for me to ask some questions about Stumdi's ability to help with visas and housing. Because the people who take the course are typically local residents, these are not issues with which they normally deal, and there was not much that they could do. Nevertheless, they noted that I would need housing during the program, and they did connect me with another student who was relocating to the Plañvour area so that we could share housing information.

As a non-EU citizen, I needed a long-term visitor visa to be able to legally stay in France for more than three months. The French visa process

was laborious, bureaucratic, and at times, confusing, but in the end, it worked out.[2]

Obtaining a long-term visitor visa for France was a bit of a Catch-22, in that I needed to secure housing before I could obtain the visa. With the help of my very kind and generous friend in Plañvour and a very useful French website (leboncoin.fr), I was able to locate and secure an apartment for my stay in Brittany; for anyone without a friend on the ground, this particular step might require a short trip to Brittany to view apartments in person, sign a contract with the landlord, pay a deposit, and obtain the necessary papers to submit when applying for the French visa.

A word about finding housing in Plañvour: as mentioned above, Plañvour has many lovely beaches, so housing was slightly more expensive than it would have been in—for example—Landerne. At the same time, because this was during the off-season for tourists, the rental prices were much more affordable and housing more available than would have been the case during the peak tourist seasons.

Once the housing issue was resolved, I was able to begin the visa process. The first step was determining the correct visa for which to apply and then gathering all of the necessary paperwork. This part of the process was confusing, as the information given on long-term visitor visa applications was different on different consular websites. I read the information on a number of consular sites, called and emailed at least one consulate for more information (it was difficult to get anyone to respond to my questions), and did my best to make sense of it all before submitting my application. One of the key steps was to make my visa application appointment: it is required for all US citizens to submit their visa applications in person at their local consulate. Because I

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2 Had I been planning to study Breton under the auspices of a university, I would have been able to apply for a student visa. This appears to be a very different—and easier—visa process.

lived at the time in Colorado, I was required to apply to the French Consulate in Los Angeles, California, which is the consulate that is responsible for all of the southwestern US. I selected the date I wanted, and then booked my flight and hotel for the visa trip.

The documentation required for what is officially called the "long stay visa for visitors" includes an application form, and approximately a dozen other documents, including a letter of intent, recent financial statements, proof of travel insurance, proof of accommodation, proof of an airplane ticket, a visa photo, and a current passport. Because people who have visitors' visas are not allowed to work in France while they are on the visa, one of the most important qualifications for getting a French long stay visa for visitors is proof that one can afford to live in France for the specified length of time without needing to work; in contrast, a student visa allows one to work part-time while enrolled as a student.

The visa appointment itself was relatively brief: I submitted my documents, had my fingerprints and photo taken, and paid the application fee. A few weeks later, I received my passport in the mail with my one-year French visa. (After I arrived in Brittany, there was one more bureaucratic step (a physical exam and a fee to be paid at the immigration office) that I needed to take to remain in good standing on my visa.)

Our study program – the first two months

During the first two months of the program, the teachers generally spoke to us in French as they explained Breton grammar and vocabulary, and we were expected to speak Breton a little, but free to speak in French during class and our break times. We students were a mix of beginners and false beginners, but all of us needed work on the basics, and the lessons took us through the core Breton grammar.

Lessons were a mix of traditional grammar explanations and activities

to practice what we had learned. As someone who has taught ESL/EFL and someone who has studied many languages herself, I tend to be a bit harsh in evaluating language pedagogy. Sometimes I was happier than other times during lessons, and teachers did vary in their styles and teaching philosophies. I tried to view things philosophically: if I especially liked or disliked something that we did in class, it was a chance for me to learn more about teaching while I was there. One big adjustment for me was the pace: my general impression is that traditional lessons move more slowly and a bit more formally in France than in the U.S., and this slower pace was sometimes challenging for me.

One key difference between U.S. language immersion programs and what I observed at Stumdi was how teachers were rotated: each day, we had a different teacher, and we had that teacher all day. (I believe that this is the structure for Roudour, as well, as our one-week intensives were similarly arranged.) This means that the teacher is required to come up with a day-long lesson plan for the class, which meant almost 8 hours' worth of activity, and that is not easy.

There was no textbook, per se, for the class, but there was some type of overall curriculum that the teachers followed, specifying what was to be covered on a weekly basis, and each teacher left notes for the next teacher, outlining what had been covered that day. The informality of the structure allowed for the teachers to approach the lessons in their own ways, while still keeping the class on schedule. There were handouts for some materials, but a great deal of the transmission consisted of the teacher explaining and writing things on the board, and the students listening and taking notes. The practice activities were livelier and more creative, and got us out of our seats and sometimes took us outdoors.

There were individual language skills tests on a regular basis, checking our comprehension and production skills in conversational situations. I found

these very stressful at first, but over time I worried less about them, as there were no formal grades. The tests seemed to be more about monitoring our progress. I also gave up thinking I could translate from French to Breton or from Breton to French, as my brain would not cooperate. In translation activities of this sort (in class or in tests), I would translate between Breton to English, and then add on the French, if necessary. Many of my teachers and classmates knew English fairly well, and I usually did not need to bother with the French at all.

In addition to our regular lessons, there were other activities that broke up the routine. There were occasional special joint-class activities, such as fieldtrips to see Breton language performances. Stumdi's job placement services were introduced to us, and most of the class participated, including me (to the degree that they let me—I do not think they knew what to do with me at times like that). We also had occasional visits from our class patron, the Breton singer Yann-Fañch Kemener, who taught us songs and generally encouraged us in studies.

Our study program – the second two months

The second two months, the teachers began speaking only Breton to us, and began to push us to try and speak Breton a bit more, in and out of class. In many ways, the lessons were very similar in style to those of the first two months; however, this forced us to improve our Breton language comprehension skills, and some of my classmates began speaking Breton most of the time in class.

Again, there were special fieldtrips and activities. Job placement activities continued: we worked on our resumes in Breton, and began having guest speakers on related topics. A reporter from a Breton language TV program spoke to us and interviewed us on camera for a special New Year's themed episode she was producing. We also had an active holiday week before the winter break, including performances and a special cooking class: I played

a blind saint in a not-overly-traditional nativity story, and we all learned to cook *kig-ha-fars*.

