



Education Provision through Minority Languages: Review of International Research

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An Chomhairle um Oideachas
Gaeilteachta & Gaelscolaíochta



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Educational Provision through Minority Languages: Review of International Research

Commissioned Research Report: An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Background.....	1
Research Questions	3
Methodology	4
Various Models of Bilingual Education.....	6
The Contemporary Gaeltacht	9
Examination of the Regions.....	12
1. Welsh in Wales	12
2. Basque and Catalan	23
3. Diné (Navajo) in the United States of America.....	45
4. French in Canada.....	51
5. Frisian in the Netherlands	62
6. Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) in Scotland.....	67
7. Hawaiian in Hawaii (United States of America)	76
8. Māori in New Zealand	78
9. Swedish in Finland	89
Conclusion and discussion of the key themes	92
Language Status	93
Programme composition and definition	94
Pupil integration.....	96
Participation and local administration.....	98
Support services for teachers and schools.....	100
Models of education for Gaeltacht areas.....	102
Summary of models.....	107
Concluding Remarks.....	108
References	110
Appendix A: Systematic Search.....	120

Introduction

This literature review was initiated by an invitation from Comhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG) on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills. We were requested to carry out a review of ‘... literature, national policies and related practice in other areas where the socio-linguistic context is comparable to those in Gaeltacht regions, in relation to the provision for minority languages in the education system and teaching through the medium of a minority language in preschool centres, primary and post-primary schools.’ (COGG, 2013: 1)

This document sets out the result of the review in ten different regions around the world. As Basque and Catalan are both spoken in Spain they are discussed under one major heading. However, a discrete account of each language is provided. The report describes the contexts in which minority languages are spoken and the influence historical factors have frequently exerted. A brief account of the background of Gaeltacht education is provided as part of this discussion. The methodology and resources used in the review are explained. The studies carried out in the various regions were prompted by the research questions set out in the research request. The research questions included in the request are used as headings to describe each region and conclusions are drawn from the evidence obtained in each region which the authors considered to be relevant to policies and education practices in the Gaeltacht. The review concludes with an examination and detailed discussion of the most important evidence that emerged.

Background

In choosing sociolinguistic contexts comparable to those obtaining in Gaeltacht areas, one needs to be cognisant of current circumstances in the Gaeltacht. Coimisiún na Gaeltachta

(1926) (Gaeltacht Commission) set out the Gaeltacht regions based on linguistic and geographic criteria. At that time, apart from County Waterford, the number of Irish speakers in those regions was above 87% of the total population. Since then, very many changes have occurred in the regions and Irish now has a minority-language status even in the regions in the country where Irish is strongest (Ó Giollagáin, Mac Donnacha, Ní Chualáin, Ní Shéaghdha, O'Brien, 2007). On the whole, Irish is spoken by a population with a high degree of fluency in English, who are frequently a minority within their own region. Consequently, education in the Gaeltacht is primarily bilingual. Native speakers, atavistic speakers, semi-speakers, and learners are all together in a single learning setting (Nic Cionnaith, 2008: 93). This creates a real challenge for directors/teachers and there is evidence to suggest that native speakers are not well served in such a context (Hickey, 2001). Any education policy therefore should focus special attention on the pupils whose family language is Irish.

A good deal of research has been published over the past decade which gives an insight into the fragile state of the Irish language in the Gaeltacht and the ongoing transition towards English (i.e. Harris, Forde, Archer, Nic Fhearaile, & O'Gorman, 2006; Hickey, 2001; Mac Donnacha et al., 2005; Ó Flatharta, 2007; Ó Giollagáin, Mac Donnacha, Ní Chualáin, Ní Shéaghdha, & O'Brien, 2007). This research provided us with direction as we examined other regions. Our review focused primarily on the education system. However, other factors such as the status of the language also have a great influence on the benefits pupils from a minority-language background can gain from the education system. The composition of the minority-language community is very significant since it is not only in school that children's language skills are developed. It is clearly evident in all-Irish schools that second language acquisition is limited when learners have little contact with the target language outside school (Ó Duibhir, 2009).

A minority language is frequently spoken by a community which was suppressed by a dominant state for a period of generations or for hundreds of years. This experience confers unique status on the minority language in relation to community identity (Nic Eoin, 2011). In certain areas the minority-language community is more committed to preserving the language since it is a means of distinguishing themselves from the wider community whom they perceive as being different in terms of either culture or heritage.

Research Questions

The following aspects were set out in the invitation to tender and guided the study and analysis:

- (i) status and context of the minority language in the community and in the education system
- (ii) planning and development of national education policies in relation to education provision through the medium of the minority-language at preschool, primary and post-primary school levels
- (iii) choices in relation to planning, management, linguistic and educational practices for provision of education through the medium of the minority-language at preschool, primary and post-primary school levels
- (iv) the potential and use of information and communications technology (ICT) to support provision of education through the medium of the minority-language in the various contexts
- (v) the support services available to schools and the manner in which these services are organised
- (vi) effectiveness of various state policies; planning, management, linguistic and educational practices; and support services in the various contexts.

Reports on the various regions are set out according to those six aspects.

Methodology

A review of relevant literature was carried out in countries and regions where sociolinguistic contexts are comparable to Gaeltacht areas and education through the minority language is provided. The languages and the regions chosen were:

1. Welsh in Wales
2. Basque in Spain
3. Catalan in Spain
4. Diné or Navajo in the United States of America
5. French in the bilingual regions of Canada
6. Frisian in the Netherlands
7. Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) in Scotland
8. Hawaiian in Hawaii
9. Māori in New Zealand
10. Swedish in Finland

In order to identify relevant literature in these languages, research terms were necessary. A considerable number of terms are used to describe the type of education available in a minority language situation such as: ‘aboriginal, ancestral, autochthonous, (ex)-colonial, community, critical, diasporic, endoglossic, ethnic, foreign, geopolitical, home, immigrant, indigenous, language other than English, local, migrant, minority, mother tongue, refugee, regional and strategic’ (Bale, 2010: 43). These terms assisted us in structuring the research.

Appendix A provides an account of the systematic research undertaken on a broad range of electronic data. When relevant articles were identified, we looked for lists of references in these extracts. Google Scholar and Google were used to discover education policies in the education departments and curricular agencies in the various regions.

Personal contact was made with experts who are very familiar with these regions to confirm that the sources we had identified were up-to-date.

A wide range of minority languages were examined as part of this research including languages where related materials in English were not easily accessible, a factor which presented us with some challenge as researchers when seeking reliable, up-to-date information, concerning the provision of education through the medium of that particular language. The most commonly accessed materials which did not have a translated version included academic articles; websites of educational organisations or support organisations in the education sector; government reports and other similar materials. To overcome these challenges, contact was made with experts in areas of education who could bridge the lacunae in our knowledge and who, in some instances, were able to translate important material and themes.

An added obstacle encountered was the dearth of contact with experts in this field. In the absence of a network of experts who have education through the medium of minority languages as an area of interest, we were obliged to depend on our contacts to seek additional information. We also acknowledge the assistance given by the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga while seeking contacts in various countries who would be in a position to provide information on this area, and when contacted, these experts very generously shared their information with us. However due to the rather narrow time frame of the research, in some cases these experts did not have opportunity to answer our questions within the allocated time. The availability of a list of experts working in this area would be of tremendous assistance when undertaking a research project of this type. A network which would encompass all experts active in this field of study would greatly support a research project of this kind, and would serve as a facility where participants could easily and speedily access comprehensive and up-to-date advice on the subject.

Other obstacles encountered in the course of this research included the lack of narrative in certain areas of education, especially the attention paid to information technology activities in the minority language, and, the support services available to teachers. To bridge these information gaps, discussion was held with the above mentioned experts. The instances where we were unable to locate accurate information are specified in the report.

Various Models of Bilingual Education

In undertaking this work questions of terminology were of fundamental importance. Baker & Jones (1998) describe ‘immersion education’ as a form of strong bilingual education. However, the term ‘immersion education’ is frequently used as an umbrella term for a multiplicity of models of bilingual education extant in different national and international contexts, adding to the complexity of a literature review of the topic. In Ireland, models of immersion education are associated frequently with the Irish-medium school movement, outside the Gaeltacht, where pupils from the dominant primary language (principally English) are immersed in the minority language (Irish in this case) from their first day of school. Immersion takes place during specific periods and the teaching of English is left to a later stage in the educational life of the pupils. All other curricular subjects are taught through the medium of Irish, and Irish is strongly encouraged in every aspect of the functioning of the school to foster an Irish ethos and atmosphere. In the context of these schools, children do not hear Irish in regular use as a language of communication outside of the education system and an immersion education policy is considered extremely important as a form of compensation (Harris, 2008).

In the Gaeltacht context, which is the focus of this review, a bilingual education system is at issue. However, the term ‘immersion education’ has emerged to describe a

range of various models of bilingual education which serve native speakers and learners. The term is sometimes used to refer to the practice operating in some Gaeltacht schools where the teaching of English is left until later in the schooling. (Nic Cionnaith, 2008: 62). Despite the fact that the same word is in use in both cases, significant differences, we believe, exist between bilingual education in the Gaeltacht and immersion education in Irish-medium schooling, outside of the Gaeltacht area. For example, in another contemporary research study on the Gaeltacht, the label 'education in the native language' has emerged as a description of maintenance and heritage models provided for pupils from the Gaeltacht whose mother tongue is Irish, and especially those pupils located in Category A Gaeltacht districts (See Ní Shéaghdha, 2010 for example). Education through the medium of the native language is different from immersion education in that children from a linguistic minority (Irish in this case) receive their education through the medium of that minority language.

In any strong bilingual model, additive bilingualism is the objective. This means that the L2 is learned without an adverse impact on the L1 (Baker & Jones, 1998). When learning of the L2 hinders acquisition of the L1, this is termed subtractive bilingualism. The most recent evidence emanating from Gaeltacht education indicates that additive bilingualism is in question in the case of English, the majority language, and that subtractive bilingualism is in question in the case of Irish, the minority language (Péterváry, T., Ó Curnáin, B., Ó Giollagáin, C., & Sheahan, J., 2014). The Gaeltacht education system empowers learners of Irish to achieve a high standard in the language without any impairment of their development of English (Shiel, Gilleece, Clerkin, Millar, 2011). Unfortunately, this is not the case for native speakers since their proficiency in Irish is not being developed appropriately (Péterváry et al., 2014).

Landry et al. (2007) differentiate between additive bilingualism of the majority language and additive bilingualism of the minority language and it is the latter which is required by native speakers and their parents in the Gaeltacht area. In such education models, efforts are made to preserve and develop the native language of the minority community through the education system (Baker, 2011). An additional basic aim of these programmes is the strengthening of the children's cultural identity and the promotion of bilingualism and dual literacy (Baker, 2007).

During the systematic search, it was essential to exercise caution in relation to the difference between immersion education programmes for learners and maintenance bilingualism programmes for native speakers in the interest of identifying, assessing and adapting appropriate good models for the Gaeltacht context. This differentiation recognises differences between the needs of learners of Irish within an immersion education system and the needs of native speakers in a maintenance or heritage bilingual programme. In addition, it is recognised that a combination of learners and native speakers could be together in the same learning setting and that such a grouping would present pedagogical and management challenges. In such a case, categorisation of the Gaeltacht area is most appropriate and important (Ó Giollagáin et al., 2007). This categorisation recognises that every category has different linguistic characteristics and that, accordingly, pupils from the different categories will have diverse education needs. The importance of this differentiation was paramount during the review of the literature as we sought to avoid contexts that are not comparable to the Gaeltacht in Ireland.

A study of various international regions demonstrated that many of the contexts agreed at the beginning of the process were more similar to the context of immersion education outside the Gaeltacht than to the context of the Gaeltacht to which we were requested to direct our primary focus. For example, it is immersion education models,

primarily, which operate in Hawaii and in New Zealand with programmes based chiefly on learners of those languages and, while certain recommendations could be made concerning the provision of education through the medium of the minority language for native speakers, one could not claim that every recommendation from these various contexts could be successfully transferred to the Gaeltacht context.

The Contemporary Gaeltacht

Study of the contemporary Gaeltacht as a linguistic district is multifaceted and complex and it is accepted currently that sub-districts or various sociolinguistic categories exist within the boundaries of the Gaeltacht areas based on the use of Irish in those areas (Ó Giollagáin et al., 2007). In Category A Gaeltacht districts, Irish is the main language of the community and is spoken daily by 67% or more of the population (aged 3 years +). In the other two Gaeltacht categories, Category B and Category C districts, English is the main community language except in the case of Category C where the language shift from Irish towards English is more advanced. Despite the potential traditional image of Gaeltacht districts as Irish monolingual communities, it is now recognised that the population of Gaeltacht areas is bilingual and that the linguistic status of a good portion of this population is vulnerable. At present only 23,175 people or 23.9% of the Gaeltacht population are daily speakers of Irish (Central Statistics Office, 2012). The number of children who are native speakers is declining in these bilingual areas (Mac Donnacha et al., 2005 and Ó Giollagáin et al., 2007) and the number of families effecting an intergenerational transmission of Irish is also declining (Ó Giollagáin et al., 2007; Ó hIfearnáin, 2007; Romaine, 2007). The level of proficiency in oral Irish among Gaeltacht pupils has fallen (Harris et al., 2006; Mac Donnacha et al., 2005; Péterváry et al., 2014), English is predominant as the general language of communication in the majority of Gaeltacht primary schools, even in areas with the highest level of usage of Irish (Mac Donnacha et al., 2005) and the impact of

English is evident in the Irish of Gaeltacht children (Leonach, Ó Giollagáin & Ó Curnáin, 2012). Ní Shéaghdha (2010) states that the number of primary school children who speak Irish as their first language is less than 1,000 in the strongest Gaeltacht areas.

Ó Giollagáin et al. (2007) consider that the primary education system currently in operation in the Gaeltacht areas supports the decline of Irish among children whose first language is Irish, since their socialisation process is generally through the medium of English. Opinion emerging in certain sectors suggests that every Gaeltacht school should be turned into a 'secure Irish fort' and a bilingual classroom within a Gaeltacht school should not be permitted (Ní Fhinneadha, 2012: 8). As a support for Gaeltacht schools in fulfilling their statutory duties in relation to the Gaeltacht under the Education Act 1998 and, as part of the language planning process under the requirements of the *20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030* (Government of Ireland, 2010) and the Gaeltacht Act 2012, Eagraíocht na Scoileanna Gaeltachta (2013) noted a need for a template for a policy for Irish in Gaeltacht primary schools and designed a policy accordingly.

In addition to this challenge, we cannot claim to have a Leaving Certificate syllabus available which is appropriate to the needs of native speakers of Irish. The current syllabus serves the standard of the L2 speaker and is not sufficiently challenging for the native speaker. This is an example of additive bilingualism for the major language not fostering dual literacy to a level one would expect from a native speaker. It is not known whether this lack of challenge has an impact at primary level; however, it is evident from the latest research findings (Péterváry et al., 2014) that the standard of language of primary school native speakers of Irish is more developed in English than in Irish. Unless urgent action is taken to stop the decline of Irish among native speakers, there is little possibility of this generation being prepared to or able to realise an effective transmission of Irish to the next generation.

The Education Act 1998 and the Gaeltacht Act 2012

Under the Education Act 1998, responsibility is placed on Gaeltacht schools: ‘(j) to contribute to the maintenance of Irish as the primary community language in Gaeltacht areas; (k) to promote the language and cultural needs of students having regard to the choices of their parents.’ (Department of Education and Science, 1998, Section 6 (j,k). Reference is also made to Gaeltacht education in the Gaeltacht Act 2012. Under the Gaeltacht Act 2012, the title Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas will be conferred on the current Gaeltacht areas and these areas will be required to satisfy certain language planning criteria in order to maintain their status. Included in these language planning criteria is ‘the availability of education through Irish’ (The Gaeltacht Act 2012, Section 12 (b)); however, the wording of the Act does not indicate that this criterion is mandatory. The percentage of Irish-medium education to be provided in order to satisfy the criterion is not specified, and the model to be used in the assessment of the provision is not defined. This is the only reference to education in the section, and it is clear that education through Irish is used as an indicator to designate Gaeltacht area rather than as a central aspect of the life and functioning of that community.

Mac Donnacha et al. (2005) state that keeping Irish alive in the Gaeltacht is not the concern of the schools alone, (‘gnó do na scoileanna amháin’) since this responsibility belongs to all organisations operating in the Gaeltacht (‘an cúram seo leis na heagraíochtaí uile ag feidhmiú sa Ghaeltacht’) (Mac Donnacha et al., 2005:137). The Gaeltacht Act 2012 places this responsibility officially on the community as is shown above. It is accepted therefore that the education system has a central role in integrated language planning to ensure that an appropriate, effective education system ‘through the medium of Irish’ operates in the Gaeltacht that does not contravene the key criteria of the Act relating to recognition as a Gaeltacht Language Planning Area. This Gaeltacht community includes

various groups and agencies which all have a central role in integrated language planning, and the education system is at the core of this interaction.

The contemporary context of the Gaeltacht must be taken into consideration in the discussion which follows on the examination of the various language regions throughout the world. Recommendations, based on our reading of education systems of minority languages throughout the world, are made in the concluding section of this review. It is the opinion of the authors of this report that, were the strongest models discussed below to be implemented by public accord, the position of Irish in the Gaeltacht schools would be improved. If the decline of Irish in the Gaeltacht in general is to be halted, a comprehensive public policy as reported to be in operation in other areas is required.

Examination of the Regions

1. Welsh in Wales

Context and Status of the Minority Language

Iaith Pawb, the national language strategy for Wales was published in 2003. This strategy document outlined the government's language objectives for all sections of society, including Welsh-medium education. It was stated that the education system had a central role in promoting bilingualism in the country, especially in areas where the language was not widely spoken among the community (Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru / Welsh Assembly Government, 2003: 37). Despite the ambitious sentiment contained therein, *Iaith Pawb* did not succeed in achieving all the stated aims due to lack of specific objectives and a definite timeframe. Implementation of *Iaith Pawb* ceased in 2012 and was quickly followed by '*A living language: a language for living Welsh Language Strategy 2012–17*'. This strategy focuses on two specific objectives; language acquisition in the home and in the education system; and promoting use of the language through the implementation of certain elements

which would facilitate the use of the language in all areas of society (Llywodraeth Cynuliad Cymru, 2012: 14).