Our study program – the final two months

In the final two months, we were expected to use Breton both in class and during our break times, and everyone had adapted to the language fairly well by then. The focus of the lessons was on the refinement of our Breton skills, and the grammar lessons were of more complex features at this point. We also were encouraged to interact with native speakers whom we knew, and to record and transcribe some of their speech. We gave educational presentations to the class on the topic of our choice: mine was on California, my home state. Job placement activities began to play a greater role in the program: a panel of Breton language school leaders came and spoke to our class, and each of us participated in two week-long internships of our choice. (See below for more details about the internship process.) We also practiced and performed long scenes from Breton plays, learned more songs, and had some older native speakers visit our class and talk about their younger days, when Breton was spoken more commonly.

At this point in the program, I recall visiting some (non-Breton speaking) friends in Roazhon, and I found that my French was overlaid with Breton, and I was unable to speak in complete French utterances without some Breton word trying to work its way into my sentence. I realized that my French had slowly declined over the previous months—an apparent side affect of using very little French and actively using Breton every day. My French returned to normal after the course, so this deterioration of my French had been some type of developmental stage in my mastery of Breton.

The Stumdi program ended with two days of special events: a Stumdi-wide meeting and scavenger hunt in Karaez for all the graduating students, a fieldtrip to the Etel river, and a visit to a studio where Breton language programs were produced.

The internships

The two internships that we did were a very important part of the program, given that the goal is to prepare students for using Breton in their future places of employment. We students were in charge of our own internships, and Stumdi provided us with a list of typical internship sites and contact information to help us get started. Stumdi has its students do two week-long internships—one around the fourth month, and the other around the fifth. (Roudour has its students do three, which seems a lot to me, and which was another of the reasons I preferred Stumdi.)

The phone call that I made—in Breton, of course—to secure my first internship was perhaps the most difficult thing that I had to do during the entire six-month program. At that time, my classmates were beginning to feel comfortable speaking Breton, but I was still struggling to get Breton sentences to come out of my mouth. Nevertheless, I succeeded, and so off I went a few weeks later to spend the week at the Diwan *skolaj* (middle school) in Kemper. Everyone's internship is different, depending upon where they go, what they propose as their role, and the people with whom they work. For mine, I had said that I wanted to observe a variety of classes and help out in an English language class. I was introduced to many of the teachers and given a schedule of classes to visit—everything from math to Breton. In addition, I hung out with the teachers at break time, experienced cafeteria lunches, and helped teach one English class. The teachers and students were welcoming, despite my halting Breton, and I learned a great deal about the challenges that Diwan schools face in France.

My second internship was at the *lise* (high school) in Karaez. For this internship, I had to first meet with the head of the school to get his approval. Once that was obtained, I was allowed to spend my internship at the *lise* and learn about this special high school. The *lise* is a boarding school—nearly all of its students live on-campus during the week. One reason for this is

that this is the only Breton language high school, so students who attend come from all over Brittany; the other reason is that the *lise* is designed to be its own little world—a linguistic island in the middle of a French-speaking world—where young people can study, share meals, participate in sports and social activities, and develop friends for life, all in the Breton language. Here again, I got to know the teachers, observed a variety of classes, and I also helped out in an English class. By that time, my Breton language abilities had improved, which made it easier to be engaged in conversations in Breton and to follow what was being taught in the classes.

Kemper, the site of my first internship, is a short train ride from Lorient, so it was easy to get to the *skolaj* on my own, and I chose to stay at a hotel in Kemper for two nights to make my commute easier. My internship in Karaez was much trickier logistically, and it was a moment when a car would have made everything much easier. To get to the *lise* for my interview, I took the train to Roazhon, stayed the night there with friends, took two trains to get to Karaez, and then walked from the train station to the *lise* campus. Going home, I took a long bus ride to southern Brittany, where I was able to catch a local train back to An Oriant. Clearly, I needed a place to stay in Karaez, and the folks at the *lise* kindly helped me to arrange to rent a basement bedroom in a house for the week. It was nothing fancy, but I could get my meals on campus, and I only needed to be there five nights.

School life at Stumdi

The school day began at nine, there was a mid-morning break of coffee, tea, and cookies (provided and organized by us students), then lunch at one, an afternoon break (again, with snacks), and then school ended promptly at five, when everyone jumped in their cars and headed home. Most of the students at our course were from the Gwened region. Some carpooled, some drove on their own, and some took the train from points farther east. I lived

only a few minutes from the center where our classes were held, and I usually carpooled with my neighbor, and occasionally took the bus.

Lunch was fairly short by official French standards, so we quickly determined that trying to eat at the one restaurant a short walk from our classes was not a realistic option. Neither was driving up to An Oriant to a nearby university cafeteria, where we Stumdi students were given a student discount. As a result, we generally brought our own lunches, which saved time. This was especially good for those of us who wanted to walk around the lake during lunch. Occasionally, when someone forgot their lunch, three or four people would bundle into someone's car and head into the center of Plañvour to pick up sandwiches from a bakery or prepared food from a deli. These small voyages were exciting for carless me, as I occasionally got tired of my own homemade lunches.

At transitional moments (usually, before a vacation period), this lunch pattern was interrupted when we all drove over to a nearby restaurant for a more relaxed lunch en masse, or we had a picnic on the grounds next to the building where classes were held.

My classmates

Our class was made up of seven women and three men. Most of my classmates were teachers, teachers' aides, or aspiring teachers—for Diwan, public bilingual schools, and Catholic bilingual schools. My classmates all lived in Brittany, most were ethnically Breton (or a mix). Some had parents who were native speakers of Breton from rural areas, but as was typical in the mid-twentieth century, those parents did not attempt to pass Breton on to their children, and rarely or never used it anymore. I know of one case where a classmate began speaking Breton with her parents during the course. After some initial reluctance and fear that their Breton was lost, her parents began responding in Breton, and eventually began using it more freely with her and

with us, as well. Some of my classmates already spoke other languages quite well and had previously lived abroad, although they were all now settled in Brittany.

Most students were in their 20s or 30s, many had university degrees, and all had already been in the workforce, although some were currently unemployed. Some of them were already passionate about the Breton language, while for others, this was more of a pragmatic step towards finding a job.