The 2011 census in Wales indicates that 562,000 people, or, 19% of the population of Wales, can speak the language. The highest percentage of speakers is to be found among children aged between five and fifteen years, thanks to the national curriculum where Welsh is a mandatory subject. The lowest percentage is defined as being in the twenty to twenty-four year age group, a statistic which shows how quickly the level of proficiency dissipates when young people leave post-primary school. The largest number of Welsh speakers and the highest level of proficiency are to be found in the north of the country in the four counties where the language has been spoken over a long period of time: Ynys Mon, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire. Sixty-two percent of primary-school children who speak Welsh fluently at home are resident in those areas (Jones, 2012). However, these figures must be viewed with a discerning eye since they are determined by self-reporting and, therefore, are not an accurate account of language behaviour in Wales.

Immigration has a negative influence on the Welsh-speaking population and on the preservation of traditional Welsh regions, Y Fro Gymraeg. Young people from these areas, Welsh speakers, frequently leave to seek employment in the large towns and a significant number of people who do not have a high level of proficiency in the language come to live in Y Fro Gymraeg. Consequently, the number of Welsh speakers in Y Fro Gymraeg has been falling in recent years and, as a result, Welsh as the living language of the community is under threat.

Education Provision through the Medium of the Minority Language

Bilingual education has been central to Welsh society since the middle of the last century with the first state school in which Welsh was used as a language of instruction having been established in 1947 (Lewis, 2006). Initially the objective of these schools was to provide

Welsh-medium education in areas of the country where Welsh was strong and was the first language of the majority of the population. At the present time however, English is the first language of the majority of pupils who attend Welsh-medium schools (Lewis, 2008; May, 2000).

The current education system operates under the Education Act 2002 which states that: ‘a school is Welsh-speaking if more than one half of the following subjects are taught (wholly or partly) in Welsh: (a) religious education, and (b) the subjects other than English and Welsh which are foundation subjects in relation to pupils at the school’ (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/section/105>). *The Welsh-medium Education Strategy 2010* is a further policy which supports the Welsh-speaking education system. This document charts the very considerable role that the Welsh-speaking education system has in promoting the Welsh language in every sphere of Welsh society. It is worth noting that this strategy promotes proficiency in Welsh as a bilingual language, and consequently in the education system in general.

A significant difficulty in the current Welsh education system is the vagueness of the definition of bilingual provision since every school is categorised as a bilingual school, irrespective of the composition of the school in relation to L1 and L2 speakers of Welsh. Undoubtedly, this presents a challenge when comparisons are made between the Welsh and Gaeltacht contexts since Gaeltacht schools are not defined as bilingual schools, or as designated Irish-immersion schools.

At present, it is believed that 7.6% of primary pupils undertake Welsh-medium education on a heritage or maintenance language basis in the traditional Welsh schools. These pupils have Welsh as their first language and the majority live in areas in the north of the country where Welsh is strongest (Lewis, 2008: 77). Notwithstanding this, it is accepted that there is a higher number of pupils for whom Welsh is not their family language

attending these schools. This presents a significant challenge for teachers and management in these schools.

These pupils and the traditional Welsh schools are the most appropriate for this present analysis as we examine the relevance of practices in Wales for the Gaeltacht education context. Therefore, this account will focus solely on that context.

Education Practice through the Medium of the Minority Language

Efforts are made to implement a bilingual teaching approach in the education system in Wales and both Welsh and English are used as the medium of instruction at different times. It is accepted that at least 70% of the time should be spent in Welsh-medium instruction if a satisfactory level of fluency is to be achieved and this guideline is laid down for primary and post-primary education levels (Llywodraeth Cynuliad Cymru, 2010: 8). However, it is at the discretion of the school and the local education authority how this approach is implemented. Therefore, in order for a pupil to adapt to such a system, s/he must be fluent in one language and have a basic knowledge of the other language. Accordingly, for pupils whose family language is English, a basic knowledge of Welsh is sufficient to function in the traditional Welsh-medium school (Ní Thuairisg and Ó Giollagáin, 2008).

With regard to the provision made for Welsh-medium education, it is generally accepted that Welsh schools may be defined using three specific models:

- Traditional Welsh schools which admit pupils irrespective of their linguistic background and where instruction is primarily through the medium of Welsh when the composition of the class permits and bilingual when there is mixed ability of English and Welsh.
- Designated Welsh schools which serve a wide range of pupils and which follow a formal immersion model. Instruction is through the medium of Welsh until pupils reach the age of seven years when they follow a model of bilingual education.

- All-English schools where instruction is through the medium of English, and Welsh is taught as a secondary subject.

As previously stated, the traditional Welsh-medium schools are the most appropriate for the analysis contained in this report due to the similarities between them and Gaeltacht schools. Therefore, designated Welsh schools and all-English schools are excluded from this report as they are not relevant to the discussion.

Similar to schools in the Gaeltacht, traditional Welsh schools are entirely dependent on the composition of the surrounding community, and consequently, according to Lewis, do not have access to any language protection. Certainly, the traditional model and the English model are identical in a significant number of cases on account of the considerable majority of English speakers in the community who demand, and therefore drive, the provision of English-medium education. (Lewis, 2007).

Currently, *Mudiad Meithrin* is the organisation with responsibility for pre-schooling in Wales and its aim is the provision of immersion education and support for Welsh for children irrespective of their family language (Jones, 2001; Hickey, Lewis & Baker, 2013: 2). From the point of view of the Welsh language, two distinct processes are at work at preschool level, language maintenance and immersion education. Language maintenance is undertaken with children whose family language is Welsh and an immersion education model is provided for children who do not have prior knowledge of the language (Jones, 2001: 14).

Despite the aforementioned two discrete processes, implementation generally depends on the composition of the *cylchoedd meithrin*¹ although group leaders and facilitators are obliged to respond to the diverse language and educational needs of the children. This integration places considerable pressure both on the system and, of course,

¹ Welsh-medium Playgroups

on children, especially as the tendency exists among children who speak the minority language as their first language to turn to the majority language to satisfy the group's social needs (Hickey et al., 2013: 3). This practice clearly disrupts the language maintenance process and is evident also in the Gaeltacht education system where teachers experience pressure in endeavouring to respond to one group who have a diverse level of proficiency in the language, and clearly varying needs consequently. This point is discussed later in the report.

Reflecting the national curriculum, bilingual education is the norm in the primary school system, with Welsh and English enjoying equal status in all schools. However, the position of the language is not the same in every area and those variations are apparent in the implementation of the bilingual policy of the different schools (Lewis, 2007). Great emphasis is placed on bilingualism and there is an expectation that, as they leave primary school at the age of 11 at the end of Key Stage 2, every pupil will be fluent, in reading, speaking and writing in the two languages (Williams, 2000: 130).

Nevertheless, it is accepted that in schools where Welsh is the language of instruction, the teaching of English does not begin until the pupil is approximately seven years old (Jones, 2001: 15). In relation to the definition of those schools in areas where Welsh is strong, the title 'bilingual schools' is applied to all primary schools in the area, and provisions in the policy of the local authority confer equal status on Welsh and English as languages of instruction in the schools, even within areas where Welsh is strongest (Ní Thuairisg, 2012).

The break in continuity regarding the provision of Welsh-medium education is most evident at post-primary level (Redknap, 2006) where post-primary schools are failing to reinforce and support the good work achieved in pre-schooling and in primary education (Williams, 2000: 131). A significant number of students move from Welsh-medium

education to English-medium as they progress from key stage 2 to key stage 3, i.e. from primary to post-primary school. This decline in Welsh-medium education continues between key stages 3 and 4 (Welsh Assembly Government 2010). This pattern is referred to in the *Welsh-medium Education Strategy 2010* which aims to reduce this decline. Lewis (2007) refers to Estyn observations that it is customary for principals of primary schools in areas where Welsh is strongest to allow pupils to undertake Welsh as a second language to boost results in that subject. While students achieve high marks in the assessment of Welsh as a L2, there is no development of their proficiency in Welsh as a first language (Lewis, 2007). This practice is criticised by Estyn; however, its use boosts the number of ‘A’ grades in the schools. This discontinuity is evident in almost every region in Wales but is more widespread in regions where Welsh is the predominant language of the community (Redknap, 2006: 12). Welsh is a mandatory subject on the second level curriculum, as is the case with Irish in Ireland. In post-primary schools located in areas in the country where Welsh is strongest, students are allowed to follow the curriculum and with Welsh as the primary language of instruction or, study the curriculum through the medium of English taking Welsh as a second language.

Frequently, traditional Welsh post-primary schools are obliged to offer a Welsh stream. Due to the numbers of students moving to English-medium instruction as they progress through the post-primary system, streams are provided as a Welsh-medium option in Welsh-speaking areas, in response to the demand for education through the medium of English at this level. Certain subjects are offered through the medium of Welsh (in the stream) and some students undertake these.

Information and Communications Technology

While certain organisations such as Cynnal provide online resources which support Welsh heritage (www.cynnal.co.uk), there is little information available on the use of information and communications technology to support the provision of Welsh-medium education.

Support Services

When we look at support services available within the Welsh education system, indications are that these services focus generally on Welsh-competency development of L2 speakers. These services include language acquisition units which offer intensive courses in language acquisition to pupils who do not have a high level of proficiency in Welsh, but who propose to attend schools where Welsh is used as the medium of teaching and learning. Despite the advantages to be gained by pupils in language acquisition from these units, research on the topic shows that total acquisition of the language is not the objective of the system, rather it is the level of language acquisition required for pupils to be competent to participate in a bilingual education system. Neither does this system serve preschool children or post-primary students older than 14 years, or pupils who received their education up to then in Wales (Ní Thuairisg, 2011: 189).

Support services are offered to teachers of Welsh to assist them in promoting the acquisition of Welsh. The *Athrawon Bro* are peripatetic teachers who visit schools and provide language assistance services to teachers to support the teaching of Welsh to primary school pupils. The objective of the service is to promote bilingualism in the school environment, relative to the language policy of the local authority, and to offer extra help to teachers who are not entirely fluent in the language (Jones, 2001). This service serves L2 speakers of Welsh, teachers and pupils, and while this support service is useful, there is no evident practical assistance available from the service for pupils or for teachers whose primary responsibility is Welsh as L1 (Ní Thuairisg, 2011).

The '*Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice*' which provides for children with special educational needs, came into effect in 2002. All stakeholders in the education system have responsibility for special education and in 2012, local education authorities were included among the stakeholders. While responsibility has been defined, a lack in provision continues especially for pupils whose home language is not English.

In 2003, the Welsh government began a review of the service offered by the country's education system to children with special educational needs. However, only one third of non-English speaking parents stated that these services were readily available (Clark & Waller, 2007: 153). While the lack of services in this sector was widespread in the education system, it was most obvious in the provision of Welsh-medium services, especially in the case of speech therapists (Llywodraeth Cynuliad Cymru, 2004: 9 - 18). The report also claimed that demand for Welsh-medium education increased more rapidly than did the availability of educational practitioners sufficiently proficient to offer services through the medium of Welsh to pupils with special educational needs (Llywodraeth Cynuliad Cymru, 2004: 36).

Effectiveness of Education Practices

A significant difficulty in assessing the effectiveness of practices referenced here is the absence of available evidence in the form of research or assessment trials relating to the operation of the system itself. This difficulty is added to by the fact that the system in operation in Wales is a bilingual system with development of both English and Welsh as an objective at every level. On the whole, this approach focuses on L2 speakers of Welsh since English is omnipresent in all sectors of the community, a fact which ensures the development of pupils' English but puts the development of Welsh at risk.

This is most evident when pupils are integrated in the classroom environment, an aspect which Hickey, Lewis and Baker bring to our attention (Hickey, Lewis & Baker,

2013). Hickey et al., (2013) highlight the preschool groups which contain a majority of L1 speakers of Welsh (38.5%), groups with equal numbers of L1 and L2 speakers of Welsh (11%) and groups with a majority of L2 speakers of Welsh (50.5%) (Hickey et al., 2013: 5). It is evident from this research that linguistic integration creates, not alone a challenge for educational and language provision, but also uncertainty among the groups' educationalists as to the most effective language and education methodologies to be used to ensure language acquisition and development for the two groups. While group leaders admit that a language policy is in operation, the author of the research is of the opinion that very often tutors turn to English when in conversation with L2 speakers to ensure their understanding of the topic under discussion, notwithstanding the fact that a process of immersion education is in operation (Hickey et al., 2013: 11). A further tendency of these groups is the lack of deliberation afforded to the integration of L1 and L2 speakers, and the frequent addition of L1 speakers to L2 groups at any one time in order to improve or raise the competence level of the group (Hickey et al., 2013: 12). This results in a significant number of leaders in groups which include L1 speakers as a minority, presuming that L1 speakers require very little development in their native language, as an unequal comparison is made between all of the children when language competency is being discussed (Hickey et al., 2013: 13). Other practices in use which could adversely affect the language development of L1 speakers is the tendency for group leaders to engage in frequent translation from Welsh to English and to code-mix (Hickey et al., 2013: 15-17). It is evident from the analysis carried out by Hickey et al. (2013) that there are serious implications for integration when those who manage the integration, i.e. the educationalists, are not appropriately trained.

As to the professional development of participants in the Welsh education system, in November 2013, the government announced the provision of extra funding over a period of three years to support educational practitioners who wished to develop and improve their

standard of Welsh. A Welsh-language sabbatical scheme, *Un, Dau, Tru – Hwyl A Sbri*, was introduced, targeting those at every level of education for whom teaching through the medium of Welsh is an essential part of their positions, to develop confidence in their language ability when interacting with young people.

(<http://wales.gov.uk/newsroom/welshlanguage/2013/131129teachers/?lang=en>).

However, it must be stated that only development of competence in Welsh is included here and not development of awareness among those who are responsible for Welsh-medium education, an approach which is essential in the current system (Baker & Prys Jones, 1998; Redknap, 2006; Hickey et al., 2013).

Conclusion

Many similarities exist between the Welsh-medium education system in Wales and the Gaeltacht education system, especially since the language is still in use as the language of the community in the regions of Y Fro Gyrmaeg, and consequently in local schools in these districts. As is the case in Ireland, there has been enormous expansion in immersion education in the country and the number of schools where Welsh is taught within the immersion education model to L2 speakers is growing from year to year. One significant difference between the two systems, however, is the broad definition of the system as a bilingual system. This practice impedes response to the language needs of L1 speakers within the education system since the system is targeted principally at the needs of L2 speakers of Welsh. As is the case with Gaeltacht schools, local schools are dependent primarily on the composition of the community as regards provision of Welsh-medium education. Once that composition changes, local schools change practices and functions, a development which threatens the language acquisition and enrichment of the schools' L1 and L2 pupils. While this is not a broad definition in the case of Gaeltacht education, nonetheless significant challenges arise from the lack of definition and a lack of knowledge

exists frequently among stakeholders within the system as regards their rights and responsibilities. (Mac Donnacha, 2005; Ní Shéaghdha, 2010).

Nevertheless, it is evident that there are lessons to be learned from the Welsh context, especially regarding the role given to the local education authority in relation to organisation and management of the system at local level. Local authorities provide support for schools as they attempt to follow a central curriculum and a national bilingual policy adapted for their own context. One example of this approach is the strategic plan set out by Flintshire County Council (2014) to achieve, within their local area, the targets set by *Welsh-medium Education Strategy 2010*. Gaeltacht schools require this type of support which would offer stakeholders in the system opportunity to adapt the national education and language policy to the language context in which they are operating at the present time.

2. Basque and Catalan

During the Franco dictatorship (1937-1975) a monolingual, Spanish, schooling system operated in Spain (Pradilla, 2001) and even though parents and teachers attempted to improve this situation by introducing their own immersion education schools (*Ikastola* in the Basque Country), there was no expansion of education in the Basque/Catalan languages until the Spanish Constitution was introduced in 1978 (Gardner, 2000).

With the advent of the constitution, 17 independent communities were established throughout Spain and, while Spanish was declared the official language of the country, each regional government was allowed to choose another co-official language in addition to Spanish (Cenoz, 2009; Gardner, 2000, 2005; Lasagabaster, 2001).

Basque

Context and Status of the Minority Language

The Basque language is spoken in two independent communities – Basque Country or

Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) and Nafarroa ("Navarre" in English). Basque has official status in both communities.

It is estimated that over 2 million people live in the BAC (Cenoz 2008, 2009; Gardner, 2000, 2005; Lasagabaster, 2001) and 30.1% of the population can speak both official languages (Cenoz, 2009).

Reflecting its linguistic background, Nafarroa is divided into three specific areas:

(a) the area where Basque is spoken (10% of the population of Nafarroa) where Basque is the official language; (b) where both Basque and Spanish are spoken (52% of the population), the capital Pamplona is situated in this district and the majority of Nafarroa's public services are concentrated here; and (c) an area with 37.2% of the population where Spanish is spoken (Oroz Bretón and Sotés Ruiz, 2008). Spanish is the dominant language in the Nafarroa community, which means that only 10.3% of the population are bilingual (Oroz Bretón and Sotés Ruiz, 2008).

Education Provision through the Medium of the Minority Language

The Basque Normalisation Law passed in 1982 identifies the possibilities regarding the use of either of the two official languages as the language of instruction in schools in the BAC. It states also that by the end of their term of compulsory education (up to 16 years of age), all pupils should have 'sufficient practical knowledge of Basque' (Aldekoa and Gardner, 2002: 4). In addition, this law prompted the Decree of Bilingualism (1983), which sets out separate models of bilingual schooling to respond to parent/pupil choice – choices which are protected in the legislation (Gardner 2000). While education models in Nafarroa are quite similar to those in the BAC, education provision is determined by the various districts and not by the language of the children, 'In the Basque Autonomous Community, the pupils' mother tongue determined the model, but in Navarre the pupils' mother tongue is

not mentioned in the legislation, and can only be inferred from parents' choice of teaching model.' (Oroz Bréton and Sotés Ruiz, 2008: 30).

Education Practice through the medium of the Minority Language

Three models of bilingualism operate in the BAC: **Model A**, where Spanish is the medium of instruction and Basque is a curricular subject (3-5 hours per week); **Model B** where the two languages are used as the languages of instruction and the two subjects are curricular subjects; and **Model D**, where Basque is the medium of instruction and Spanish is a curricular subject (4-5 hours per week).