I lucked out with a very lively, fun, and friendly class who made the days pass entertainingly. A couple of people knew each other before the course started, but the rest of us were strangers of various temperaments who would have to find a way to get along for the six months that we would be together. Our class was in fact so boisterous and assertive that it gained a reputation among some of the teachers as being the troublemakers: a challenging class that asked a lot of questions and that could get out of control. Some of the greener teachers—teachers who had less experience managing more challenging class personalities—apparently did their best to avoid us once they realized what we were like.

The other class next door (also ten) was also primarily made up of teachers and similar types of school professionals or aspirants. However, their personalities were more subdued, a bit shy, and much easier on teachers than my class was. My neighbor was in the other class. He was exceptional in that, although ethnically Breton, he had grown up just outside of Brittany, and he had attended university in Paris. It worked out well for me that he and I ended up living a block apart.

For certain special lessons and events, the two groups came together and became a joint class. Given that we were all on more or less the same break schedule, we all interacted with each other, but tended to gravitate to our own classmates.

Halfway through our program, a third course started up, with seventeen

students in one class. Because they were three months behind us, and so large a group, our interactions with them were more limited and our Breton language levels were quite different. They appeared to progress more slowly than our two classes had—I do not know if that was a function of class size, or individual motivation levels and personality types.

I was the only foreigner there, and while my classmates were always friendly, I think that they were not sure what to make of me initially. We shared intercultural and interlingual jokes at break time, and we engaged in lively and open-minded discussions about our respective cultures. However, I think that initially they found it odd that an American who was not culturally Breton would want to move to Brittany for most of a year to learn their local language. By the end of the program, I felt that I had not only completed the course and begun to speak Breton more naturally, but perhaps proven my commitment to the language and culture—and therefore, to them, as well. Some of my classmates were going out of their way to take me sightseeing and inviting me along to special Breton cultural events, and it became clear that I had truly made friends—good friends whom I am happy to visit whenever I am able to return to Brittany.

Eight of my classmates were of Breton ancestry--at least in part--and the ninth was an "adopted" Breton who had grown up there and was already a talented Breton musician. So, all of them had had at least some exposure to the culture and music of Brittany, and many were well versed in the songs and stories which were part of the culture. They had all been educated in the French national system, so they also shared a common educational background in terms of knowledge, expectations, and styles. They were also all native French speakers. This is the type of person for whom the program was designed, of course. I did not share this background, and all of these factors put me at a disadvantage in the classroom. For example, while my French was good enough to function in the classroom in general, when we learned

Breton sayings, as we did weekly, I sometimes had a hard time understanding their meanings, as I tended not to know the equivalent French saying; I had a similar challenge when the teachers taught us traditional songs, as it was difficult to keep up when most of the class already knew the words. It was frustrating at times for me, but my classmates were a great support in helping me to understand and keep up when my lack of cultural knowledge got in the way.

Our teachers and the dialect focus of our program

We had so many teachers over the course of the year, and I got to know some better than others. Although they did not talk about their backgrounds initially, most of the teachers at some point revealed their histories with the Breton language. Most, it turned out, were not native speakers themselves. (As indicated above, for this generation, Breton native speakerhood is extremely rare in Brittany, due to a lack of intergenerational transmission.) These teachers had either taught themselves Breton on their own (via textbooks or correspondence courses), studied the language at school, or done some combination thereof. All displayed a genuine passion for the language, and despite their long teaching days, they consistently made themselves available at breaks and lunchtime to answer our questions and encouraged us to use our Breton in conversation as much as we could. They were all active in the Breton language scene outside of school in various ways, whether it be teaching night school classes, organizing cultural events, participating in Breton music activities, or writing for Breton language publications.

Our class had two core teachers who each taught our class once a week or more. The other teachers—ten or so—would cycle through less often, and our core two provided us with some consistency. Our two core teachers were also our local dialect experts. This is a key feature of the Stumdi program— that in each Stumdi location, the teaching focuses, at least in part, on the

local dialect. I was surprised to discover this, as it is in contrast to much of the existing academic literature on modern Breton language education. Breton language revitalization programs and Diwan immersion schools for children are seen as purveyors of neo-Breton, a standardized language that has a great deal of literary influence. Instead, I found that Breton programs (including Diwan) tend to have a localized, dialectal flavor, with enough of the standardized Breton included to keep up with the school standards that currently exist.

Our sister class was a geographically mixed group, and as a result, they spent more time with teachers from other dialectal regions than our class did. Our class was almost all folks from the Gwened region, so our lessons almost always oriented towards the Gwenedeg (i.e. Vannetais dialect) dialect: even teachers from other dialect areas made it a point to provide the Gwenedeg version of whatever they were covering, as well as their own dialectal version. Gwenedeg is considered to be the most distinct of all the major dialects, and as such, its lexical inventory, phonology, and even some of its syntax are distinct from those of the other dialects. As a result, it is also the most marked dialect, the most likely to be perceived as difficult to understand by outsiders, and the one that tends to get made fun of in the wider Breton world. Most pedagogical materials available for Breton reflect what are known as the KLT dialects (Kerneveg, Leoneg, and Tregerieg), which are the predominant influences upon Standard Breton, so it requires specialists in the Gwenedeg dialect to provide a good grounding in the local traditional speech, and the Plañvour Stumdi program was unique in providing that. My classmates were eager to learn the Gwened dialect and used it in their speech in and out of class. I was fascinated to learn the features of this generally overlooked dialect. Ironically, though, I was also the holdout when it came to speaking it—I studied it along with my classmates, but I spoke a more standardized (i.e. KLT-flavored) Breton. This was the case for two reasons: one was that my previous study of

Breton had been of the more standard variety, and I found it easier to build upon that knowledge base; the other reason was that—as a foreigner who had been conducting research in different parts of Brittany—I felt that learning to speak a marked variety of the language would be confusing, and potentially off-putting, to Breton speakers outside the Gwened region. Even so, when I visited the *Lise Diwan*[3] in Karaez I discovered that I had not fully escaped the regional dialect—after my self-introduction to some of the teachers at lunch, one of them announced that I must be studying Breton in Gwened: unbeknownst to me, my pronunciation of the verbal infinitive suffix *–iñ* had become Gwenedized.