These three models are available at every level of compulsory schooling. This period begins at preschool level for children aged between 3 and 6 years. While the three models are available also at primary school level, there is the possibility that not every model is available in every district. Basque is taught as a subject at primary school level for 3.5-4 hours per week. Second level education begins at age 12 and the compulsory period finishes at age 16 years (this is followed by a further period of two, non-compulsory, years). The three education models are offered during the compulsory period in second level education and Basque is taught as a subject for 3.5 hours per week. Model A is not offered during the two final years of second level education (16-18 years) because it is believed that students have sufficient Basque at this stage to attend the other two models (Gardner et al., 2005).

Model D was devised to focus on native speakers; however, the composition of school pupils has changed considerably since then. The numbers of pupils with Basque as L2 who attend this model has grown, resulting in a mixture of abilities in the classrooms in these schools. This model provides immersion education in the case of L2 speakers and language maintenance in the case of L1 speakers of Basque (Aldekoa and Gardner, 2002; Gardner 2000; Zalbide and Cenoz, 2008; Cenoz 2009).

Similarities are evident between Gaeltacht schools and the Basque Model D. As is the case with the Basque Model D, there is a mixture of L1 and L2 speakers of Irish in Gaeltacht schools at the present time.

Gardner et al., (2002) describe the language behaviour of pupils who live in BAC and attend schools which offer Model D. It is reported that in Model D, Basque is spoken by native Basque speakers, both inside and outside the classroom; however as pupils get older, the situation changes. In relation to those pupils who do not have Basque as their native language and who attend the same model, the language behaviour of those pupils depends on specific issues such as (a) school context; (b) the family language of others in the class; (c) the language spoken by children outside school when they are with their friends; (d) Basque in the community; and (e) if the school has a plan for the use of language (normalisation). In the majority of schools with Models B and D, Spanish is the language of the playground (Gardner, 20020). Gardner and Zalvide (2005) refer to the influence of Basque L2 on native speakers in Model D – on their phonetics, vocabulary, and grammar and it is thought that this encourages them to speak Spanish. This affect is also evident in the Gaeltacht context. It is clear from the research on preschools in the Gaeltacht carried out by Hickey (1999) that there exists the likelihood that the development in language proficiency of L2 speakers of Irish is more evident than in the proficiency of L1 speakers.

Resulting from the composition of the Nafarroa community, the provision of the education models is different. Particular models are provided in the various districts, ‘In the distinct language zones established by law, different language models are applied’ (Oroz Bretón and Sotés Ruiz, 2008). The district most closely resembling the Gaeltacht is the district in which Basque is spoken. Basque is a mandatory subject in that district and schools can choose if they wish to deliver Basque-medium instruction. Consequently, every

school in Nafarroa, in the district where Basque is spoken, is obliged to provide Model A however, they may choose Models B or D if they so wish. Models A and D are the most popular in that area (Gardner et al., 2005; Oroz Bréton and Sotés Ruiz, 2008).

Information and Communication Technology

It is not clear from the research whether information and communication technology schemes or policies exist which would be relevant to this report.

Support Services

This section of the report will focus on support services available in the BAC.

Following the introduction of the constitution in 1978 and the ensuing changes, the greatest challenges facing the BAC government were the recruitment of teachers with appropriate Basque language skills and the provision of curricular subjects in Basque-medium (Gardner, 2000; Aldekoa and Gardner, 2002).

At the beginning of the 1980s, the BAC Department of Education introduced the *IRALE* programme to provide in-service courses for teachers. Language courses were organised for L2 speakers of Basque and literature classes provided for teachers with Basque L1 (Gardner, 2000). While Gardner (2000) makes reference to these courses, he does not describe the courses or their provision.

Outside of those courses, teachers are given the opportunity to spend a period of time (3 years, maximum) as full-time or part-time students of Basque. The salaries of teachers who attend such courses, as well as substitutes for those teachers, is paid for the duration of their studies (Gardner 2000).

Under legislation laid down for the BAC, parents should not have to pay any more for school subject material in Basque than for a subject in Spanish. The *EIMA* programme was established by the government in 1982 to provide financial assistance to incentivise the creation of curricular materials. Resources such as school textbooks, audio-visual material,

and software were made available in addition to bringing together work groups to develop further materials, 'the Basque Government's support is indispensable, essential and fundamental' (Lasagabaster, 2001: 410). Work groups consist of teachers primarily, and the quality of the work is assessed before the final payment is made. To encourage participation, prizes are awarded to those who produce high-quality materials (Gardner, 2000; Gardner et al., 2005).

In 2004, funding was provided for 269 books (or other print media), 30 videos, ten audiotapes, five computer software programmes, 18 multimedia CD-ROM and 15 prizes were awarded for materials developed online (Gardner et al., 2005).

In 1984 a small unit, NOLEGA, was established within the Department of Education in the BAC to assist the promotion of Basque in schools. Grants are available to support activities associated with Basque culture (drama, singing etc.), non-academic activities in Basque, visits to short-stay centres to develop language, and for networks among pupils of different sociolinguistic backgrounds. In addition, NOLEGA has established links with private organisations so that pupils will be enabled to study Basque films or read Basque texts and meet well known authors. Prizes are awarded for the standard of Basque in the schools (a piece of writing in second level schools and oral work in primary schools), in addition to providing bilingual signage in schools. Training courses are arranged for teachers to assist them to acquire the skills necessary for the implementation of the aforementioned activities (Aldekoa and Gardner, 2002; Gardner, 2000).

Although there were high levels of demand for the services offered by NOLEGA, it was considered (by the Department of Education and many of the schools) that a more structured approach was required to promote the language in schools and thus the *Ulibarri* programme was developed, '...the ULIBARRI programme is run by the Education

Department of the BAC's Government. It started during the 1996–1997 academic year and aims to revive the use of Basque in schools through developing specific activities. Each school has its own LNP-Language Normalisation Project built on the basis of its own ecosystem, and ULIBARRI brings all these LNPs together under the umbrella of the education system. ULIBARRI is a language plan prepared by the education system and designed for schools; it encourages the use of Basque through knowledge stemming from the education system and using the LNP as the vehicle' (de Luna et al., 2013).

Aldekoa agus Gardner (2002) provide a comprehensive description of the programme, explain the duties of all personnel and what the process involves.

Programme Structure:

The programme consists of seven parts –

1. The person with full responsibility for the programme in the Department of Education (a full-time post). This individual is in charge of budget, works with personnel in charge of NOLEGA and reports to the official with responsibility for 'Basque Service' in the Department of Education.
2. The official co-ordinator (full-time post). This individual deals with the various officers in every district and co-ordinates the scheme on a daily basis.
3. Officers who are available at the teachers' centres (full-time posts). Each officer is in charge of a specific district and provides information regarding NOLEGA activities/events; monitors the progress of the schemes; provides support and advice to schools; creates links between all participating schools; works with schools/co-ordinators and counsellors; and carry out an assessment of the various schemes.
4. The three external organisations which provide counsellors (part-time posts). These organisations advise project leaders and officers.

5. Project leaders in schools – their teaching hours are reduced (in private schools, the department provides additional monies to compensate the project leader). These leaders have responsibility for co-ordinating the collection of information; formulating and implementing plans; advertising NOLEGA schemes; are in charge of committee meetings; and provide information to other schools on their individual plans. They are not involved in the correction of the school's documentation in Basque (this is stated specifically).

6. Committees in the schools (2-8 members). They are informed of what is happening in the school, observe the results, they accept the best plan, dialogue with others involved in the project, and, in addition, have responsibility for the control and standard of written documents produced by the adults in the school.

7. Other teachers in schools within the same scheme – they have no explicit responsibilities other than to participate in the school's plan.

A specific role could be offered to parents and older pupils (especially second level school students).

The Process –

- The Department of Education sends out a proposal to every school to participate in the scheme.
- The school is obliged to arrange a meeting to discuss the invitation – and must arrive at a decision – every school must make its own decision.
- Schools interested in the scheme and who are accepted by the Department must form a steering committee with representatives from parents/pupils and, at least, one member from the school's board of management. A teacher is selected to lead the scheme.
- The committee then collects information on the linguistic context of the school. Elements such as: the number of Basque speakers; the frequency of Basque usage

by school staff, pupils, parents, and the surrounding community; the type of material in the school library, and other similar issues. Written questionnaires may be designed to collect information or dialogue may take place with the school community.

- A computer application in the form of a CD-ROM is provided for schools to facilitate the storage of all the information collected. Guidelines regarding the use of this application are provided in booklet form.
- The results obtained are divided into two parts. The first part provides a percentage of the use of the language; how frequently the language is heard; the written form of the language (for example correspondence/school subjects, curriculum); the number of people proficient in the language; amount of time allocated to the language. These results are compared to the model collated by Txillardegui (penname of the Basque linguist, José Luis Álvarez Enparantza) and the percentage of Basque one would expect.
- The second part of the information focuses on linguistic behaviour of the various classes. The computer application compiles the results.
- The committee meets when the figures are collated and two plans are formulated
 1. A long-term plan – five years, 2. A short-term plan – a list of realistic objectives is identified for the school year along with an account of how these are to be achieved. Examples include: not to allow any non-Basque speaking group from any organisation to visit the school; to provide additional information to parents on how to promote Basque; the Basque language to be heard and visible at all times (on the walls/on school buses); correspondence between school and parents to be bilingual.
- The plan is agreed – everyone is included in the agreement.

- At the end of the year, the school must complete a questionnaire in relation to every objective – the local officer carries out an assessment on the written report and gives feedback to the school for use in the following school year.

Although schools and school committees are required to develop and administer a language plan, support and training are available from representatives of the Department of Education and from agencies in the community (Aldekoa and Gardner, 2002).

Effectiveness of Education Practices

As insufficient research has been carried out in Nafarroa regarding the effectiveness of education practices, the focus in this section of the report will be on the BAC and the effectiveness of their education practices will be assessed. In the assessment of Basque-medium schooling in the BAC, carried out by Gardner (2002), it is evident that there has been a significant increase in the numbers of pupils attending schools with Model B and Model D. That said, as Aldekoa and Gardner state (2002), in examining statistics factors such as variation in areas, school type, education level and age must be taken into consideration when arriving at a conclusion (Gardner 2000).

The most recent statistics from the Basque Department of Education for the School Year 2013/2014, show the following numbers of pupils attending the various models.

Pupil Numbers – School Year: 2013/2014			
	Model A	Model B	Model D
Preschooling	3.54 %	19.96 %	75.98 %
Primary Schooling	5.49 %	24.67 %	69.15 %
Second Level Schooling	11. 29%	26.63%	61.31 %

Source: Basque Government – Department of Education.

From the obvious tendency towards Model D currently, it is clear that parents see the advantages of this model. Research on the effectiveness of the models demonstrates this when comparisons are made between the ability levels of pupils in the various models. Model D is believed to be the most effective model for learning Basque, 'Model D students are the ones who achieve the highest scores in Basque and hence the ones who are closer to balanced bilingualism, that is to say, bilinguals with a high level of competence in both languages (Lasagabster, 2001: 415).

Model A is the least effective from the point of view of the development of pupils' skills in Basque and frequently pupils in these schools leave school with very little Basque (Gardner, 2000).

It is not evident that the development of Spanish is hindered in Model D since no difference was observed between pupils' language skills in Spanish in the three diverse models (Gardner, 2000).

Since the establishment of ISEI-IVEI² in 2001, development has been taking place on language testing based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. It was decided that this form of testing was necessary since language objectives were not set out for the different models and schools did not have a reference point in relation to the level of pupils' ability in Basque³. The testing was based at level B2⁴ of the Framework of Reference and this level is described as follows, 'Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party.

² Further information available at <http://www.isei-ivei.net/eng/indexeng.htm>

² More information available at <http://www.isei-ivei.net/eng/indexeng.htm>

³ No specific level of school is mentioned in the account by Sierra (2008)

⁴ An account of the various levels is provided at: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/Source/assessment_grid/assessment_grid_english.pdf. The Basque version of the testing is available at <http://www.habe.euskadi.net/s23-5492/es/>.

Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and Independent disadvantages of various options.’ (Council of Europe, 2011).

It is held that level B2 is the most appropriate for the ‘independent language user’ and for this reason, this particular level was selected. Following a pilot study, Model A pupils were excluded. Looking at a representative sample of results, 68% of pupils in Model D and 32.6% of those in Model B succeeded in gaining a mark higher than level B2 in Basque (Sierra, 2008). Sierra recommends concentrating on aspects of the language relevant to level B2 in the Basque-medium schools since pupils would have a good foundation in the language by this stage and it would be consistent with the aims of legislation regarding Basque language skills in the education system (2008).

However, we must be alert to what Gardner states regarding standardised testing and the manner in which test materials are devised, ‘...a major problem consists in ensuring that test materials in either language are of equivalent difficulty. The tendency of test makers to start from the dominant language and then translate mechanically into the minority language tends to invalidate such materials.’ (2000).

In their assessment of the education system (2008), Zalbide and Cenoz believe the following changes are necessary in BAC (and would be achievable in light of legislative constraints); a) support and protection to be given to Basque native speakers; b) development of oral skills to be advanced, especially language in daily use by pupils; c) aims/objectives to be set out for those who speak Spanish and are learning Basque; and d) raise teachers’ standard of Basque (Zalbide and Cenoz, 2008). However, no detail is given concerning the approach required to implement these changes.

The collection of information on the use of Basque at school level was begun in 2004, ‘A recent example of a concerted action in the field of language planning evaluation

is the Arrue project that was launched in 2004. Jointly developed by the Department of Education of the BAC's government and the Soziolinguistika Klusterra, this project aims at a detailed study of the use of Basque in schools in the BAC, both from a qualitative and a quantitative point of view.' (Martínez de Luna et al., 2013:2).

In the analysis undertaken by Martínez de Luna et al. (2013), an examination was carried out on the use of Basque in Model D schools on statistics from the *Arrue* programme based on pupils at first and second level schools. This analysis shows that specific factors have a positive impact on the use of Basque within the school context (Model D), for example: a high number of native speakers in the school; the school located in a community with a large number of native speakers; high standard of Basque spoken among teachers; events and activities where Basque is in use (Martínez de Luna et al., 2013). These aspects are available and need to be developed in the case of the Gaeltacht.

Nafarroa

The numbers of pupils in the Basque region who attend schools with Model D has increased considerably and the numbers attending schools with Model A has decreased. While these figures are available, there is no evidence that any comparative study has been carried out to date on the bilingual models in Nafarroa (Oroz Bretón and Sotés Ruiz, 2008).

Conclusion

It is clear that the education system in the Basque Country is moving towards a system where Basque is the language of instruction in schools. A dramatic increase is evident in the number of pupils attending schools where Model D is offered and where a 'balanced bilingualism' is provided.

While numbers are increasing and while growth is evident in the models where Basque is dominant, there is frequent reference to the quality of pupils' language skills in the various models and efforts being made to improve those language skills. One of the

means chosen to assess language skills of pupils is through setting out standardised tests based on the criteria of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: 'The Common European Framework provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set. The Framework also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis.'

(http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/source/framework_en.pdf)

In total, six levels are involved: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2. Standardised tests in the Basque Country are based on level B2, a level which is primarily focussed on L2 speakers, 'Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and independent disadvantages of various options.

(http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/source/framework_en.pdf)

Levels C1 and C2 relate to the 'proficient user'. It is certain that other tests based on levels C1 and C2 could be developed to assess the proficiency level of native Basque speakers. However, as Gardner has stated, we must be careful of the language used in tests since these materials are frequently translated from the major to the minority language without any adjustment on a language level, which could therefore disconcert native speakers of the minority language as they undertake the tests.

Standardised testing is administered in English and Mathematics at primary school level in Ireland. In addition, all-Irish schools and Gaeltacht schools are obliged to administer standardised tests in Irish to pupils. As the tests do not differentiate between L1 and L2 speakers, it is difficult to assess the development of native speakers or of L2 speakers. Since no differentiation is included, it is difficult to obtain an insight into the quality of language skills of native speakers or of pupils who are L2 speakers. A model such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages could be used to solve this problem and tests based on various levels could be made available to differentiate between the various language levels that exist in the Gaeltacht.

Research undertaken in the BAC suggests that L2 speakers of Basque adversely affect L1 speakers of Basque in Model D (the model closest to the position in the Gaeltacht) from the point of view of skills and language behaviour. While this problem is noted, there is no discussion of possibilities to resolve it. However, it is clear that native speakers are recognised as a case apart and require specific protection.

Support services in the BAC are provided through the organisation NOLEGA which was established as a small unit within the BAC Department of Education in 1984. Many of the services offered are available in Ireland on a smaller scale, for example, authors available to visit schools; literature competitions; and bilingual signage and notices. However, we must consider specific schemes which could be appropriate for Gaeltacht schools. Work groups (mainly teachers) are set up to design teaching materials. Since Gaeltacht schools have particular needs in relation to teaching resources, similar community practices could be established to provide teaching material specific to the Gaeltacht. This material would be assessed by the funding organisation and, in addition, NOLEGA models could be followed and prizes could be awarded to the best teaching material produced.

NOLEGA provides very important funding to schools for cultural activities and events in order to promote Basque culture. Another aspect of this funding appropriate for circumstances in the Gaeltacht would be the provision of training for teachers to organise and promote cultural activities. The Gaeltacht community is a community apart where aspects of Irish culture are interwoven; therefore it would be worthwhile to train teachers so that they could promote this facet of the Gaeltacht community in the local schools.

The *Ulibarri* programme operates under the umbrella of NOLEGA and is very well structured. This programme brings together representatives from every level of the education system, from the top down and from the bottom up. This is a scheme which could be implemented in Gaeltacht schools, which would entail offering schools support to take ownership of their own language development. Each school would have ownership of its own plan thus adding significantly to the development of the scheme, and in addition strong support would be forthcoming to ensure the success of the programme. It is thought also that the school plan influences the surrounding community and events/projects are initiated within the community to promote Basque as a result of the promotion of the language taking place at school level. The programme fosters a worthwhile link and partnership between the Department of Education, the Basque University and other organisations outside the education system.

It is evident from the analysis carried out on the results of Model D schools from the *Arrue* project, that certain other variables influence the use of Basque in the school context. Factors, such as a high percentage of native speakers in the community or a high percentage of pupils whose family language is Basque, have a positive impact on the use of Basque within the school context. It is accepted also that Basque-medium activities and events outside school time benefit the use of Basque in the context of the school and undoubtedly, the *Ulibarri* programme could influence the number of activities available in the

community, ‘As the Arrue data show, the investment in the development of specific extracurricular activities seems to be rewarding since ‘language use in organised activities outside school’ is one of the variables that reach (relatively) high values in the correlation analysis and also figures on the first place in the top 5 of the multiple regression analyses for all of the subgroups identified on the basis of the pupils mother tongue profile and the Basqueness of their area of living.’ (Martínez de Luna et al., 2013)

Education Provision through the Medium of the Minority Language

Catalan

The autonomous statutes of Catalonia allowed the independent community to approve education laws in 1980 and consequently, drafting of policies and legislation to enable the Catalan language to become central in the education system began (Areny et al., 2012). This legislation began in 1983 with the Law of Linguistic Normalisation which permitted schools to introduce Catalan gradually. This approval was built upon in the Language Policy Law of 1998 (Ferrer, 2000). This law affirmed Catalan as ‘...the language to be normally used as a vehicular, learning language in all non-university levels of education’ (Areny et al., 2012: 16). Special permission was given to pupils in early-years education to receive their schooling in their native language (even if this was Spanish). However, pupils could not be assigned to classes because of their family language (Ferrer, 2000). In addition, specific reference was made to teachers and the requirement for teachers to be proficient in the two official languages (Huguet, 2007), ‘...teachers must prove a knowledge of Catalan equivalent to level C1 CEFR in order to be allowed to teach at all non-university levels...teachers who still do not have an official certificate of Catalan cannot ask to change school or to be promoted in their position at school.’ (Areny et al., 2012: 56-57).

The above legislation was reformed and strengthened in 2006 when the new Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia came into force. The Spanish Constitutional Court carried out an analysis of the new law and ruled that certain articles were not in keeping with the Spanish Constitution and that Spanish, as a language of instruction, must have equal status with Catalan (Arnau and Vila, 2013). If this ruling were to be accepted, the Catalan people would be required to fundamentally change the system, however it is considered that the government of Catalonia has no interest in doing so (Arnau and Vila, 2013).

The Balearic Islands

Catalan was introduced as an obligatory subject in the Balearic Islands in 1979 although the region was not given any education powers until 1998 (Arnau and Vila, 2013). Catalan is the language of instruction of the region, ‘...Catalan is the language of teaching, learning and communication, emphasizing that the activities of teaching and learning through the medium of Catalan imply the oral and written use of the language.’ (Areny et al., 2012).

As is the case in Catalonia, children are not assigned to different classes according to their linguistic background.

Valencia

Authorities in Valencia have power to enact education legislation since 1983 and two separate education systems are set out for the two areas. Valencian is the language of instruction in schools in the area where Valencian is spoken and Spanish is the language of instruction in schools in the area where Spanish is spoken – with Valencian as a curricular subject. (Areny et al., 2012).

Education Practice through the medium of the Minority Language

Catalan

The aim of legislation in Catalonia is that every pupil should have a good standard of both Catalan and Spanish at the end of their period of compulsory education (16 years old).

Accordingly, each school is required to formulate its own language plan. This plan is unique to each school depending on the linguistic composition of pupils and teachers. The status of each language is defined in the school (Catalan, Spanish and one foreign language – frequently English) and, at least one subject is taught through the medium of Spanish in every school (Areny et al., 2012).

In addition to formulating language plans for pupils in the area, it was decided to develop a special programme for immigrants in response to the exceptional increase in the number of immigrants in recent years. Schools are required to develop reception plans in which the integration of these pupils is set out. As part of the plan, reception classes are arranged for pupils who enter the education system after the third year of primary school. These pupils learn Catalan for a few hours each day and attend mainstream class for the remainder of the day. More than a thousand reception classes were held in Catalonia in the school year 2008/2009 (Arnau and Vila, 2013).

The Balearic Islands

Many similarities are evident between the education systems in Catalonia and the Balearic Islands. Two education models operate in the Balearic Islands: Monolingual Catalan schools, and Bilingual schools (Spanish and Catalan as the medium of instruction).

In bilingual schools, the school determines the amount of time spent on the two languages. According to education regulations, two specific conditions must be fulfilled: (a) Catalan must be used at least 50% of the time and (b) Catalan must be used in the appropriate subjects as is laid down in law, for example social science or natural science. (Arnau and Vila, 2013).

As in Catalonia, schools are encouraged to formulate language plans which reflect the objectives of the local government with regard to the language. Support is provided also

for immigrants who are learning Catalan, especially older pupils who enter the education system (Areny et al., 2012).

Valencia

Different models of education are available within the education system in the areas where Vaileinsis is spoken (Blas Arroyo, 2002, Areny et al., 2012, Arnau and Vila, 2013):

- *Programa de Inmersión Lingüística* (PIL) [Programme of linguistic immersion] – Directed at native speakers of Spanish who are living in areas where Vaileinsis is spoken and whose families have an interest in the local language. Pupils do not begin Spanish until the third year of primary school (c. eight years old). This programme does not continue at second level and it can be difficult for pupils when transferring to second level schools where models are different (Blas Arroyo, 2002).
- *Programa de Enseñanza en Valenciano* (PEV) [Programme of Vaileinsis-medium instruction] – This programme serves pupils who speak Vaileinsis and live in areas where the language is spoken. Vaileinsis is the language of instruction in the school. Spanish is an obligatory subject and the language is used in teaching other subjects (Arnau and Vila, 2013).
- *Programa de Incorporación Progresiva del Valenciano* (PIP) [Programme for Progressive Integration of Vaileinsis] – This programme operates frequently in areas where Vaileinsis is spoken. While Spanish is the language of instruction, Vaileinsis is introduced progressively and is used for different tasks in various subjects. Usage of Vaileinsise depends on variables such as parents' wishes; teachers who are proficient in both languages; and the language of the majority of the residents in the area (Blas Arroyo, 2002).

In recent years, a new programme has been introduced which could be implemented as part of the aforementioned programmes:

- *Programa de educació bilingüe enriquecido* (PEBE) [Programme of Enriched Bilingual Education] – This programme was initiated in 1998. In addition to Vaileinsis and Spanish, a foreign language is in use early in the schooling period. English is most frequently the subject of choice. In 2010, participation in PEBE was most common in PEV and PIL schools where there is emphasis on Vaileinsis (Arnau and Vila, 2013, Blas Arroyo, 2002).

Information and Communication Technology

It is not clear from the research if information and communications technology schemes or policies exist which are relevant for this report.

Support Services

Catalonia and the Balearic Islands

In these communities, it is accepted that every student who obtains a degree is competent to teach in the two official languages (Spanish and Catalan).

Support services are available to teachers in both communities albeit different in their approach. Currently, there is a decline in the number of pupils speaking Catalan and consequently, the role of the organisation was changed to respond to these new needs in that the focus is now on the pupils (Areny et al., 2012). Furthermore, it is accepted that teachers have no difficulty obtaining teaching materials in Catalan owing to the increase in the number of resources available, ‘Nowadays, the publication of materials for language teaching is completely normalised both in terms of teaching of the language and teaching in the language at all levels of education...’ (Areny et al., 2012).

Valencia

A teaching service was established to provide advice and services for language teaching. A new service was put in place in the academic year 2011/12 - *Servici d’Ensenyament en Llengües* [Service for Language Teaching] – it would seem that this new service is

concentrated on learning foreign languages rather than on learning Vaileinsise, which could leave centres which teach through the medium of Vaileinsis without a service (Areny et al., 2012).

The organisation *Escola Valenciana - Federació d'Associacions per la Llengua* [Vaileinsis School – Federation of Associates for the Language] brings together Vaileinsis schools. Their principal activity is the meeting organised for all the schools in which Vaileinsis is spoken. In addition to this meeting, meetings are organised throughout the regions, where more than 200,000 people come together – including parents, pupils and teachers (Areny et al., 2012).

In terms of teacher training, primary teachers must choose which language they wish to focus on during their training (Areny et al., 2012). Teaching posts are advertised based on language criteria – for example a teacher with Vaileinsis, indicating that the teacher must have a special certificate in order to be eligible to apply for the post - *Certificado de Capacitación Lingüística* (Blas Arroyo, 2002).

Certification as a teacher of Vaileinsis can be gained in the training colleges also - *Mestre en Valencià* – following the accrual of 40 additional credits relevant to the language and literature. Regrettably, only 13% of primary teachers have the appropriate qualifications and oral proficiency skills and it is suggested that there is the likelihood that this figure is higher at second level (Blas Arroyo, 2002).

Effectiveness of Education Practices

Catalonia

Currently, due to the number of speakers of Catalan in Catalonia and the high rate of success achieved by pupils in the two official languages (Spanish and Catalan) (Areny et al., 2012), education authorities in Catalonia are concerned more with plurilingualism and immigration into the country. That said, it must be clearly understood that pupil proficiency

in both languages is due to the status Catalan enjoys in the education system, ‘Data also show that, in order to maintain the level of knowledge of Catalan, it is necessary that Catalan continues to be the vehicular language of the education system of Catalonia.’ (Areny et al., 2012:65-66).

The Balearic Islands

Arising from government changes in recent years, different ideas are emerging regarding language in the education system. In 2003, the use of Spanish increased in schools, then changed again in 2007 and the pressure exerted on schools to use less Catalan ceased. The emphasis in 2011 was on regional dialects and there is a suggestion currently of a trilingual system – Catalan, Spanish and English (Arnau and Vila, 2013). Every government has its theories and ideas regarding languages in the education system, and it is most likely that debate on this new proposal of trilingualism will continue.

Conclusion

Due to the large number of Catalan speakers in these communities and the strength of the language in the various communities, it is difficult to make comparison between schools in these areas and schools in Gaeltacht areas. At the present time in these communities, the focus primarily is on immigration and a multilingual system as Catalan is not perceived as being at risk in the current education system, especially in communities such as Catalonia.

3. Diné (Navajo) in the United States of America

Context and Status of the Minority Language

In the United States of America (USA), there are 372,000 native speakers of native languages and the majority of these (237,000) live in one of the special indigenous areas (AIANA: American Indian, Alaskan Native Area) which are designated for native communities and tribes. The Navajo tribe, with a population of 255,000, is the largest tribe

in the USA, living within an area of 27,000 square miles across three states, Arizona, New Mexico and Utah in the south west of the USA. With some 169,000 native speakers, Diné (Navajo in English) is the most widely spoken native language in the USA (US Census, 2011). Ethnologue (2014) shows the language to be very much at risk and the percentage of Diné native speakers in first grade in primary school reduced from 90% in 1968 to 30% in 1998. Moreover, the tribe is experiencing social problems - over 55% live below the poverty level of \$6,217 per person per year and 44% of the population is unemployed (US Census, 2000).

Education Provision through the Medium of the Minority Language

Legislation was passed in the USA (Bilingual Education Act 1968, Indian Education Act 1972 and The Indian Self-Determination and Educational Assistance Act 1975), to support native communities in the USA to implement bilingual education. This legislation set out the legal and financial framework to enable this population to establish community-based bilingual education programmes (McCarty & Watahomigie, 1999). While it is claimed in the legislation No Child Left Behind (2002), that native communities have the legal right to receive their education through the medium of their native language, immense emphasis is placed on teaching English and on high achievement in English in standardised examinations (Aguilera & LeCompte, 2007). Another challenge of language maintenance and heritage programmes is the operation of the 'English Only' legislation which casts aside bilingual policies and adversely affects and harms those education models (McCarty & Watahomigie, 1999).

Education Practices through the Medium of the Minority Language

The absence of a broad overview of education models or practices through the medium of Diné was evident from this review of literature and it was necessary for us to attempt to identify specific examples as an insight into the possibilities of bilingual education. The

evidence in this review is based on individual schools such as the following: Rough Rock Community School and Fort Defiance Elementary School are K-12 schools (from preschool level to grade 12) and Rock Point Community School is a K-6 school.

A maintenance programme was initiated in Rough Rock School in 1966 to serve the children in that area when there was only one English speaker in the class. While the programme was based on the philosophical and traditional principles of the tribe, over the years the number of native speakers has declined and it is regarded now as an immersion education programme for the L2 speakers of Navajo in the school (McCarty, 2002). Rock Point was another primary school which began with a maintenance programme and now operates a coordinated bilingual programme where two teachers teach in the one classroom. One teacher delivers the curricular subjects to pupils in Diné, while the other teacher, using the translation method, works on the development of pupil competence in English (Spolsky, 1977 quoted in García, 2009).

The most famous of the immersion education schools in this context is Fort Defiance Elementary School, Window Rock, Arizona. One of the greatest challenges facing the establishment of the immersion education programme was the mixed ability and mixed linguistic backgrounds of the pupils. Only 10% approximately of pupils on the programme were proficient Diné speakers, another 33% had some knowledge of the language (Holm & Holm, 1995) and a large number of pupils had limited ability in English (Little, McCarty & Zepeda, 2006). While the programme was a partial-immersion education programme, two-way or dual immersion (DI) education models appear to have had considerable influence on the drafting and implementation of the programme. In dual immersion education models, children from the majority linguistic community (English in the USA context) and the minority linguistic community (immigrant Spanish speaking populations primarily) come together in one learning environment. At present two DI programmes English/Diné operate

in the USA (Centre for Applied Linguistics, 2013). While the programme is successful in many respects which will be discussed later in the report, it is not regarded as an appropriate model for a minority context such as Diné or Irish.

Various factors assist the successful outcome of the DI programme: pedagogical balance; fully-qualified bilingual teachers; active cooperation from parents and informed leadership from the principal (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008). It is strongly recommended that translation classes or preliminary support classes are not made available to pupils and nor should they be separated into different groups (Collier & Thomas, 2004: 13).

However, there are difficulties, disadvantages and challenges associated with DI programmes and there is always the risk that the programme will not work in a situation where a minority language such as Irish or Diné is exposed to a very powerful language like English. Various pedagogical strategies are called for when two linguistic groups are together in the DI learning setting. There is a risk that the teacher will simplify and delay output in the classroom so that L2 children are not left behind the other children (Mougeon & Beniak, 1988). Such a practice would also imply that L1 children would not receive the same high quality, enriched input that they would receive in a regular L1 programme, which is not desirable in the case of minority language. In such a context, educationalists must ensure that high-quality education is provided through the medium of the native language of the L1 speakers (Valdes, 1997). Amrein & Peña (2000) noted that a certain ‘asymmetry’ could emerge in DI programmes and a cautionary approach is needed in this regard. In their study of a DI setting in Arizona, USA, they stated that three asymmetries or imbalances had arisen 1) imbalance of teaching; 2) disparity of resources; and 3) pupil inequality (2000: 7-11).

With regard to DI programmes, it is also suggested that there is a risk of continuing society’s imbalance and inequalities and that, consequently, the risk of failure will be

increased for pupils (Cummins, 1986: 33). Additional challenges are evident in the implementation of bilingual education policies when the programme consists of only one stream in an all-English school. In such cases, a linguistic inequality is created as considerable emphasis is placed on the importance of English in the school campus and in society in general: 'Two-Way Immersion classrooms (on this campus) function as small oases ... in a vast desert of English-only.' (Palmer, 2008: 757).

Despite the concerns expressed above, Fort Defiance follows an immersion education programme where 90% of teaching from grades K-1 is done through the medium of the minority language (Diné). The amount of time spent on English is gradually increased however, (up to 50% Diné: 50% English) in grade 6 (Johnson & Wilson, 2004).

One Navajo community now has a trilingual school called Puente de Hozho where curricular subjects are delivered through the medium of Diné, English and Spanish. Significant efforts are made to celebrate the three major cultures of the region and to link their communities together through the education system (Fillerup, 2011: 150). Two bilingual education programmes operate in this trilingual school. A common dual-immersion education programme (Spanish: English) is provided to pupils from backgrounds where English or Spanish is spoken. This combination of pupils are taught together in one learning setting, one half of the day through English and the other half through Spanish. Parallel with the traditional dual-immersion programme, an immersion education programme in Diné is run for Navajo pupils whose native language is English. In kindergarten in this programme, 80% of teaching is delivered through the medium of Diné however the amount of English-medium instruction increases to an even balance of 50-50 in both languages.

The ethnic linguistic composition of the school community consists of 21% coming from a background where Spanish is spoken and 26% are members of the Navajo tribe,

even though the majority of that tribe now speaks English (McCarthy, 2013: 168). The programme began in 2001 with 58 preschool children and in the second year of the programme, 120 pupils were enrolled in preschool and grade 1. The number of parents wishing to send their children to the school increased and in its third year, three full classes were enrolled in preschool and at that point, the school was serving grade K-2. This huge growth pattern continued and, with the recruitment of a full-time principal, a plan was implemented to deliver bilingual education for every pupil in every grade (K-12) (McCarty, 2013: 172).

One very important aspect of education through Navajo is that the local community has control over their own education provision and give pride of place to community culture and tradition in curricular design (McCarty & Watahomigie, 1999).

Information and Communications Technology

It is not clear from the research if information and communications technology schemes or policies exist which are relevant to this report.

Support Services

Research does not show whether schemes or policies related to support services exist which are relevant to this report.

Effectiveness of Education Practices

Fort Defiance School is an interesting illustration since comparison can be made between pupils who completed the bilingual education programme and the pupils who registered for the 'ordinary' English system. This comparison showed that pupils in immersion education were as successful in English reading, were better at Mathematics and in English writing than mainstream English-medium pupils (Johnson & Wilson, 2004). In the case of a minority language such as Diné, it would appear that a partial-immersion education programme better serves pupil achievement than does the mainstream English-medium

system. However, further research is needed if we are to make a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of the practices.

In terms of the effectiveness of education practices in the trilingual model, pupils enrolled in the Puente de Hozho School are successful in achieving the education objectives set down at state and federal level. In 2008, pupils from a native Navajo background, in a Diné immersion education programme, outperformed Navajo pupils who participated in an English programme in grade 3 by 14% and by 21% in grade 4; and in Mathematics, pupils from a native Navejo background who followed the immersion education system outperformed by 12% pupils from the same background who received their education through the medium of English in grade 5, and by 17% in grade 6 (McCarty, 2013).

Conclusion

The immersion education programme in Fort Defiance School has shown positive learning and social results; however, a suitable comparison cannot be made between the case of Diné and that of Irish. Research carried out illustrates that the system of partial-immersion could be appropriate in certain cases (Gaeltacht schools or schools in Category C in the Gaeltacht areas where the majority, or all of the pupils, are brought up through English) and that it is superior to an English-medium monolingual education system, but not as strong as a total immersion system such as is found in various all-Irish schools, for example (Johnstone, 2002). It is important for the heritage/maintenance programmes in this context that the community is in control of school management, and in addition, that no school or minority language is swamped by the school-campus of the majority language.