Everyday life during the six-month program

Because the language program is intensive, there is an enforced consistency of daily life during the six-month course: attendance in class is required, so Monday to Friday, from 9 to 5, life is school. There are morning and afternoon breaks, as well as lunch, of course, but the rest of the day is class time. During the winter months, this can be challenging, as sunrise occurs around 9:00 am and sunset is around 5:00 pm. Still, within the confines of the schedule, it was possible to get fresh air and some sun. Students were encouraged—when it wasn't rainy—to spend break time outside. Our classes were held at a Breton cultural center that sits on the site of a once grand 18th century chateau. The cultural center building is surrounded by parkland, and includes a scenic lake. Some of us chose to walk around a lake during the lunch break, even if it meant that we only had a few minutes to eat our lunches—I have fond memories of those walks and conversations with my classmates. Because we were at a cultural center, it also meant that we were able to benefit from some of the center's offerings, such as being able to listen to occasional concert rehearsals, as well as check out books and CDs from the onsite Breton language library.

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3 Lise Diwan is the *lycée*, or high school, of the *Diwan* Breton language immersion schools.

Outside of the school day, simple rhythms also predominated. This was partly because the school day was so mentally demanding for me that I did not have much energy for extra activities during the week, and partly because I did not have a car. I usually carpooled to school with a classmate who lived near me; there was also a local bus that I could take to school, when my classmate was unavailable. After school, I might pick up groceries in one of the shops in the city of Plañvour on the way home, or I might go straight home. If it was dark outside, then I did not venture out again, except to occasionally go to the one nearby restaurant, which was only open certain days in winter, or to visit my neighbor-classmate. When the days were long enough, I might go out for a walk to the beach or along the coast, pick up yummy bread or desserts at the village bakery, or ride by bike to a supermarket in a nearby village. For a few months, I was able to take a traditional Breton dance class once a week, which was possible because my car-owning neighbor took the class with me, as the buses did not run late in my area.

A word about public transit in Brittany: it is quite limited, and most people rely on cars for their daily life. Two bullet trains run in parallel from Paris to the western end of Brittany—one along the northern coast (terminating in the city of Brest), and the other along the southern coast (terminating in Kemper), and there is a local train connecting the two terminuses. Traveling from one city to another along either of those Paris-Brittany routes is quite easy and convenient; traveling anywhere else is time-consuming and often rather difficult. Limited regional bus service fills in some of the north-south gaps, but not enough to get one everywhere in Brittany. If one lives in a metropolitan area, as I did, one can take advantage of the local bus system as well. However, the buses tend to have rather limited or no coverage to suburban areas in the evening and on Sundays, and if one lives as far out on a bus line as I did, it may be difficult to travel at all during off-peak hours.

If I had picked an isolated area in which to spend my year in Brittany, it

was also a picturesque one, filled with incredible beauty and a great deal of history. I lived on the border of two villages, Ar Gerveur and Kerroc'h, in a small apartment that had been carved out of an old farmhouse and converted into a vacation rental. A ten-minute walk south and west of my apartment, there were white sand beaches, as well as walking trails that wound along the coastline. In fact, the entire coast was a scenic mix of rocky outcroppings and sandy beaches all along the coast of the commune of Plañvour and neighboring An Arvor. The area, while now primarily functioning as a suburb of An Oriant, still has some farms and traditional houses mixed in among the newer houses. In addition, within walking distance of my apartment, I was able to explore ancient megaliths, a holy well, old public washing areas, and WWII bunkers.

Weekends tended to be quiet, especially at first. I might go into An Oriant to sightsee, shop, or eat at a restaurant on a Saturday (sushi! Indian food!), and on Sunday ride my bicycle to the Plañvour farmers' market or along the coast to take pictures of the sunset or a nearby megalith. Occasionally, when I needed to stock up on some exotic basics, like jello or peanut butter or Asian cooking ingredients, my local friend would drive me to a specialty store in An Orient or Lann ar Ster. Later on, I got out a bit more, as my classmates invited me out to *festoù noz* and to go sightseeing around Brittany. After a while, I also got to know some folks in the area, via my local friend, and they included me in their events and parties. In addition, one of my neighbors befriended me—an older couple who were native Breton speakers, and we would occasionally visit and talk about Breton.

The year was punctuated by one- and two-week vacations, and those were the moments when I had the freedom to engage in some intensive sightseeing (via rental car), entertain visitors from back home, or head off to Paris for a change of pace. I also spent five weeks in town after the program ended to explore the area a bit more and hang out with my former classmates and

their families. This time at the end allowed me to decompress, use my Breton a bit more, and say goodbye to all of the people I had gotten to know over my nearly nine months in Brittany.

Resources

Links to all of the schools that offer six-month immersion courses, as well as two programs for those who plan to teach in Catholic bilingual schools or Diwan:

http://www.fr.opab-oplb.org/13-formation.htm

To search for housing in Brittany:
http://www.leboncoin.fr/annonces/offres/bretagne/

Decoding Irish Manuscripts

Dennis King. Seattle

Students of Old and Middle Irish generally work at one remove from the actual written texts, certainly in the early stages of learning. *Stories from the Táin*, *Old-Irish Paradigms and Glosses*, Quin's *Old-Irish Workbook*, and all the more recent textbooks all give us Old Irish in our familiar Roman script, with the spelling more or less normalized. The same is true of the "blue books" in the Medieval and Modern Irish Series. Until quite recently, there was little choice in the matter. If we wanted to read a tale in *Lebor na hUidre* (The Book of the Dun Cow), we went to the transcription edited by R. I. Best and Osborn Bergin, originally published by the Royal Irish Academy in 1929 and reprinted since. The lithographic facsimile of the book itself, printed by the RIA in 1870, has been long out of print and is now a stratospherically expensive collector's item.

Our opportunities changed radically and suddenly, however, with the advent of Irish Script on Screen (http://www.isos.dias.ie/), the Bodleian

Library of Irish Manuscripts (http://image.ox.ac.uk/list?collection=bodleian) and similar resources which have made high resolution photographs of the actual handwritten texts easily available. Now we can see exactly what the scribe wrote, how he wrote it, and what he wrote it on: the texture of the vellum, the color of the ink, the width of pen nib.

The scribes, by the way, frequently complained about all three - vellum, ink, and pen - in their marginal notes, as well as the cold and the poor lighting they had to put up with. Here are a couple of typical examples:

Is olc in dub ⅂ in memram gann ⅂ is dorcha an la. (The ink is bad and the vellum is scarce and the day is dark.)

Is mor mo chessacht fein aniu ar mo scriben le holcus mo duib ⅂ le ro olcus mo memraim. (I have a lot to complain about my writing today, given the badness of the ink and the badness of the vellum.)

We have even more to complain about today, centuries later: the fading of the scribe's ink, the water stains, and all the other depredations of wear and age. There is one other set of obstacles to reading directly from the scribe's pages, and it outstrips all others for the modern scholar: the writing conventions of the time.

The scribes did not spell consistently, of course, but we see that and get used to it in the Best & Bergin edition of *Lebor na hUidre*, in the blue books, and in most other printed editions. They also did not consistently leave spaces between words, nor did they bother to indicate that a word continued from one line to the next (i.e., no hyphens). That can cause confusion.

One of the hardest things of all for the uninitiated, however, are scribal

contractions and abbreviations. That is what I'll be discussing from here on out. The scribes had an extensive stock-in-trade of "noda" (Latin "notae") which they used to shorten words, and sometimes phrases. Even when there was plenty of vellum, they were so accustomed to (and enamored of?) their abbreviations that they rarely spelled words in full.

A few examples might be useful at this point.

This is the ampersand of the Irish scribes, equivalent to our &. It can stand for "et" in Latin or "ocus / agus" in Irish. It is also the most successful of the notae, still in use in writing Irish. You can even see it on parking signs in Dublin!

This one was originally an abbreviation for Latin "vel" meaning "or". It consists of the letter 'l' with a suspension stroke written across it indicating that letters have been left out. In Irish texts it stands for "nó".

This is one of the most common abbreviations in Irish, where it stands for "ar". Originally it was the Latin abbreviation for "quia" meaning "because", consisting of a 'q' with a suspension stroke. The sign could also stand for Old Irish "ar" meaning "because", and was then generally to stand for the syllable "ar" in any context, usually as part of a larger word.

Like these, many other Irish abbreviations got their start in Latin, where they are called Notae Tironianae or Tironian Notes. They are so named after Marcus Tulius Tiro, who invented a system of shorthand to enable him to take down the speeches of his master, Cicero. The above examples are taken from a web page called Notae and Suspensions at:

http://quidnunc.net/~garyi/noda/notae.html

I put this page together a number of years ago as a reference list of the most common abbreviations and my friend Gary Ingle hosted it on his server. I collected all the examples from a single page in the *Book of Leinster*. This site is still a useful cheat sheet. The more time I and my colleagues on Old-Irish-L spent rooting around in the new on-line photographic images of Irish manuscripts, however, the more it became apparent that the Notae and Suspensions list was just not adequate in scope.

In the earlier MSS, such as the *Lebor na hUidre* and the *Book of Leinster*, the scribes maintained a remarkably uniform writing style. Both their letter forms and their use of abbreviations and suspension marks did not vary much from text to text. As the centuries passed, however, scribes began to display increasingly personal writing styles. Some of these hands are very beautiful and clearly written, others less so. At the same time, they began to deploy a greater variety of abbreviations.

So last fall we decided that a new, much more comprehensive list of notae and suspensions was needed. The result, Tionscadal na Nod, is now on line at:

http://www.vanhamel.nl/wiki/project:tionscadal_na_nod

The project is open-ended, meaning that we continue to add examples, although they are increasingly of rare and "exotic" abbreviations and alternate letter forms. The most commonly encountered material has already been entered and is available for your viewing pleasure!

Y Llyn

The Lake

by Ginny (G.R.) Grove

Beth yw llyn? Lle sy'n llonydd?
Lle heddychol, tawel, distaw?
Lle naturiol, lle digyffro,
noddfa, heb ddim trais?
Gofynnaf nawr i rywun agos
sydd yn gwybod ateb gwir.

What is a lake? A quiet place?
A place peaceful, quiet, still?
A natural place, a tranquil place,
a refuge, without any violence?
I will ask now someone near
who knows the true answer.

O Llyn Mawr, hallt a llydan,
yn breuddwydio rwyt yn gorwedd
dan yr haul fel drych y nefoedd
mewn gwlad arw, wyllt a sych.
Yn dy ddyfroedd glas a dwfn
cedwi gofion y canrifoedd,
oesoedd hir a heb eu rhifo –
canu adar, canu'r gwynt,

O Great Lake, salt and wide,
dreaming you lie
under the sun like a mirror of the heavens
in a land rough, wild and dry.
In your depths, blue and deep,
you keep the memories of the centuries,
long ages without counting –
singing of birds, singing of the wind,

olion llwythau anghofiedig
yn y llwch sydd ar dy lannau.
Gest dy eni gan yr iâ –
hen fam oer – oesoedd gynt.
Dyweda, llyn, o'th ddoethineb –
a oes llynoedd eraill rywle?
Wyt ti'n gwybod am dy frodyr?
Am eu hanes a'u heneidiau?

Oes, yng Nghymru mae rhai eraill –
llynnoedd mawr a bach, enwogion.
dweudaf wrthyt eu hanesion –
gwrando arnyn – siaradant.

Llyn y Fan Fach yw'm henw.
Yn Ne Cymru preswyliaf.
Lle dewiniaeth fawr wyf i,
cartref cu y tylwyth teg.
O'm dŵr oeraidd daeth y forwyn
i briodi gan was ifanc
a ddywedodd fod ei charu –
ond ni chadwodd ei lw cryf.
Nôl i'w chartref daeth y fenyw
gan ei da gwyn a'u lloi.
Gadawodd ei gŵr a'i meibion –
meddygon Meddfai daethon nhw.
Felly rhois rodd i Gymru.
Dyma bopeth ddywedaf nawr;
am ei hanes, gofyn nesa
i lyn arall – dacw un.

traces of unremembered tribes
in the dust on your banks.
You got your birthing by the ice –
old cold mother – ages ago.
Tell, lake, of your wisdom –
are there other lakes somewhere?
Do you know about your brothers?
About their history and their spirits?

Yes, in Wales are some others –
lakes great and small, famous (ones).
I will tell you their stories –
listen to them – they will speak.