4. French in Canada

Context and Status of the Minority Language

The Official Languages Act 1969 declared English and French to be the official languages of Canada and federal institutions are obliged to offer their services in both official languages. This act also prompted the bilingual system now operating in New Brunswick, a province on the east coast of Canada (Burnaby, 2008). The Constitution Act 1982

reinforced the country's bilingual status. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which references developments in relation to language issues originated from this Act (Burnaby, 2008). Under the Official Languages Act based on the federal version, official status was afforded to nine aboriginal languages in the Northwest Territory (Burnaby, 2008; Government of the Northwest Territories, 2014).

The 2006 Census shows that English is the language of 58% of the country's population, 22% stated that they speak French, and it is understood that of 20% (or over 31 million people) of the population have neither of these two languages as their native language (Duff and Li, 2009). Some 81.4% of Canadian Francophones live in Quebec and 4.4% in the rest of the country. It is believed that 38% of Francophones living outside Quebec do not speak French in their home (Duff and Li, 2009).

Outside of Quebec, French is a minority language in Canada. Therefore, these minority districts (outside Quebec) most closely resemble the position of the Gaeltacht in Ireland, '...while French is an international language Francophones are a very small minority in the vast sea of English speakers in North America as are the people of the Gaeltacht in Ireland. Less than 3% of the population are Francophones and if the population of Quebec is excluded, there are perhaps, one million Francophones scattered throughout five other provinces in Canada.' (Bourgeois, 2010: 1).

Education Provision through the Medium of the Minority Language

Provinces in Canada have the right to structure their own education systems. While the provinces have power to provide education, under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms specific requirements are laid down regarding the provision of bilingual education. The Charter states the government's duty to make minority-language medium education available to those who fulfil certain conditions (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009). This is followed through if there is demand and it is lawful to do so (Minister of

Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2006) ‘...the provinces and the territories established schools for French speakers in many of the communities with a significant population who speak French ... they set up school councils for native speakers to manage these centres on behalf of people who had rights. Therefore, the Ministry of Education in each of the nine provinces and in the three territories decided to share their exclusive power with thirty CSF⁵.’ (Bourgeois, 2010: 3).

While Ministries in the various provinces in Canada have particular responsibility for the provision of French-medium education to native speakers of French, they share that power with school councils who have specific decision-making powers. The following is an example of some of the responsibilities of school councils:

1. Identification of the schooling needs within the community in which they operate
2. Estimated expenditure on teaching and school building
3. Recruitment and allocation of teaching personnel
4. Nomination and direction of administrative personnel
5. Establishing school programmes
6. Implement the agreements relating to teaching and other services provided
7. Determine the location of minority schools (Bourgeois, 2010: 3).

Education Practices through the Medium of the Minority Languages

This section of the report focusses on the French school system (Francophone) provided for those French speakers who are in a minority in a much larger English speaking community. French-immersion education was introduced in Canada at the beginning of the 1970s. This system is renown throughout the world because of its success over some years. While there are certain similarities between a French-language school and a French-immersion education school, the two types are not the same. O’Keefe describes the difference between

⁵ Conseil Scolaire Francophone (Francophone Education Board/Francophone School Council)

French schools and French-immersion schools as follows: ‘French immersion is a program for the “majority” child – a child who lives in an environment in which his or her first language is constantly reinforced by the surrounding community. The minority child lives in an environment in which the first language is often not present outside of the home or the school. Minority language education is designed for children whose first language is French, but live in a largely Anglophone environment.’ (O’ Keefe, 2001: 76).

Cormier et al., (2013) in their account confirm this differentiation and the difficulties in achieving this type of differentiation: ‘There were significant court struggles to acquire a distinct school system controlled by the French minority and separate from the Anglophone French Immersion L2 programme. For this reason, the term ‘French immersion’ is used in Canada only to refer to the French as a second language immersion programme in the Anglophone system.’ (161)

Therefore, French schools and French immersion education schools are completely different schools. In relation to Gaeltacht schools and Irish immersion education schools in Ireland this difference is acknowledged also in *Curaclam na Bunscoile* (Primary School Curriculum): ‘... schools where Irish is generally the language of the home and the medium of instruction in the school; and all-Irish schools where Irish is, or is not, the language of the home and the language of the school.’ (Department of Education and Science, 1999: 43).

The focus in French-language schools is L1 speakers of French, and certain conditions have to be fulfilled before these children can be admitted. These conditions are set out in the Canadian Charter of Right and Freedoms. The Charter declares that parents who live in areas where English is the dominant language have the right to have their children educated through the medium of French if:

- French is the native language of the parents,

- Parents received their education through the medium of French in Canada,
- Parents have another child who is receiving, or has received, education through the medium of French in Canada (Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2006).

Native English speakers who live in strong French speaking areas (Quebec) have the same rights to have their children receive education through the medium of English if:

- Parents received their education through English in Canada
- Parents have another child who is receiving, or has received, education through the medium of English in Canada (Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2006).

New Brunswick has a bilingual system based on the federal system and 30% of the population are native speakers of French. This figure is declining due to certain factors, for example: an aging population; language change; and an increase in the number of exogamous couples⁶. These features are evident also in Gaeltacht districts and contribute significantly to the current decline in the numbers of native speakers in these districts.

Parents in exogamous relationships fulfil the conditions required for attendance at French schools. It is believed that 33% of children in New Brunswick (who have a right to attend French schools) live in families where the two languages (English and French) are spoken. The 2006 Census provides us with an insight into the home language of these families, ‘...the children’s mother tongue is French for only 50% when it is the mother who is francophone and drops to 29% when the father is francophone’. (Cormier et al., 2013:161).

⁶ Marriage outside the tribe or social group or language community (Bourgeois, 2010: Glossary)

The *Francization Programme* was introduced as a result of the number of pupils in French schools who did not have French as the language of the home (Cormier et al., 2013). This programme aims to develop the language skills of those pupils who have little French. While funding was made available for the programme, there is no specific policy laid down for its implementation, and consequently various models are promoted in the different schools. It is worthwhile exploring these models because of the similarities between the composition of pupils in Gaeltacht schools and in French schools in New Brunswick.

In their research, Cormier et al., (2013) describe four specific models, ‘(1) sheltered class; (2) mainstream pull-out; (3) mainstream with in-class support and pull-out and (4) integrated model’ (168). In the ‘sheltered class’ model, a group of English speakers is brought together in a class for a defined period during the school day. In models two and three, an example of ‘pull-out’ consists of small groups coming together now and again (outside the class) to focus on particular aspects that require development. In model three, a support teacher can also be in the class to work with pupils who need assistance. A combination of all these models is found in the ‘integrated model’ and great emphasis is placed on cooperation among teachers.

Teachers assert that model 4 is the most effective although this model operated in only one school and undoubtedly the development of the French language skills of L2 French speakers may well be attributable to other factors. Nonetheless, reference is made to the concern of teachers regarding the skills development of pupils who are L1 speakers of French: ‘Our qualitative data on teacher frustration illustrates, as seen in Hickey’s work, just how difficult it can be to protect and promote minority language use by L1 children in the presence of majority language speakers. It was notable that in all schools and for every model except Model 1: sheltered class, school B, the issue of holding back French L1

students in their own language development was cited as a concern.’ (Cormier et al., 2013: 173).

The two greatest concerns teachers had when assessing these models were: 1) the amount of English spoken in the classroom when there is a high number of native English speakers in the class and, 2) the short amount of time teachers have to reinforce the language skills of pupils who have L1 French when they have to spend considerable time teaching basic French skills to L2 speakers in the class.

Information and Communications Technology

While some of the support services involved information and communications technology, it is not evident from the research that policies or schemes exist which would be relevant to this report.

Support Services

Some 10,000 teachers teach in French-language schools (in areas where French is a minority language) and these teachers are registered with the *Canadian Teachers’ Federation (CTF)*. It was accepted that these French schools have specific needs in districts where French is a minority language and for that reason, a special service was initiated in 2001 for the schools through *Services to Francophones* to address these needs (Canadian Teachers’ Federation, 2014).

This service established the *Advisory Committee on French as a First Language*, which links together teachers from areas where French is a minority language. This service also facilitates study and research on all aspects pertaining to French in the education system and places emphasis on specific fields of research. In addition to this Committee, a network of Francophone liaison officers is in place. French organisations are allowed to nominate liaison officers. They are very involved in activities such as: promotion of

French-medium education; disseminating information about French-medium education; and providing professional support (Canadian Teachers' Federation, 2014).

When the Francophone service was established, it was decided to set out a research action plan for French entitled *The School at the Heart of a Thriving Francophonie*. The plan encompassed a wide range of research areas including early-years education, teaching methodologies and teacher needs. A workbook, entitled *DEBOUT*, based on cultural activities was compiled as part of the applied research. The package contains the workbook and a CD, a website based on the book was also designed (Canadian Teachers' Federation, 2014). Having implemented the applied research plan, a new plan entitled *The French-language School at the Pace of Change* (2008-2012) was initiated which emphasised six specific aspects:

- i. Attract children to French-medium schools,
- ii. Improve the infrastructure of the schools
- iii. Provide assistance for recruitment and teacher training (especially, aspects of teaching that are specifically related to Francophones in minority areas)
- iv. Teaching methodologies and resources to respond to specific needs of pupils in French-medium schools
- v. Promote the cultural identity of Francophones
- vi. Provision of special programmes/services for early-years education to Francophones linked to primary schools and the various centres (Canadian Teachers' Federation, 2007).

In addition to the service for teachers provided to Canadian Francophones in areas where French is a minority language, another service is offered to teachers teaching in French-immersion schools - *Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers*. The two teacher services – the *Canadian Teachers' Federation* and the *Canadian Association of Immersion*

Teachers, decided to come together to devise a social-media based support programme for newly-qualified teachers (French immersion teachers and teachers in French-medium schools). Teachers' opinions of the programme were sought and efforts made to recommend and implement such a plan (Canadian Teachers' Federation, 2012). It was determined that certain elements would be very important in this programme and the following list identifies some of these essentials:

- An index of all online resources to be made available.
- Good-practice videos to be available in one location.
- Material to be made available in the form of 'video capsules' to facilitate sharing.
- Class management strategies to be available.
- Ways of accessing teaching materials without undue difficulty.
- Material to be easily handled.
- Develop useful strategies which would be easy to use in class – teachers stressed good practice in the class
- Be able to exchange materials easily.
- Facility to communicate with other teachers.
- Facility to express opinion.
- Establish an interactive online community available on social media such as Facebook or Twitter (Canadian Teachers' Federation, 2012).

Effectiveness of Education Practices

Canada is very well known for its French-immersion education system which has expanded since its establishment at the beginning of the 1970s. Landry et al. (2007) believe that this success is due to the manner in which French native speakers were neglected outside of Quebec, 'French as a second language was better promoted for Canada's Anglophone majority than it was as a first language for the Francophone minority in most Canadian

provinces.’ (134). While the situation has improved at the present time, native French speakers certainly experience distinct difficulties when they seek a French-medium education system.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms determines that education through the medium of French is made available to Francophones outside Quebec, certain conditions having been fulfilled. Nevertheless, it is worth remembering the appendix in the legislation which declares that this form of education will be provided, if there is demand for it and it is legitimate to do so. It is evident that this is frustrating for those in areas with small numbers of Francophones and the question has been debated in the courts (Landry et al., 2007).

Although O’Keefe’s study (2001) explained the tendency among parents (who are entitled to have their children educated in French) to send their children to English-medium schools, and that their decision was made based on factors such as socioeconomic status and the importance of English to employment, it was evident also that it was the distance of the school from the home which was one of the major reasons for parents to choose a school. Certainly, parents would have difficulty sending their children to French schools, if that type of school did not exist in their own area. Parents prefer to send their children to the local school; however, French schools are not available in every district.

A further decision which French speaking parents make is to choose French-immersion schools rather than French schools for their children. This choice is made frequently owing to a lack of understanding of the difference between the two systems (Landry et al., 2007). Some parents, especially bilingual families, consider the immersion system to be more appropriate since this system serves the two languages they speak (Landry et al., 2007). Parents who speak French also believe that the programme with equal amount of French and English, is the best for bilingualism. Landry et al. (2007) criticise

this perception and explain that this type of programme involves subtractive bilingualism, where the two languages are not at the same standard, as is evidenced in research completed to date. The programme most closely associated with additive bilingualism, where both languages are of a high standard according to research, is the programme in which every subject other than English is taught through the medium of French (Landry et al., 2007). It is clear therefore that parents' understanding of the various systems is very important, and that research on languages in the education system, in addition to the implications of the different approaches, should be made available to them.

Conclusion

Similarities are evident between Gaeltacht schools and French primary and post-primary schools (outside Quebec). While the registration system of pupils is the major difference between the two types of school, it is obvious that some of the same difficulties could present within both types of school arising from the linguistic composition of the pupils. It is evident as well that in Canada, differentiation is made between French schools and French-immersion schools, similar to what occurs in Ireland.

An examination of the special services provided for Canadian Francophones would be worthwhile as an example for Ireland, especially services which focus only on native speakers and the French-medium schools. The *Advisory Committee on French as a First Language* which operates under the umbrella of the *Services for Francophones* fosters a link between French teachers in French-medium schools; a comparable link could be created among teachers in Gaeltacht areas if a similar committee were in place. This committee also sources research material specific to the needs of French-medium schools. A similar committee would offer Gaeltacht schools the opportunity to focus on their own specific needs.

The workbook *DEBOUT*, based on cultural activities, initiated from research carried out on aspects of Francophone education in French-medium schools. There is excellent demand for the book and teachers are very satisfied with the resource, ‘[S]ince this cultural activities kit was launched in 2002, the integration of elements specific to the Francophone culture into teaching has evolved considerably’ (Canadian Teachers’ Federation, 2014: <http://www.ctf-fce.ca/en/Pages/Francophones/debout.aspx>). An equivalent type of book would be suitable for Gaeltacht schools as support material for teachers.

More than 95% of newly-qualified teachers who participated in the research considered that a virtual support programme would be very desirable and useful when they were teaching, ‘Our consultation shows that, for teachers, the main benefits of a virtual community are access to content and the opportunity to comment, to team up with experts and specialists, and to promote content on other networks’ (Canadian Teachers’ Federation, 2012: 18). This form of programme would be helpful to teachers in general and would be very suitable for teachers in the Gaeltacht. The programme offers a means for teachers to come together, share ideas, identify teaching materials in a very user-friendly manner and seek advice from experts. It is not always possible to bring teachers in the Gaeltacht together on a regular basis due to geographical constraints; therefore this approach would be one way of overcoming that difficulty.

5. Frisian in the Netherlands

Context and Status of the Minority Language

Of the 643,000 people living in Fryslan in the Netherlands 350,000 are native speakers of Frisian (Douwes, Hanenburg & Lotti, 2010). Frisian is an Indo-European language very closely related to English and is the dialect which is furthest removed from standardised Dutch in the Netherlands (Gooskens & Heringa, 2004). Frisian has three principal dialects

West Frisian, East Frisian and North Frisian. Within the national context, Frisian is recognised as a minority language under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) and enjoys equal legal status with Dutch in Fryslan Province. Nevertheless, Frisian is considered to have very poor standing in society in the Netherlands since it is regarded as not having any importance in socioeconomic terms (Van der Bij & Valk, 2005 quoted in Gorter & Van der Meer, 2008). Recently, an administrative agreement has been reached between the Government of the Netherlands and the Local Authorities in Fryslan which sets out the essential stages to be fulfilled relating to the protection and promotion of the province's native language and culture (The Government of the Netherlands, 2013).

Frisian has been subjected to pressure as the language of the community in Fryslan Province on three major grounds: Dutch speakers who do not speak Frisian are moving into the region; the number of parents who are bringing up children with Frisian as the language of the home has declined to 48% (Provinsje Fryslan, 2007b quoted in Riermersma, Jong & Kalsbeek, 2010); and Dutch is the principal language used for social interaction among many Frisian speakers (Douwes et al., 2010).

Education Practices through the Medium of the Minority Language

At preschool level, 7,500 children are enrolled in 300 centres in Fryslan (Douwes et al., 2010); 46% of these children are native speakers of Frisian and 52% are native speakers of Dutch. The linguistic background of children is determined primarily by geographical circumstances: the majority of Frisian-medium preschools are located in rural areas and the majority of Dutch-medium preschools are situated in the cities (Boneschansker & LeRutte, 2000 quoted in Douwes et al., 2010).

At primary school level, 62,815 pupils are enrolled in 486 schools throughout the province (Douwes et al., 2010). Frisian has been an obligatory subject in the primary

schooling system in the Province of Fryslan since 1980 onwards and the curricular objective is for pupils to achieve full competency in Frisian and in Dutch (Ytsma, 2000). To attain this objective, a language course, *The Frisian Roundabout*, is employed in approximately 300 of the 500 schools. An exemption from teaching Frisian has been granted to 6% of schools in the province as these schools are located in areas where the language is not widely spoken. Between 10%-30% of formal teaching is delivered through the medium of Frisian in the majority of primary schools; however, immersion education or heritage/maintenance schools do not exist in the province (Ytsma, 2000). The number of schools teaching Frisian for a half-day or a full day per week has increased; nonetheless, the decision of how many hours spent in language teaching is left to the individual school (Douwes et al., 2010). Consequently, there is a huge variation in the amount of time spent teaching Frisian and great emphasis is placed on fostering positive linguistic attitudes and on understanding and speaking Frisian rather than on reading, writing or using technology according to the educational inspectorate of the Netherlands (Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2006 quoted in Riemersma et al., 2010).

Education Practices through the Medium of the Minority Language

An important linguistic initiative in the primary education system is the *Trijetalige Skoalle* (trilingual school) project. In participating schools three languages are used as the medium of instruction: Dutch, Frisian and English. In these trilingual schools the 50:50 model (Frisian: Dutch) operates up to grade six (c. 10 years of age). In grades seven and eight, the 40:40:20 (Frisian: Dutch: English) model is followed. This movement has seen a steady growth and the local government in Fryslan planned to increase the number of schools which offer this programme from 7 schools in 1997 to 50 in 2012 (Provinsje Fryslan, 2006 quoted in Riemersma et al., 2010).

Regular post-primary schools in the province have an enrolment of 60,670 secondary students; however, only 70% of these post-primary schools provide Frisian as a curricular subject. When Frisian is chosen as a subject, students receive only one hour instruction of Frisian per week or approximately 40 hours in the first school year and while the subject may be taken as an examination subject in the final post-primary examinations, in the 2008 school year, only 78 students were registered for the examination (Douwes et al., 2010). Bilingual schools do exist at post-primary level; however English and Dutch are the languages of instruction and Frisian is available only as an optional subject (Douwes et al., 2010).