Llyn y Fan Fach is my name.
In South Wales I dwell.
A place of great magic I am,
a dear home of the Tylwyth Teg.
From my chill water came the maiden
to marry a young lad
who said that he loved her –
but he did not keep his strong oath.
Back to her home came the woman
with her white cattle and their calves.
She left her husband and her sons –
the physicians of Meddfai they became.
Thus I gave a gift to Wales.
This is all I will say now;
for his story, ask next
another lake – yonder is one.

Cerrig Bach ydy'm henw.
Ar hen ynys y derwyddon
arhosais am fy ebyrth
trwy'r oesoedd gynt mewn anghof.
Daeth penaethiaid pobl Prydain
gan eu llwythi tlysau tlysion –
pethau hardd i roi i'r Duwiau,
pethau byw i ladd amdanyn.
Gwin a gwaed arllwyswyd yno;
torrwyd arfau miniog haearn.
Wedyn daeth y fyddin Rufeinig,
gwaed i ollwng dros y tir.
Nawr mae dreigiau'n byw a hedfan –
swnllyd, budr, ddydd a noson,
mynd a dod heb fy nghydnabod –
wrth fy nŵr a dros fy nefoedd.
Ni ddywedaf ddim byd arall –
caiff un arall siarad nawr.

Du fy nyfroedd, du fy enw.
Nid yng Nghymru wyf, ond un tro
cyn dod o'r hen elynion
yn rhan oddi roeddwn i.
Wrth droed du rhai bryniau serth
gorweddaf yn dawel a chudd.
Daeth i mi ddynion rhyfedd,
rhoesant ynof aberth gwaed.
Dyn ifanc a heb ddim anaf
lladdwyd teirgwaith ar fy nglan.
Deil ei ysbryd gwarchod ffiniau

Cerrig Bach is my name.
On the old island of the druids
I waited for my sacrifices
through the long ages lost from memory.
The chieftains of the people of Britain came
with their burdens of beautiful treasures –
handsome things to give to the Gods,
living things to slay for them.
Wine and blood were poured out there;
sharp iron weapons were broken.
Then came the Roman army,
blood to spill across the land.
Now there are dragons living and flying –
noisy, dirty, day and night,
coming and going without acknowledging me –
beside my water and across my heavens.
I will say nothing else –
another gets to speak now.

Black my depths, black my name.
Not in Wales am I, but once
before the old enemies came
part of her I was.
At the dark foot of some steep hills
I lie quiet and hidden.
Strange men came to me,
placed in me a blood sacrifice.
A young man without blemish
was killed triply on my bank.
His spirit watches still (the) borders

rhwng ei wlad a gwlad ei elyn.

between his land and (the) land of his enemy.

Cofia neb pwy oedd y werin

No one remembers who were the folk

a'i roddasant ar ei wylio,

who set him on his watching,

ond ar nosau tywyll gaeaf

but on dark winter nights

gelli weld ei enaid gwyllt.

you may see his wild spirit.

Un llyn arall ddaw i siarad.

One other lake comes to speak.

Nid wrth iâ neu law fy gwneid.

Not by ice or rain I was made.

Dwylo dynion a'm ffurfiodd,

Hands of men shaped me,

trefi foddwyd i'm gwneud.

villages were drowned to make me.

Tai a chaeau dan lifogydd

Houses and fields under floods

aeth am dda i'w dinas bell,

went for the good of their distant city,

holl yn wancus am fy nyfroedd

all greedy for my waters

heb ddim gofal pwy a gyll.

without caring who (it was) that lost.

Llyn anhapus ydwyf fi,

An unhappy lake am I,

pawb amdanaf yn fy nghasáu.

everyone around me hating me.

Tynged arnaf sydd mor bigog

The fate on me is as thorny

â dail glas fy enw i.

as the green leaves of my name.

Dywed ond yn ddistaw'r enw:

Say only quietly the name:

wyf Llyn Celyn. Dos i ffwrdd.

I am Llyn Celyn. Go away!

Clywsit nawr rai hanesion

You heard now some stories

o'm brodyr dros y môr,

of my brothers across the sea,

ebe'r Llyn, a wyt yn hapus?

said the Lake, and are you happy?

Nid oes ateb gyda fi.

I have no answer.

The Midnight Court / Cúirt an Mheán Oíche
A Critical Edition.
Syracuse University Press, 2011. 152 pages
ISBN-9:780815-632603 (paperback) $17.00

Brian Merriman, 1780, translated by David Marcus, 1966, edited by Brian Ó Conchubhair.
Reviewed by Hilary Mhic Suibhne. New York University.

The Midnight Court, Cúirt an Mheán Oíche, by Brian Merriman, is a poem of 1,026 lines written c.1780 which offers some insights into the social and cultural life in late eighteenth century Ireland through a humorous lens. This poem is encountered by all students of the Irish Language at University Level in Ireland and overseas by non Irish-speaking students focusing on Irish language literature in translation. The poem has had a colorful history, as colorful perhaps as the story it narrates. The poem is based on the Aisling or vision poetry model of the 18th century. It is, however, a comic departure from that convention.

The early sections of the poem give a brief account of the woeful state of a leaderless Ireland. It continues with a description of the depopulation of the countryside due to the political situation. This, it claims, has led to the deportation of the best young men, and poverty for those remaining. However the narrative in *The Midnight Court, Cúirt an Mheán Oíche,* is essentially about sex, or lack thereof, in the lives of the young women of Ireland who are ignored by

the remaining young virile men in the community. In this case the poet, who is a young man enjoying his life without responsibilities, finds himself on trial for failing to marry and thereby denying a young woman the pleasure of his youthful virility. Social conditions of the time, or perhaps the desire for an easy life, dictate that these men, already a scarce commodity, choose to marry older women, often widows of means, thus leaving only older bachelors and widowers as marriage prospects for Ireland's young women. Though economically sound, the elderly men are considered to be past their sexual prime, causing Ireland to have a dearth of sexually unfulfilled young women apparently in the throes of desperation. The narrative employs five voices: the poet who is the narrator and on trial, a fierce female as bailiff, a young maiden as prosecutor, an elderly but recently married man who speaks for the defense, and the judge. During the court room proceedings old men as lovers are reviled, young women are castigated for their trickery and duplicity, and the celibacy rule of the Catholic Church is lambasted; evidently young priests are not only objects of desire but are perfectly willing to assuage the frustrations of the young women of Ireland, with none of the responsibilities of marriage.

"Throughout the land there's ample proof
The Church is anything but aloof,
And many a man doesn't know that he
Has a son with a clerical pedigree" (Marcus 798-802)

The poem is funny, intense, irreverent and fantastic dealing with conscious and unconscious sexual fears and desires. It is a work of linguistic art in the Irish language revealing Merriman's intellectual experience through references to other writers and his immense power in the Irish language. It was published in its original Irish in the late 1800's and subsequently

published numerous times in the 20th century, both in Irish and in translation to English. Some of the poem's notoriety rests with the banning of Frank O'Connor's translation to English in 1945. Interestingly the Irish language version was not banned.

The introductory essay in this new volume gives a useful overview of the poem in its historical and literary context along with many examples of disparate critiques ranging from Aodh de Blacam in 1935 who wrote that it was "a thing that we could lose without a sigh", to Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin in 2005 who wrote "there is no text, not even Ulysses, whose fate in the 20th century interacted with the national culture as significantly as Brian Merriman's *Cúirt an Mheán Oíche* ".

The book then presents a translation of the poem published by David Marcus in 1966 which is glossed where necessary for the benefit of American undergraduates. The lines are numbered, which is a practical advantage for anyone studying multiple versions of this text. Much is lost in translation, of course. When a work of art is utterly refashioned into a new creation, the result is inevitably quite different to the original. In this case the translator successfully recreates a rhyming poem in English in a style very close to that of the original, and in doing so the content strays from the original perhaps more than a translation to prose might, but it is still funny and irreverent, capturing the essence of the original. Our lives are unquestionably enriched by access to translated texts, whether poetry or prose. There are many perspectives when considering the world of translation and undoubtedly loss. The question remains one of balance.

The text of the poem is followed by four essays by contemporary critics: *Cúirt an Mheán Oíche: A Wonder of Ireland* by Alan Titley; *The Two Enlightenments of Brian Merriman's County Clare* by Michael Griffin; *Courting an Elusive Masterwork: Reading Gender and Genre in* Cúirt an Mheán Oíche/*The Midnight Court* by Sarah E. McKibben; and *Approaching* Cúirt an

Mheán Oíche/*The Midnight Court* by Bríona Nic Dhiarmada. The inclusion of these essays is particularly useful to a student who has had little or no prior exposure to the poem. However, they are also interesting to those who regularly access it. Each essay raises myriad questions about the significance of the content of the poem, its historical worth and its linguistic importance from a different point of view. This edition also generously includes a publication history of the text, a timeline of famous events from 1770 until 1807, and a comprehensive additional reading list. The volume is wonderfully referenced.

The editor notes that the absence of the Irish language poem in this edition is lamentable because, quoting T.F. O'Rahilly (1912), the principle glory of Cúirt an Mhéan Oíche remains its language. For this reason he recommends Liam P. Ó Murchú's scholarly edition which is in Irish alone for those who wish to access the Irish original. The breadth of Merriman's vocabulary makes it not only a fantastic study of the Irish language of the late 18th century but a worthwhile study for dedicated language students of today, in particular those who are advanced enough to read *Cúirt an Mheán Oíche* in Irish aloud and thereby fully experience the aural carnival. Consisting primarily of dialogue, the poem was written at a time when poems were constructed for performance and entertainment rather than for solitary consideration.

Cúirt an Mheán Oíche languished unread for over a century, it was resurrected and translated to English only to be considered unsuitable for the Irish public by an English-speaking power structure, the same power structure which had established the Irish Republic and claimed to champion the Irish language and culture. Cultural norms change as is evident in the poem. It was too bawdy and humorously critical of the church in Ireland in 1945 but it is now acceptable, although still bawdy!

This edition has two aims, to introduce North American students to the poem in translation and to present to them the major

arguments and debates surrounding it. This publication does more; it presents Brian Merriman's achievement to all, whether in North America or anywhere else, who have an interest in Irish Language, Irish History and Irish Literature and who have a sense of humor to match. The inclusion of essays, an additional reading list, the timeline of events and the publication history of the poem add significantly to its usefulness for students. For many it will serve as a springboard to further study but for all it will be a thoroughly good read.

Mon premier dictionnaire Breton-Français.

Martial Ménard, 2010.
Reviewed by Kevin Rottet. Indiana University.

The name Martial Ménard is well known in Breton lexicography. Ménard has penned a number of small dictionaries and phrase books including the *Petit dico érotique du breton* (The little erotic Breton dictionary), a small pocket dictionary of cycling vocabulary, a dictionary of "les plus belles injures bretonnes" (the finest Breton insults), and the first monolingual Breton dictionary (*Geriadur brezhoneg gant skouerioù ha troiennoù*). The latter, his largest work and the one that made his reputation, caused a bit of a scandal when it appeared in 1997 because of accusations that some of the linguistic examples were nationalistic and anti-French in tone. Subsequent editions have been stripped of the offending lines, but the publisher An Here had already closed by that time as a result of the bad press.

The work being reviewed here ("My First Breton-French Dictionary") is Ménard's first dictionary written for children—specifically children in bilingual education, according to the Foreword, though the work is intended to appeal to any beginners in Breton. There are six entries on most pages and

a total of about 1200 entries.

The typical entry in this dictionary takes the following form. I have added English translations in parentheses:

> • **bezhin** *algues (seaweed)*
> **bezhin zo war ar c'herreg, diwall da risklañ warno! :**
> *il y a des algues sur les rochers, attention de ne pas glisser! (there is seaweed on the rocks, be careful not to slip!)*
> **ur vezhinenn** : *une algue (a piece of seaweed)*

The Breton headword is presented in bold lowercase (here **bezhin** 'seaweed'), followed by a French translation equivalent in italics (here '*algues*'). Below these there is an example or two in Breton, sometimes consisting only of a phrase but often a full sentence, followed by a French translation. The centerpiece of each entry is a wonderful color illustration (not reproduced here) by illustrators Christophe Lazé and Samuel Buquet, done in cartoon style and frequently featuring a little boy named Yann and his sister Mona. Their friends Malo and Lena frequently appear too. (Occasionally the girls' names are mixed up and Yann's sister is called Lena in some of the pictures). Children and adults alike will find these images engaging. The cartoon illustration for the article **bezhin** shows Yann slipping on the seaweed-covered rocks at the seashore.