The National Government has identified targets for Frisian and plan to add, on an annual basis, 20 primary schools to the number of schools providing education through the medium of the language, so that 25% of the schools in the province will be trilingual schools and an additional €90,000 per annum will be added to the budget for the preservation of Frisian. (The Government of the Netherlands, 2013)

Information and Communications Technology

The report on the administrative agreement between the Government of The Netherlands and Local Authorities states that high quality teaching aids, including ‘physical and digital aids’, will be available (The Government of the Netherlands, 2013); however, what is in question here was not specifically outlined.

Support Services

It is not evident from the research that policies and schemes relating to support services exist which would be relevant to this research.

Effectiveness of Education practices

Primary school pupils in the province perform below the national average in Dutch and Mathematics standardised tests (Van Ruijven, 2003 quoted in Gorter et al., 2008). This is

very significant among pupils from lower sociolinguistic backgrounds especially, but is also the case with pupils from middle and higher social classes. Rates of lower level ability are shown to be very significant among senior grades in primary school (Van Ruijven, 2003 quoted in Gorter et al., 2008).

As regards the aforementioned trilingual education, it was shown that ‘important achievement’ is made by pupils in two languages (Frisian and English) and that their competence in Dutch is not adversely affected (Van der Meij, 2008). In terms of teaching standards, it was shown that only 60% of primary and post-primary teachers in the province were qualified or had sufficient competence to teach Frisian (The Government of The Netherlands, 2013). And as a result, efforts are being made to provide third level courses to reduce this competence gap.

Conclusion

Very little contemporary research has been carried out on Frisian in the education system and therefore it would be very difficult to learn any lessons that are applicable to our Gaeltacht context. Local government in Fryslan has set out certain language targets for Frisian in the education system; however, these aspects are already in place in the Gaeltacht. A very important element in the debate on the future of the language is the growth of English as a *lingua franca* across Europe and the influence the English language will have on minority languages such as Frisian. Currently English is considered as a third official language rather than a foreign language in the Netherlands, a factor which will present future challenge in the promotion of Frisian in the education system since, if a choice has to be made between a major global language and a local minority language, the pragmatic choice will most often be made. The Netherlands’ trilingual schools are perceived as one solution to this challenge.

6. Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) in Scotland

Context and Status of the Minority Language

Scotland has a population of 5,313,600 people and of these, some 58,000 are Gàidhlig speakers (Scottish Census, 2011). In the 2001 census in Scotland, 58,652 people were recorded as Gàidhlig speakers, a decrease from the figure of 65,978 in 1991. These figures demonstrate a decline in the number of Gàidhlig speakers though a decline which has slowed somewhat. In recent years, Gàidhlig has achieved official, statutory status and Bord na Gàidhlig has been established as part of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. The aims of the Bord include: advise Government Ministers in Scotland on matters relating to Gàidhlig; prepare and direct a national plan for Gàidhlig; offer advice in relation to the provision of Gàidhlig-medium education; and monitor pertinent aspects of the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Gàidhlig is spoken primarily in the Western Isles and in the Highlands in the north of Scotland and the traditional *Ghàidhealtachd* (Gàidhlig area) is concentrated in these regions.

Education Provision through the Medium of the Minority Language

While the difference between a Gaeltacht school and an all-Irish school is recognised in Ireland, a similar formal differentiation is not made in Scotland with every Gàidhlig school perceived as a single entity. This approach presents a challenge when undertaking an analysis of Gàidhlig-medium education since it is difficult to separate the ‘Gaeltacht’ schools from the ‘immersion’ schools.

In the school year 2010/11, 802 infants attended 58 Gàidhlig-medium playschool/preschools throughout Scotland. At primary level, a total of 2,316 pupils were attending 60 Gàidhlig-medium units and 410 students were receiving Gàidhlig-medium

post-primary education. (Comunn na Ghàidhlig, 2014). These figures indicate that a total of 2,786 children were receiving Gàidhlig-medium education at all levels in Scotland.

Despite these very low figures, an increase has taken place in Gàidhlig-medium education in Scotland when comparisons are made with the figures for the school year 1985/86 when only 24 children were attending Gàidhlig-medium primary schooling. It is stated that approximately 22% of the total number of pupils come from a linguistic background where Gàidhlig is the major language (O'Hanlon, 2012: 58).

The education system in Scotland is independent and differs from that of the rest of the United Kingdom (Humes & Bryce, 2003; Raffe, 2004) and it would appear that local authorities in Scotland have certain independence with regard to the education provision offered in their areas. This is a factor which influences the provision of bilingual education, and in terms of Ghàidhlig-medium education, for example, 18 of the 32 education authorities do not offer Gàidhlig-medium education in any of their schools (Rogers & McLeod, 2006: 363). Even in Gàidhlig-medium schools there is considerable variation from school to school in the use of Gàidhlig (O'Hanlon, 2010); in the Western Isles where 61% of the population are native speakers of Gàidhlig, only 26% attend Gàidhlig-medium schools (McLeod, 2001: 15). The first Gàidhlig-medium unit was opened on the islands in the year 1986; however, English continues to be the stipulated medium of education and parents on the islands who wish to have their children educated through the medium of Gàidhlig must choose that option specifically (Rogers & McLeod, 2006: 363). Immersion education is available typically in a Gàidhlig-medium unit or stream within the regular English-medium primary school. Throughout the country, only three independent primary schools exist which are not linked to mainstream English schools (Gaelic Excellence Group, 2011). Pupils are immersed in the target language from the first day of school (P1

and P2), and generally in the third year (P3) teaching of literary skills in English begins (Comann nam Pàrant, 2013).

Education Practices through the Medium of the Minority Language

A recommendation has been proposed at post-primary level that a National Centre for Excellence should be established to support the development and dissemination of information about courses, resources, training opportunities and continuing professional development (Gaelic Excellence Group, 2011). These centres are to be based on the central hub model of the *Confucius Classroom Hub* in use internationally and across Scotland. Confucius classrooms originated from the collaborative agreement between Education Scotland and Haban (The Office of Chinese Language Council International) to promote Chinese culture and the recommendation is made that Gàidhlig Culture could be promoted by means of the same model. Schools which participate in the Confucius Classroom project work with local authorities and receive funding from the Chinese Government to promote Chinese cultural activities. Efforts are made to create links with Chinese cultural organisations and to promote the Chinese language by teaching it to the whole community (Education Scotland, 2014). These hubs or ‘centres of excellence’ are based in one school in each area and support the community and schools in the surrounding area to promote cultural activities and share ideas and resources about teaching and learning Gàidhlig. Hubs to support teaching and learning in Chinese operate in twelve post-primary schools across Scotland and their potential in promoting Gàidhlig culture is considered feasible.

Information and Communications Technology

For schools that are not Gàidhlig-medium and are interested in beginning classes or modules in the language, it is recommended that peripatetic teachers and information technology are employed to meet demand (Comhairle na Gaidhltachd, 2002). The concept of peripatetic teachers is that teachers would not be based in or closely linked with any one

school and would be free to travel from school to school in the area to promote positive teaching and learning practices in Gàidhlig. However, the literature did not outline specifically what was in question in relation to the use of information technology.

Support Services

Schemes and efforts to attract people to Gàidhlig-medium education are to be found mainly at primary education level. In the northern Highlands, the local authority provides a free bus service to pupils whose parents wish them to attend a Gàidhlig-medium unit (Comhairle na Gaidhlealtachd, 2002).

Comann nam Pàrant (Parents Association), a voluntary, national association was established in 1994 to promote the interests of parents whose children are educated through the medium of Gàidhlig. The association consists of a network of 30 local groups across Scotland and is the umbrella group of Comunn na Gàidhlig (Gàidhlig Association of Scotland). Its principal objective is to stimulate interest in Gàidhlig-medium education and to offer support for the establishment and continuance of Gàidhlig-medium schools at preschool, primary and post-primary levels (Comann nam Pàrant, 2014). The establishment of such an association is important and advantageous as it brings parents together to discuss education issues, and in this way, the association's ideas and messages are unified, well organised and integrated. Officers of Comann nam Pàrant can raise questions with local and national education authorities on behalf of their members and can speak authoritatively and consistently on issues concerning the Gàidhlig-medium education sector. This creates an organisation with a coherent, integrated approach rather than individual parents discussing individual issues independently. In addition, an association can access funding to undertake support activities for the language more easily than individuals.

Comann nam Pàrant organises a national advisory scheme to provide parents with advice and support on Gàidhlig-medium education matters. A national officer was recruited

to offer training to parents to enable them to become local advisors/counsellors in their own areas. These parents, working in a voluntary capacity, are responsible for disseminating information concerning Gàidhlig-medium education: on preschool groups; at information sessions; on school open days; on marketing stands and make presentations at events, and undertake home visits. (Comunn na Gàidhlig, 2014).

A fulltime development officer with special responsibility for child care and pre-schooling through the medium of Gàidhlig was appointed by The Highland Council (Comhairle na Gaidhlealtachd). This officer provides support to families and communities wishing to promote Gàidhlig and coordinates support services and quality assurance in the sector.

In addition, Gàidhlig classes, information sessions and a lending service are made available to parents. Within the lending service, parents have opportunity to obtain learning and educational resources on loan to assist them in learning Gàidhlig or to help their children with homework (Comhairle na Gaidhlealtachd, 2002; Pàrant, 2013). The information sessions present details regarding immersion education and Gàidhlig-medium education and attempt to answer any questions or concerns that parents have about bilingual education. A website <http://www.storlann.co.uk/>, has responsibility for the design and distribution of appropriate teaching and learning resources to Gàidhlig-medium schools.

Parents from native Gàidhlig areas receive information packages (Lathaichean Fìorachaidh na Gàidhlig) describing the advantages of bilingualism in general and of Gàidhlig in particular (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, 2012). This service is provided to attract parents towards choosing Gàidhlig-medium education and in the future, it is recommended that a survey is carried out of parents who did not choose this form of education for their

children to determine their reasons and to inform future planning (Gaelic Excellence Group, 2011).

In recent years, a great deal of emphasis has been placed on teacher recruitment and continuing professional development. Bòrd na Gàidhlig announced a recruitment campaign (*Thig gam Theagasc*) to meet the demand for teachers who can teach through the medium of Gàidhlig (Bòrd na Gàidhlig, 2014). The website *Gabh an Cothrom* (Take the Opportunity) is part of this marketing campaign (www.gaelicteaching.com) and is a starting point for teachers who wish to pursue Gàidhlig-medium education. A central feature of this website is the information it provides on training courses available to teachers who are currently teaching through the medium of English, to prepare them to become Gàidhlig-medium teachers and, in addition, provides a section detailing employment opportunities in the Gàidhlig-medium education sector.

Effectiveness of Education Practices

It is difficult to assess the progress of the education system in the heritage areas since no differentiation is made between those schools and schools outside the areas which offer Gàidhlig-medium education.

Conclusion

Based on the evidence from literature, the status of Gàidhlig in the native Gàidhlig areas is more vulnerable than the status of Irish in Gaeltacht areas in Ireland. Hence educationalists in Scotland could look to Ireland for guidance and support to achieve their language reversal objectives. That said, there are certain ideas which could be implemented productively in the Gaeltacht in Ireland. It is recommended that ‘centres of excellence’ could be established based around one school in every Gaeltacht area. These centres would be able to attract funding for their activities and be responsible for the promotion of various facets of teaching and learning Irish in the Gaeltacht. In these voluntary, integrated centres,

principals and boards of management could work collaboratively with teachers, parents and pupils to develop policies, good practice and resources for teaching and learning. The centres would disseminate information to other schools in the area in the interests of promoting good practice in teaching and learning. An Association of Gaeltacht Parents would be an enormous support to Irish-medium education in the Gaeltacht. Teachers of Irish could be encouraged to obtain a special qualification as preparation for the exceptional linguistic context in which they would work and the qualification could be a basic requirement in future.

7. Hawaiian in Hawaii (United States of America)

Context and Status of the Minority Language

There are some 24,042 speakers of Hawaiian in the United States of America (US Census, 2008) and the majority live on the Hawaiian Islands. However, only 0.1% of the population of Hawai‘i are native speakers of Hawaiian and the island of Ni‘ihau, with a population of 180, is the only one of eight islands where the language is spoken by the majority of the people. Hawai‘i is the only state in the United States of America (USA) where a native language has official state status, achieved in 1978. Similar to other native languages in the USA, Hawaiian is under enormous pressure from English.

Education Provision through the Medium of the Minority Language

A preschool immersion education programme, *Aha Punana Leo*, and a primary immersion education programme *Ke Kula Kaiapuni* operate in Hawaii primarily to promote the Hawaiian language and these education models heavily emphasise Hawaiian native culture, tradition and philosophy. The immersion education model originated from a cultural revival on the Hawaiian Islands in the 1960s and 1970s (Ah Nee-Benham & Heck, 1997) which inspired the Hawaiian people’s interest in their culture and native language and in the decolonisation of the islands. One of the key results of this movement was the opening of

Hawaiian preschools *Aha Punana Leo* which were based largely on the *Kohanga Reo* experience in the Māori tradition in New Zealand (Bowman, 1990). The immersion education programme *Papahana Kaiapuni*, now part of the provision by the Department of Education in Hawai'i, emphasises the revitalisation and promotion of native Hawaiian language and culture in Hawai'i (Yamauchi & Wilhelm, 2001). Approximately 1,500 *Papahana Kaiapuni* pupils were enrolled in 2008 in 19 K-12 centres throughout the islands (Hawai'i State Department of Education, 2008). At least 15 of these schools share a campus with a mainstream English school.

Education Practices in the Minority Language

Hawaiian is the third largest target language in immersion education programmes in the USA after Spanish and French (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2013) and there are three models in operation at present:

- Total immersion schools independent from any other school and from the influence of other schools
- Integrated programmes where Hawaiian-immersion pupils and mainstream English pupils are mixed for some classes
- A model in which the majority of teaching is through English and classes in Hawaiian are provided.

Early-years total immersion education is practised in one school, Nawahi, where a mixture of native speakers and language learners come together in one educational setting similar to the situation in Gaeltacht schools. One hundred percent of instruction is through the medium of Hawaiian at all levels from grade K-4 (Nursery-Class 2 in Ireland), and teaching of English does not begin until grade 5 (Third class in Ireland). Some 261 pupils attend school from Grade Pre-K to Grade 12. One similarity evident between the Nawahi programme and dual-immersion education programmes found in other contexts in the USA

is that L1 speakers of Hawaiian are used as educational and linguistic exemplars to build proficiency for L2 speakers of Hawaiian (Lindolm-Leary, 2001) and the aim of the programme is for children to achieve bilingualism. Apart from this aspect, the two models are different and in the case of Hawaiian-immersion education programmes, the potential negative affect that a powerful majority language such as English could have on the promotion of the minority language is clearly recognised. The school also has special status in that academic links have been created between the school and the third level College Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke’ elikolani. Research is carried out on teaching and learning Hawaiian, the language is used to design and distribute resources to other Hawaiian-medium schools (Wilson & Kamana, 2006 quoted in Tedick et al., 2011) and to provide training for immersion education teachers and testing of new materials and bilingual education policy initiatives (Tedick et al., 2011: 45).

Information and Communications Technology

The *E-School* scheme is used to promote the use of information technology in English-medium schools in Hawai’i and is now recommended for immersion education schools (Department of Education State of Hawai’i, 2014). The scheme facilitates online classes, classes additional to the curriculum, prepared by fully qualified teachers, for all primary and post-primary pupils in the public education system. Pupils can log on to the module at any time, work on various projects and tasks and forward it online for correction. Teachers correct the work and return it online with corrections, feedback and recommendations on how improvements could be made. Pupils interact with each other and with teachers via blogs, debating forums and virtual classrooms. Courses are provided in Mathematics, English, Social Studies, Technology, Career Guidance, Fine Arts and Health Education (Department of Education State of Hawai’i, 2014).

Support Services

Parents play a central role in Hawaiian-immersion education programmes. Parents of preschool children are obliged to spend eight hours per month working in their preschool and must attend Hawaiian classes so that they will be enabled to support the teaching received by their children (Reyhner, 2003). The outcome of this stipulation is that a strong connection is forged between the parents and the school. It is recommended that, as part of their continuing professional development, immersion education teachers should be afforded the opportunity of taking time out from teaching for a period to access further training (Yamauchi & Ceppi, 2006); however, this literature review does not indicate if that recommendation has been implemented as yet. Particular attention is recommended for teaching Hawaiian in early-years education with teachers highly qualified in Hawaiian teaching in early-years infants to ensure pupils have a strong linguistic foundation (DoE, 2004). Special certification in immersion education is part of teacher training available for immersion education teachers before they begin teaching in an immersion education school (Tedick et al., 2011).

Effectiveness of Education Practices

The immersion education school Nawahi, is effectively passing on language to the next generation. A hundred percent of students graduated and 80% went on to third level (Wilson & Kamana, 2009: 372). Pupils taking Hawaiian do better in the immersion education system than do pupils studying Hawaiian in regular mainstream English schools (Wilson & Kamana, 2001) and there is evidence to suggest that the programme is successful in establishing good linguistic habits among pupils in the use of Hawaiian as a language of social interaction (Wilson & Kamana, 2009). The school produces positive results in Hawaiian primarily because it operates as an independent identity, free from the influences of the major language in the mainstream English system (Tedick et al., 2011), a

fact which strengthens the cultural and linguistic ethos of the school and allows the school to take control of implementing, managing and monitoring its own policies. It is recognised that English could have a negative effect on the promotion of Hawaiian if the school were a Hawaiian-medium unit within an English-medium school, as is the situation in many of the immersion education schools on the islands of Hawai'i. At the beginning of the 2009 school year, 261 pupils, from preschool to Grade 12, were registered on the immersion education programme in Nawahi and 33.3% of these pupils were native speakers. In the nursery classes, all of the 11 children registered were native speakers, a figure which shows the effective support that the school provides in encouraging and fostering the next generation of native speakers of Hawaiian (Tedick et al., 2011).