The pictures generally do a fine job of communicating the intended meaning, at least for noun entries. Thus, the reader has no trouble inferring the meanings 'bat', 'bone', and 'apple' from the illustrations in the entries **askell-groc'hen**, **askorn**, and **aval** respectively. It is considerably more difficult to portray verbs and adjectives in an unambiguous way. For instance,

the illustration for the verb **astenn** 'to extend, hold out' shows a homeless person holding out and shaking a collection tin—a creative representation of the meaning of the verb, to be sure, though the picture could be understood to represent other meanings such as a verb 'to beg' or even a word for 'homeless person'. The pictures thus support rather than replace the glosses and examples.

Some of the drawings are small diagrams which include additional Breton vocabulary. For instance the illustration for **marc'h-houarn** 'bicycle' labels the handlebars, seat, brakes, spokes, etc. These "bonus" words are not generally given their own entries in this dictionary.

The major departure from traditional lexicography is that morphological information about entries, such as gender and number of nouns, or stems of verbal nouns, is not presented overtly, though such information is often built into the examples. This approach is not uncommon in children's dictionaries. Noun genders can generally be inferred from the illustrative sentences if the reader knows how to interpret the relevant facts about Breton morphology. For instance, the feminine gender of **kerc'heiz** 'heron' is revealed in the example *O pesketa emañ ar gerc'heiz* 'the heron is fishing', because feminine singular nouns undergo the soft mutation after the definite article (in this case <k> becomes <g>). But such information is not always given. For instance, the example for the entry **kein** 'back' (*daoubleget eo gant an droug kein* 'he is doubled over with back pain') reveals the gender of **droug** 'pain' but not that of **kein**.

The front matter claims that irregular noun plurals are supplied in examples, and this is sometimes true. Thus, the example sentence for **amezeg** 'neighbor' shows the plural form **amezeien** (*bugale an amezeien a zo mignoned da Yann ha Lena* 'the neighbors' children are friends with Yann and Lena'). However, plurals in Breton are not easy to predict, and one could wish that this information were given more systematically. The beginner could hardly

be expected to know that the plurals of **loa** 'spoon', **merc'hodenn** 'doll' and **kleze** 'sword' take the suffixes **–ioù, -ed** and **–ier** respectively, but these plurals are not supplied.

Breton has a fairly large number of nouns for which the base form is not a singular but a collective plural. The singular (called a singulative in these cases) is derived from the collective form by adding the suffix **–enn**. Ménard's dictionary includes many common nouns in this group (e.g. **koumoul** 'clouds', **kerez** 'cherries', **keuneud** 'firewood', **kevnid** 'spiders', and **bezhin** 'seaweed' that was discussed above), and the singulative forms are systematically shown in the examples, cf. **ur vezhinenn** 'a piece of seaweed'. An exception is for the entry **logod** 'mice'. The singulative **logodenn** is only shown as a label for the computer mouse in one of the two illustrations provided.

Overall, this new dictionary for children is an entertaining and fun way for Breton learners, including adults, to add to their basic Breton vocabulary. Besides presenting morphological information more systematically, the only major improvement that one would hope to see in a second edition is the inclusion of a French-Breton index to enable readers to find the Breton head-word from a French starting point.

REVIEW

Brezhoneg pell ha fonnus.

Yann-Bêr Kemener, 2011.
Reviewed by Kevin Rottet. Indiana University.

   Brezhoneg pell ha fonnus (henceforth BPF) is the more advanced companion volume to the beginner's 2005 book *Brezhoneg prim ha dillo* (BPD). The two volumes aspire to take the Breton learner, working independently, through the first four levels of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The CEFR is a scheme developed by the Council of Europe in view of standardizing and facilitating language instruction across the European Union. Given that the scheme lays out six levels of proficiency, one suspects that a third book is in the works to cover the two highest levels.

   BPD and BPF are organized almost identically. Each is divided into 24 units with an opening dialogue in Breton—a CD accompanying each book supplies the audio recordings—followed by its written translation into French. Part II of each unit is a vocabulary list of *Gerioù nevez* or "New Words" which nicely indicates pronunciations in phonetic transcription using the IPA. Part III, simply entitled *Yezh* ("Language"), provides brief grammatical discussions and cross-references to two of the main Breton grammars available

on the market for the learner interested in a fuller treatment of the relevant points. Finally, Part IV of each unit presents *Poelladennoù* ("Exercises") which alternate between listening comprehension exercises with audio provided on the accompanying CD, and short reading passages. A second exercise in each unit often takes the form of a debate, requiring at least one other Breton speaker to participate—a somewhat surprising inclusion in a course that is otherwise intended for independent study.

The dialogues function together across the two books to form a coherent narrative in which the learner follows the Kere family for its summer vacation to visit the grandparents in Brittany. Along with the parents and their two teenagers, Gaela (18 years old) and Erwan (who is 15), the Breton learner discovers important historical and cultural sites in Brittany. Both books are abundantly illustrated in black and white by the well-known French cartoonist Nono. BPF in addition includes color photographs throughout the text, showing some of the sites visited by the Kere family. Some readers (including this reviewer) may find that they prefer the strict black and white of BPD over the busy-looking full-color pages of BPF, although the photos are well chosen.

The appendices of BPF supply an answer key for exercises, the script for the audio exercises, a summary or review of Breton phrases and expressions arranged by communicative task, and finally two glossaries, Breton to French, and French to Breton. The inclusion of the communicatively arranged list of phrases is undoubtedly motivated by the fact that the ability to carry out particular communicative tasks is a key element of the CEFR scheme's six proficiency levels.

The course uses the ZH orthography (called *peurunvan* in Breton), which is nowadays by far the most widely used spelling system for Breton. The targeted dialect is a fairly neutral / central one, though the front matter notes that the various speakers in the recordings do not all speak exactly the same

way, since Breton is a language displaying important dialect variation. The inclusion of such variation is therefore quite authentic.

Overall, this series of two volumes and accompanying audio CDs is well planned out and user-friendly, and will be a useful component for any independent study of Breton.