Conclusion

Despite the fact that the number of native speakers of Hawaiian in Hawai'i is much smaller than the numbers of native speakers of Diné in the south west of the United States, the movements, *Aha Punana Leo* (Hawaiian-medium Nursery) and *Ke Kula Kaiapuni* (K-12, primary system), have achieved substantial progress in the revival and revitalisation of the language within the education system and the community as a whole. The Hawaiian people have succeeded in providing post-primary education in their native language, an achievement which has not been equalled in any other native language in the USA (Tedick et al., 2011). Recommendations have been made to develop special initiatives in online courses for pupils in Hawai'i as an additional support to the traditional classroom learning, and with one generation of pupils successfully through the immersion education system, it is very encouraging that the next generation of pupils are coming to school as L1 speakers of Hawaiian (Tedick et al., 2011). Part of the evidence given above is based on the experience in one school, Nawahi School, where a link has been fostered with a third level

college and it is not clear, as yet, if the same educational results could be achieved in other schools in other contexts.

8. Māori in New Zealand

Context and status of the Minority language

The Waitangi Treaty was signed in 1840 and since then relations between the English language and Māori language in life and society in New Zealand could be described frequently as confrontational and unequal. This tension is very often reflected in the status and standing of the Māori language in New Zealand society. In the 1970s, Māori was a language under threat in that only 26% of the population spoke the language fluently. It was this sudden decline in the language that motivated the Māori people to begin a campaign to boost not only the Māori language but also the Māori culture in general (Hill & May, 2013: 49). In the 1980s, Māori language schools were established at four levels of education: preschools (*kohanga reo*), primary schools (*kura tuatahi Māori*), post-primary-schools (*wharekura*) and universities (*wananga*) (Hill & May, 2013). The Māori education system underwent rapid growth and fourteen years after its foundation in 1982, more than 14,000 Māori children were attending 767 *Kohanga Reo*. Regrettably, since then, these figures have declined somewhat and in 2011 almost 10,000 Māori children were registered in 560 *Kohanga* units (May, 2005: 368). This decline will be discussed later in the report. In 2009, a total of 22,000 Māori pupils, (3% of all pupils in the country), were receiving Māori-medium education.

<http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/schooling/oecd-review-on-evaluation-and-assessment-frameworks-for-improving-school-outcomes/chapter-1-the-school-system>

Education Provision through the Medium of the Minority Language

At present, the majority of pupils and teachers within the Māori-medium education system are L2 speakers of Māori (May & Hill, 2005: 379). It is accepted therefore that the model in

use in the Māori education context is heritage language education and not heritage maintenance or language enrichment education (May & Hill, 2005). When we attempt to compare this system with the case of the Gaeltacht, certain differences are evident. However, these variations depend frequently on the composition of the community and the districts. While it could not be claimed that the majority of pupils or teachers in the Gaeltacht system are L2 speakers of Irish, nevertheless, a significant percentage of L2 speakers are to be found in the current system which presents challenges in the definition and functioning of that system (Mac Donncha et al., 2005). In addition, many teachers who teach in the Gaeltacht context are L2 speakers of Irish. Therefore, it is useful to undertake an analysis of the Māori education context in order to examine good practices within that system which would be appropriate to the Gaeltacht education system.

Immersion or bilingual Māori language education programmes are classified in six groups based on the level of Māori language used in each group; however, this classification is to facilitate funding rather than to implement a particular model of immersion education (Hill, 2014; May, Hill & Tiakiwai 2006). Less than 50% of teaching is delivered through the medium of Māori in the four lowest groups and it is accepted that it is cultural immersion rather than immersion in the language that is involved here (Hill, 2014).

Level 1: between 81% and 100% of instruction through the medium of Māori and it is accepted that the average is 90%

Level 2: between 51% and 80% of instruction through the medium of Māori. Frequently teachers in these schools do not have a high standard of Māori and a low level of awareness of bilingual teaching; it is assumed therefore that provision of Māori-medium instruction is closer to the minimum (Hill, 2014).

The above models are delivered in many ways, including total-immersion schools (Kura Kaupapa Māori) where all instruction is through the medium of Māori and other models which provide a more flexible version of immersion education as in bilingual Māori classes or Māori units. A significant fact is that the schools decide which category they belong to, and there is no evidence of monitoring of schools to ensure compliance with the conditions laid down in the different categories (Hill, 2014). Based on the high quantity of teaching through the medium of Māori and current practices in Gaeltacht schools, it is the Kura Kaupapa Māori which would be the most appropriate model when we examine the relevance of language education practices in New Zealand for the Gaeltacht context. Therefore every other model of immersion education will be omitted from future discussion within this report.

Education Practices through the Medium of the Minority Language

The current Māori education system operates under the *Ka Hikitia* strategy which was first implemented in 2008. This was quickly followed by another *Ka Hikitia* in 2013 as an additional support for the original strategy. This strategy sets out the ways in which Māori education can be promoted as well as ensuring and strengthening the participation of the Māori people in the education system. In addition to the education strategy, a specific curriculum is laid down for Māori education, *Te Marautanga O Aotearoa*. Although the curriculum is in keeping with the main national curriculum, it responds to special aspects that relate specifically to Māori culture and education. Moreover, schools which implement *Te Marautanga O Aotearoa* must achieve certain preset learning targets and progress, and a report on the progress must be given to parents and other stakeholders in the system (Education Review Office 2012).

Te Kohanga Reo, the name given to preschool provision, is a total-immersion programme provided for young children from birth to sixteen years of age and Māori is the

language of communication in the programme. While the language is core to the service, *Kohanga Reo* is a movement which serves every aspect of Māori culture and tradition (Fishman, 1991: 338). The first unit was established by the Department of Māori Affairs in 1982 and in 1994, a total of 14,000 pupils were enrolled in 800 units. However in 1990, responsibility for *Kohanga Reo* was transferred to the Department of Education and this transfer had a significant influence on the provision of programmes at community level.

(http://www.kohanga.ac.nz/index.php?option=com_content&id=4&Itemid=10).

The increase in the number of criteria and official standards to be fulfilled meant that the local Māori community had difficulty in ensuring that they were attending appropriately to the cultural and heritage aspects of the movement and as a result, a good number of Māori communities withdrew from preschool provision. Since 1993, a decline has been evident in the number of pupils attending *Kohanga Reo* and it is believed that less than a quarter of Māori children attend at the present time (Skeryett & Gunn, 2011). This is an interesting illustration, when minority language education is under discussion, of the importance associated with other social and cultural factors. Often, when the education system functions in a manner that is detached from these aspects, there is little support available from the surrounding language community which is critical if the language is to be given a practical function.

Kura Kaupapa is the Māori name given to immersion education system, and the system is based on six basic Māori principles (<http://www.runanga.co.nz/about-us>):

- Te Ira Tangata: a total pupil-centred system focussing on physical and spiritual education
- Te Reo: Māori is the principal language of instruction

- Nga Iwi: The whanau (people of the community including especially the extended family in the community) has responsibility for the education environment and the cultural heritage is highly valued
- Te Ao: A rich Māori knowledge of nature is a central element in learning
- Ahuatanga Ako: Learning and teaching is a happy, stimulating and spiritual experience
- Te Tino Uaratanga: Graduates must attain a high standard in their individual talents and must develop their spiritual, social, and emotional understanding.

Kura Kaupapa Māori are state schools established under the Education Act 1989 and by the year 2000, there were 59 of these schools in operation (May & Hill, 2005). Three levels of schooling are included in Kura Kaupapa Māori (OECD, 2010), including:

- Kura Tuatahi: Primary education for pupils from years 1-8
- Kura Arongatahi: Primary and post-primary education for pupils from years 1-13
- Wharekura: Post-primary education for pupils from years 9 - 13

This model of immersion education promotes additive bilingualism and frequently English is not taught until the pupil is aged 9 years or older. As is the case in a multiplicity of educational contexts where minority languages are provided for, a lack of continuity is evident in the transfer from Māori primary to post-primary levels, a feature which threatens the language at third level and in the wider society (May & Hill, 2005).

Information and Communications Technology

Research results are inconclusive as to whether information and communications technology policies and schemes exist which would be relevant to this report.

Support Services

Māori culture has a central role in pre-service education of teachers and training courses are devised frequently to deliver high levels of language proficiency and cultural awareness to

students. These courses are offered by various third level institutes, including Wananga, centres in which Māori culture and language are promoted, generally for the benefit of Māori culture. Qualification in immersion education teaching is available in Wananga, Te Wananga o Raukawa, and two universities, University of Auckland and Massey University (Kane 2005: 200).

Students in these courses undertake a curriculum that not alone includes language acquisition and immersion education methodologies, but also aspects specifically related to Māori culture, Māori curriculum and the social and political standing of Māori in New Zealand (Kane, 2005). As already stated, the majority of pupils and tutors in the total-immersion Māori schools are L2 speakers of Māori and the same challenges are present in language proficiency at third level. Consequently, courses are regularly provided which offer students the opportunity for an intensive study of Māori language for one year before beginning undergraduate education.

Effectiveness of Education Practices

While the Kura Kaupapa Māori system has enjoyed success in providing Māori education, challenges still exist in this provision, especially at the level of assessment. Assessment is a contentious issue in the Māori education system due to the lack of assessment tools to engage with the specified needs of Māori pupils. Notwithstanding the good news stories regarding the success of the Māori education system in halting the decline of the language, there is little information available as yet concerning the educational effectiveness of the system (Rau, 2003). An added difficulty is the lack of research on the subject which would allow educationalists to set out Māori pupils' assessment needs and design assessment tools and practices adapted to these needs (May & Hill, 2005: 381).

Another challenge facing the Māori education system is the pressure on institutions offering, and the students undertaking, training courses. These Māori-centred courses place

an obligation on students and on tutors to continually improve their ability in Māori, add to the provision of resources in Māori and attain a high level of awareness of Māori culture and associated curriculum (Kane 2005: 203). This work is obligatory and has to be carried out in tandem with the study that the students have already undertaken. These challenges are well documented in reports involving the educational context of the Gaeltacht where teachers are often of the opinion that twice the amount of work is required from them as they attempt to respond to the demands of language and culture which are placed upon them. Obviously teachers in the Gaeltacht have these demands visited upon them in addition to the professional demands that they share with their colleagues at national level. In this instance however, the Māori arrangement has the advantage of a training structure which serves their particular context.

While the provision for pre-service is to be commended in many ways, other shortcomings are still evident. These include gaps in the training offered to bilingual teachers. Gaps in bilingual education are apparent in the continuing professional development provided for teachers and in literacy and in dual literacy (Hollings, Jeffries and McArdell, 1992; Rau 2003). Increasing the numbers of teachers who have high levels of proficiency in the Māori language is stated as a government target in The Māori Language Education Framework, as is the target of increasing effectiveness of teaching and learning (Skerrett & Gunn, 2011).

While it is worthwhile that the levels of immersion education being provided are defined, it is of concern that it is left to the individual schools to decide their own level of immersion, a practice which threatens overall provision. In addition, inspection reports do not show that any school is criticised for not adhering to the criteria as set out (Hill, 2014). One expert on the subject is of the opinion that these levels are a mirror image of the quality of immersion education that teachers are competent to implement, and not an

insight into a model of immersion education based on pedagogical principles. These shortcomings, especially at the lowest level of provision, negatively impact on overall provision for immersion education.

Conclusion

While a decline is evident in recent years in the numbers of pupils attending the Māori education system, this trend is not due to a lack of interest; rather it is a result of other aspects that significantly impact on the implementation of the system, including the level of participation of the Māori community in the system. The support offered to the Māori language and to the culture which emerges from the language, is central in the Māori educational context. The achievement of these targets is dependent on the Māori population, including tribes, sharing their information (Tomlins Jahnke, 2013: 146). This fosters a sense of responsibility with regard to the area and the tradition in general. In addition, it allows the Māori community to prioritise their linguistic and educational needs within the local education system. This is a clear advantage of the Māori education system that could also benefit the Gaeltacht education system. A special Māori curriculum operates and gives priority to matters central to the Māori tradition, and serves national education needs as well. Such flexibility would greatly benefit

Gaeltacht schools as they attempt to serve mixed language populations and are controlled by national education policies, where Gaeltacht pupils are regarded as a significant educational and linguistic minority.

Clearly, important advantages attach to the definition of the various levels of immersion education provided within the system, a practice which would benefit the Gaeltacht system which is currently experiencing a lack of clarity in this regard. However, as has been stated above, when this classification is undertaken it is crucial that the reliability of the awarding agency is beyond question, and that ongoing monitoring would be carried out to confirm

the suitability of the school to the category. It is essential that other stakeholders are included in the process as well as the individual school. Currently in the Gaeltacht, very little classification of Gaeltacht schools takes place involving the level of teaching through the medium of the target language or the language needs of pupils. This is the case notwithstanding the fact that it has long been established that it is a mixed linguistic composition that is dominant in the majority of schools in the system and that very composition presents significant challenge in the present-day system. (Mac Donnacha, 2005).

9. Swedish in Finland

Context and Status of the Minority Language

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, Swedish has enjoyed a high status in Finland, since Finland was once part of Sweden. At the present time, Swedish is an official language in Finland and registered in the constitution from 1919 onwards. Although an official language in Finland, Swedish is similar in many ways to a minority language with approximately 297,000 people, or 5.4% of the population, who speak the language (S. Björklund, Mard-Miettinen & Savijarvi, 2013: 1; Mercator, 2013; Prime Minister's Office of Publications, 2012; S. Björklund, 2005: 24). Even though these are native Swedish speakers, they are citizens of Finland and strongly believe that they have Finnish identity (Prime Minister's Office Publications, 2012: 12). The majority of Swedish speakers reside in the capital Helsinki and the surrounding suburbs. In addition to these, Swedish is used as the primary language of the community in three council areas situated on the Finnish coast, and other strong Swedish-speaking districts located on the west and south coasts of Finland and in the Aland Islands (Mercator, 2013). These rural areas are the most appropriate for this present analysis and the report will focus on education practices in those areas, rather than in urban areas.

Similarities are also evident between the sociolinguistic context of native speakers of Swedish living in Finland and the Gaeltacht, including the variation between standard Swedish taught in the curriculum and the various Swedish dialects common among native speakers of Swedish. Despite the fact that Swedish is their first language, it is usual that L1 speakers are continuously exposed to L2 Finnish, the country's other official language. This exposure stems from the strong standing that Finnish enjoys as a language of communication in the community and also as the primary language of the broadcast and print media (Brunell & Saretsalo, 1999: 175). This creates a high level of interaction between L1 speakers of Swedish and L1 speakers of Finnish, which results in their children being bilingual, a pattern that is clearly evident in the case of the Gaeltacht. Clearly there is an imbalance in their ability in the two languages until the education system attends to that shortcoming (Brunell & Saretsalo, 1999: 175).

Education Provision through the Medium of the Minority Language

The Finnish system of education is divided into two parts, one conducted in Finnish and the other in Swedish. The Swedish-immersion education system in Finland has expanded significantly in recent years, especially in urban areas where a high proportion of bilingual families live. However, there are also Swedish-medium schools located in rural areas where Swedish is still a community language and these schools are the most relevant for this present analysis.

In terms of the structure of the two systems, education policy targets are similar and draw from the same curriculum, the only difference between them therefore is the language of instruction (S. Björklund, 1997: 85).

Generally, teachers in the system are L1 speakers of Swedish and Swedish the only language of teaching and learning in the school environment (Mercator, 2013). Up until the age of nine, the language of all instruction is the pupil's first language (Swedish in this

case) when another language medium is introduced, usually Finnish or another language such as English. Study of the two official languages is obligatory in Finland and by the time that they arrive at the end of their schooling, all pupils will have received instruction through the medium of the two languages (S. Björklund 1997: 85). Every pupil has the right to receive his/her education through the medium of his/her first language in Finland which supports the vulnerable situation of L1 speakers of Swedish (S. Björklund, 2005: 26).

The Swedish education system, including curricular subjects and the level of teacher training, is controlled by the central authority in Finland. Local authorities also have a role in various aspects related to the local curriculum but are obliged to ensure that the core curriculum is always given priority (Mercator, 2013: 13). In addition, schools are permitted to develop their own curriculum, a practice which allows priority to be given to pupil needs within the national curriculum. The Finnish and Swedish education systems in Finland are comparatively similar and several, distinct organisations oversee Swedish education, but obviously fewer organisations than is the case in the Finnish system.

Education Practices through the Medium of the Minority Language

Pre-schooling is provided in Finland in preschool institutions and day care centres. One year of pre-schooling is provided free of charge to every six year old child and 90% of all children in Finland attend preschool at that age. There are costs involved in day care and fees are charged depending on parental income (Mercator, 2013: 16). In 2010, some 930 pupils were attending preschool institutes and 2,274 in day care centres, giving a grand total of 3,204 pupils attending Swedish-medium pre-schooling.

Generally, pupils are assigned to groups in keeping with their first language; however, some groups have a variety of first languages and the teachers speak to each individual in the pupil's first language (Mercator, 2013: 18). It is quite easy for preschool

teachers in Finland to use this approach since they usually have a high level of fluency in Finnish although often Swedish is their first language.

In Finland, education is compulsory for children and young people aged between seven and sixteen years, from grades one to nine. Pupils frequently have the same class teacher from grades one to six and a subject teacher from grades seven to nine as is the case in post-primary level in Ireland (Mercator, 2013: 20). Education, amenities and school meals are provided free of charge in Finland and the retention rate of pupils is 99.7%.

In the year 2009, there were 274 Swedish-medium schools in operation and a total of 33,100 pupils attending at primary and post-primary levels. In general, these schools tend to be small – less than 100 pupils in 60% of schools. As is the case in the preschool system, teachers in the primary school system are L1 speakers of Swedish, or have achieved a high quality of proficiency in the Swedish language, or have obtained a masters from a Swedish-medium university. Again, like the preschool system, a variation of language ability exists in class groups reflecting the dominant family language of pupils. In such instances, a special course, focussing on the pupil's weakest language, is offered within the curriculum, at primary and post-primary levels, to develop the pupil's proficiency level in that language (Mercator, 2013: 22). In the case of bilingual pupils, it is usual for one language to be stronger than the other. To address this imbalance in proficiency, pupils are given opportunity to undertake a special curriculum to improve the standard of that language as a native language, and a mother tongue curriculum for the other language. This practice is quite common in Swedish schools as parents wish their children to have a high level of proficiency in Finnish when they leave school. It is stated that 19% of 15-year-old pupils attending the Swedish-medium education system are not fluent in Swedish and have Finnish as the language of their home (Mercator, 2013: 24). This proportion can rise to 36% in urban areas. Extra courses are provided for these pupils

in the early years to reinforce their proficiency in Swedish. In discussing the curriculum of Swedish schools, it is worth noting the distinct role that local dialects have in the curriculum and the stated importance of supporting the linguistic identity and proficiency of every pupil. This is undertaken along with the development of standard Swedish.

While it is claimed that comparable facilities are provided for both Finnish and Swedish systems, research confirms that facilities in the Swedish system are of a lower standard and it is considered that, on the whole, there is a lack of facilities in the Swedish-medium education system (Harju-Luukkainen & Nissinen, 2011, quoted in Mercator, 2013: 25). In addition, there is delay in translating resources from Finnish to Swedish presenting further challenges to the system.

Two different systems of provision operate for post-primary education in Finland, second level education and vocational education. Thirty-seven Swedish-medium post-primary schools with an enrolment of 7,041 were operating in Finland in 2011, and, similar to the primary schools, these schools are smaller than the Finnish-medium post-primary schools. A flexible approach is evident in post-primary education in Finland in so far as pupils are afforded the opportunity of finishing a course within two or four years. In Swedish-medium post-primary schools, the study of Swedish as a mother tongue is an essential component in the curriculum and pupils must complete six compulsory modules and three optional modules. These modules are quite different to those offered in Finnish-medium post-primary schools and concentrate on Swedish literature, culture, identity, oral communication, writing the language and Swedish literature as a pastime (Mercator, 2013: 29).

Demand for vocational education in Finland has grown in recent years, and in the year 2011, fourteen Swedish-medium vocational schools were operational and, in six of these, only Swedish-medium courses were offered. These schools focus on practical work

such as cooking, fashion, home economics, health care, hospitality and similar type courses. This education is provided free of charge to pupils; however, pupils are required to buy their own equipment for the course. Swedish is the language of instruction in the Swedish-medium vocational schools and study of the two official languages is a compulsory part of the curriculum (Mercator, 2013: 33).

Information and Communications Technology

Research outcomes do not show information and communications technology policies or schemes which would be relevant for this report.

Support Services

Swedish-medium teacher training is provided in the Swedish University Abo Akademi, and also in the University of Helsinki. Bilingual courses are offered in the University of Helsinki also and notwithstanding the fact that Finnish is the primary language-medium, students are obliged to spend a period of their teaching practice in Swedish-medium schools (Mercator, 2013: 36). Two separate courses are provided through the medium of Swedish to facilitate students who wish to qualify as primary school teachers and one course for those who wish to qualify as second level teachers and another course for those wishing to qualify as preschool teachers (Mercator, 2013: 37). It is understood that from the beginning of autumn 2014, Vaasa and Abo Akademi Universities will initiate a new training course for teachers. This course will continue for five years and will focus specifically on students who wish to teach in an immersion education context.

Effectiveness of Education Practices

Although Swedish-medium education in Finland enjoys the support of a special system, at primary and post-primary levels, it is not a homogenous system with approximately 35% of all pupils coming from families where Swedish is not the primary language (M. Björklund, 2013: 120). This creates difficulties, especially in the environment of the classroom where

pupils with disparate levels of ability socialise together and where Finnish is by and large the most common language, thus endangering the acquisition of Swedish. This form of integration is particular to speakers of Swedish and Finnish and also to immigrants who speak foreign languages such as Russian and Chinese and other languages. Unfortunately, teachers in the system are not trained in these practices and therefore are uncertain in this regard (M. Björklund, 2013: 122). While it is recommended that the country's training structures should address these deficits, integration continues to be accepted as a characteristic of the education system which influences every speaker of every language within that system.

Conclusion

The Finnish education system benefits from advantages that are not available in the education system in the Gaeltacht, especially the high numbers of Swedish speakers and, Swedish spoken as a primary, national language in the neighbouring country. The assistance given to pupils whose first language is not Swedish is to be commended where a specific education module and courses are provided for them to significantly enhance their language acquisition to native speaker standard. A similar module is offered to those whose first language is not Finnish. It is worth stating however, that these modules address the pupil's second language, and not the enrichment of the mother tongue, a practice needed in the context of the Gaeltacht.

Conclusion and discussion of the key themes

Key themes which arose in the course of the review are discussed in this final section of the report. The status of the language and its effect on education through the medium of the minority language is examined. The blend of students in various education programmes and the manner in which this challenge is managed are analysed, and the means by which the

integration of pupils is undertaken are studied. The important role played by participation of local community and the opportunities arising from local administration are discussed. Some of the support services offered to teachers and schools are considered. The final part of the report sets out the choices identified for Gaeltacht education and recommends various models which could be implemented at primary level.

Language Status

The literature illustrates that the status of the language is of enormous importance. The state can confer a status on a language as is the case in the Irish Constitution and in the Official Languages Act in Ireland. While this statutory status is very important, in itself it is insufficient to persuade parents to send their children to schools which teach through the medium of the minority language. Based on the evidence from the literature, it is evident in Scotland that the status of Gàidhlig in the native Gàidhlig areas is more vulnerable than the status of Irish in the Gaeltacht in Ireland. A considerable percentage of Gàidhlig-speaking parents do not send their children to Gàidhlig-medium schools. Similarly in Canada, Francophones, whose right it is to send their children to French-medium schools, choose to send their children to English schools (including immersion education schools), based on factors such as socioeconomic status, importance of English in employment issues and the Francophone having a spouse who speaks another language.

However in addition to conferring status on the language, the community who speaks and uses the language must have trust in the services and the education system by which they are served. In New Zealand, while Māori-medium education is widely available, only 26% of the Māori population attend the preschool services available to them. This would indicate the presence of other obstacles which have to be overcome concerning the functioning of the official status of the language and the provision of education through the medium of that language. Legislation which confers and protects the

status of the minority language is to be welcomed; however, it is of no value to the language community if the status is not implemented on the ground in a manner that will win the trust and confidence of that community.

Another means by which status is conferred on schools for native speakers is to demand that teachers have special qualifications, as is required in certain regions where the exceptional linguistic context in which they will function is acknowledged. It would be worthwhile considering this approach in the context of Gaeltacht schools.

Programme composition and definition

One of the most salient features of the various minority language settings was the composition of the classes in terms of linguistic background of the pupils. As previously stated, native speakers, atavistic speakers, semi-speakers and learners, are all together in one single learning setting in Gaeltacht schools. The same circumstances obtained in many of the regions examined in this report. For example, in Scotland a very small number of native speakers were found in the Gàidhlig-medium schools and in French-medium schools outside Quebec in Canada, pupils came from a mixed linguistic background as well. In Finland almost half of all pupils in Swedish-medium schools came from families where Finnish is their primary language. The system in Wales is widely defined as a bilingual system but prohibits schools from responding appropriately to the language needs of native speakers within the education system, since the system is focused mainly on L2 speakers of Welsh.

As with schools in the Gaeltacht in Ireland, schools in many other regions are dependent upon the linguistic composition of the local community. Once this composition changes, the practice and function of the local schools change, a fact which threatens language acquisition by L1 and L2 pupils in the school. This problem is addressed in Hawai'i by the implementation of an immersion education system.

The Māori system also consists primarily of immersion education and the various levels of immersion education provided are defined; however as stated earlier in the report, these levels are not based on particular pedagogical theories which would support immersion education, and the lack of monitoring of the system negates the provision. The Gaeltacht education system is currently experiencing a distinct lack of clarity with regard to the amount of time that should be spent in teaching through the medium of Irish. A specification would be beneficial if it were built on best practice and pedagogical principles of immersion education, with a reliable and trustworthy system of monitoring on the functioning and development of the definition. For example, in the strategy for Welsh-medium education, the minimum amount of curricular time is defined as 70% (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010). The same strategy also recognises that in Wales, the sociolinguistic context of the school must be included when the amount of time is specified. If the work of the school is not reinforced by the community and the pupils' families, there is little hope that they will achieve total acquisition (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010). The less support provided for the target language outside school, the more time is necessary in school.

A clearer definition would be helpful not alone to pupils and parents when choosing schools, but also to teachers and boards of management of those schools since there is a wide diversity of understanding among stakeholders regarding the functions and responsibilities that they have in language education. At present, there is little categorisation of Gaeltacht schools in relation to the level of teaching carried out through the medium of the target language although it has long been established that it is predominantly a mixed linguistic combination that is found in the majority of these schools. Nevertheless, it should be said that it is not sufficient merely to label the linguistic and educational activities taking place in the current context of Gaeltacht education, rather,

existing practices should be examined and adapted to form the most appropriate and effective model of immersion education required to respond to the specific needs of the Gaeltacht community, and categorised accordingly. An additional feature which should be confirmed in defining immersion education is the question of authority within the process and the assessment of the current functioning of that categorisation. Education and language expertise must support the definition at the outset and a reliable modern assessment system implemented to clarify the understanding of this definition, and as a result, confirm the confidence of stakeholders.

Pupil integration

Arising from the mix of linguistic backgrounds within groups, teachers face particular challenges in responding to the language needs of the native speaker. Evidence from the review does not suggest that this is achieved satisfactorily in any of the regions. The language proficiency of native speakers is frequently used to develop the skills of L2 language learners. This is achieved by using the oral proficiency standards of L1 speakers as a yardstick in the language acquisition process of L2 speakers, a practice which guarantees very little development in language acquisition for L1 speakers. Another outcome of this practice is that, because the system is designed and directed towards L2 speakers, educationalists within the system have a poor understanding of the language needs of L1 speakers, the most vulnerable group. This was clearly illustrated in the pre-schooling structures in Wales where L1 and L2 speakers were integrated together (Hickey et al., 2013). The tendency exists among children who speak the minority language as their first language to turn to the majority language to satisfy the group's social needs. Teachers in the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) expressed their concern regarding the adverse impact that L2 speakers of Basque have on L1 speakers of Basque in Model D.

Similar concerns were identified by teachers in New Brunswick, in Canada, and services are provided for Canadian Francophones, outside Quebec, which focus exclusively on native speakers and on French-medium schools. The *Advisory Committee on French as a First Language* which operates under the umbrella of the *Services for Francophones* fosters a link between French teachers in French-medium schools; a comparable link could be created among teachers in Gaeltacht areas, if a similar committee were in place. Research material specific to the needs of French-medium schools is identified through this service. A similar committee would enable Gaeltacht schools to focus on their own particular needs.

In Wales, a particular effort is made to address this problem by sending learners to language acquisition units. These units clearly do not have total acquisition as an objective or indeed as an outcome but rather are focused on developing the proficiency of the Welsh speaker to a level which would allow him/her to participate in a bilingual education system. In Finland, a special model is organised for pupils whose first language is not Swedish, and also for those whose first language is not Finnish. These practices emphasise the development of L2 speakers and not the acquisition or enrichment of the minority language for those whose first language is the minority language. Some language support is available to pupils with poor levels of Irish in Gaeltacht schools through the *Language Assistants' Scheme*. A small amount of support is provided for native speakers but more comprehensive assistance is required in order to respond to the needs of native speakers. An additional allocation should be added to the period of time that assistants work in the course of the year and specific training provided for them in relation to the language enrichment of native speakers.

It must be recognised that young native speakers in the Gaeltacht have specific language needs as is the case with children who speak minority languages elsewhere.

Similar to children who speak Hawaiian, Māori or Gàidhlig, the future of Irish depends on the total acquisition of Irish by L1 children in the Gaeltacht, if the well for Irish is not to run dry. If it is not possible to establish a system specifically focussed on them due to a lack of population, as is the case in Canada, there must be differentiation between these children and those learners of Irish who are in the class with them. There is a need for them to have opportunities to be in separate groups during the school day. Differentiated provision can also be provided in other subjects in the education system. For example, in the case of mixed abilities in a Mathematics class, an effective teacher would respond appropriately to the ability levels by differentiation and by giving suitable support to his/her pupils. A specific language development plan with ambitious learning outcomes which would enrich the language proficiency of native speakers should be formulated by teachers. The authors of this report attach great importance to having practical recommendations for teachers and principals who are dealing with this linguistic mix.

Participation and local administration

Another theme which arose in the review was the role of the local community and local authorities in administering and supporting schools. In Scotland, Comann nam Pàrant is active in schools. Local authorities in Wales are responsible for the administration and management of the system at local level. Every school is obliged to follow a central curriculum and a national bilingual policy; however, the local education authority has a certain freedom to make decisions in response to the linguistic and educational needs of the pupils in their care. In Finland, local authorities have a role in the provision of education in the regions of the country where Swedish is a community language. In the case of Māori and Diné, native communities, including tribes, have a central role in sharing their knowledge of native culture and the essential elements of their tradition. This is achieved in the context of national educational needs and there is some freedom at local level. While

Gaeltacht schools have a certain amount of freedom currently, schools believe they do not have the authority to take decisions concerning the language rights of native speakers in case parents oppose them or the school loses pupils. There is also the additional burden of the supplementary work which teachers in Canada describe as the ‘Francophone factor’ .i.e. they must teach French, promote Francophone culture, deal with small schools and pupils with various levels of ability. More explicit guidelines from the local education authorities who understand the linguistic setting would help so that teachers would have more confidence in the policies that they are implementing.

This form of local participation is evident in the *Ulibarri* programme in the Basque Country. Great efforts are made to ensure that pupils achieve a high standard of Basque in school. Everyone is involved from the top down and from the bottom up. A comparable scheme could be implemented in Gaeltacht schools, which would imply that schools would receive support to take responsibility for the development of their own language.

There is an opportunity now within the context of the Gaeltacht Act 2012 and the provisions therein concerning the preparation of language plans to ensure that education issues will have a central role in these plans and that there will be an emphasis on Irish-medium education. These plans would be prepared by the Gaeltacht communities as recommended in *Twenty Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030* (Government of Ireland, 2010). However, lessons can be learned from the international systems, already referred to in this report, in relation to local administration and emphasis should be placed on the training of stakeholders regarding the aims and functions of the local education systems. When the administration burden was increased in the Māori education system, a significant percent of the community withdrew from the central role that they had previously played in the operation of the system. The potential exists to confer an active participative role on Gaeltacht communities in the administration and management of the

education system; however, it would be imperative that ongoing expertise and support would be a central component of that work. The *Welsh-medium Education Strategy* in Wales (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010) recognises the importance of an awareness campaign for the community which would demonstrate to parents the advantages of bilingualism and the outcomes arising from different models of language education.

Support services for teachers and schools

We have noted that support is given to schools and teachers in very many ways. Special training courses are provided for teachers of L1 Swedish. In Scotland, hubs or ‘centres for excellence’ are based around one school to promote the teaching of Chinese. These centres can access funding to promote their efforts and are responsible for various aspects of teaching and learning Chinese. These centres disseminate information to the other schools in the district in the interest of sharing and promoting good practice in teaching and learning.

The *E-School* scheme is employed in Hawai’i to encourage the use of information technology in English-medium schools and the recommendation was made to extend the use to immersion education schools (Hawai’i State Department of Education, 2014). It would be interesting to create virtual classrooms like this for Gaeltacht schools which are geographically distant from each other.

An online support programme for newly-qualified teachers operates in Canada to bring teachers together to share ideas, identify teaching materials in a very user-friendly manner and seek advice from experts. Due to geographical constraints, it is not always feasible to bring teachers in the Gaeltacht together on a regular basis, and this online support would be one means of overcoming that difficulty.

Choices for Gaeltacht education

Having completed a review of the ten regions within this research, it is clear that they have strengths and weaknesses. Reviews of this kind assist us to appreciate the merits of the Gaeltacht education system in Ireland and the challenges that must be addressed. We can be satisfied that a specific system of post-primary education operates in the strongest areas of the Gaeltacht, a situation that is not enjoyed by many of the regions examined in this research. One very significant and important fact in the post-primary education system in Ireland is that students are awarded bonus marks in some subjects in the Leaving Certificate. The authors are not aware of any other country where such support is available to students who undertake the study of curricular subjects through the medium of the minority language. We are of the view that this bonus system has significant influence on the numbers of students who continue their studies through the medium of Irish up to the end of post-primary school. In other regions studied, for example, in Wales (Lewis, 2007), the pattern is different with students turning to the majority language at the end of primary school or as soon as they are faced with taking important examinations. In Wales, it is also difficult to persuade pupils to change to Welsh-medium post-primary education, since they believe that it is easier to study through the medium of English and to achieve better examination results.

As stated above, Gaeltacht education is bilingual. Of all the regions examined, the best exemplars were to be found in the regions and provinces where French is spoken outside Quebec. The type of education available to the minority language community who speak French in the provinces is specifically defined. Parents can choose to send their children to French schools which belong to a system that is different from French-immersion education schools. A special education board is in charge of these schools to ensure that additive bilingualism for the minority language is implemented. A home visit

scheme is in place to encourage parents to speak French to their children and to enhance their children's proficiency in French, if necessary, even before they begin school. This provides some safeguards for proficient speakers who will be in the same class later on.

Gaeltacht parents do not enjoy a similar choice at present; however, this is the most robust model which could be implemented to protect the language rights of native speakers. Teachers in preschool, primary and post-primary schools could ensure appropriate development of pupils' Irish, while at the same time addressing their needs in English, other languages and curricular subjects. These schools could be 'centres scolaires communautaires' or community school-centres (Landry et al., 2007:143) as are found in Canada outside Quebec. The central role of the community in the transmission of the language to the next generation is acknowledged, as is the fact that the school can achieve only a certain amount of language development. These centres foster aspects of the culture which were found to be so important in Māori and Hawaiian. Centres like these enable the community and local authority to promote schemes, for example *Ulibarri* in the Basque Country.

It is very important nonetheless, when community participation is encouraged that appropriate training structures are implemented which would facilitate this participation so that community input is consistent with the principal language planning objectives of the system. In addition, this training would greatly enhance the competence development of the community which would, in turn, provide strong support to the Gaeltacht education system as it addresses all the challenges that present.

Models of education for Gaeltacht areas

One of the lessons to be learned from this review is that the success of an education model depends not alone on pedagogy or the percentage of instruction through the medium of the native language but rather on the sociolinguistic context in which the school operates.

Support for the language, contact with the language, and the status conferred on the language by the family, the community and the media are the most important factors in this context. For example, in certain districts in Wales, pupils have quite a high level of contact with Welsh at home and in the community so that schools can be confident that total language acquisition is being achieved. In other words, the minority language has a functional status. In this case, schools must ensure that pupils have sufficient contact with English and reduce the percentage of Welsh-medium instruction. Regrettably, this is not the situation in the Gaeltacht.

Arising from this review, the following models are recommended as educational choices for the Gaeltacht districts. Models A-D below relate to primary schools. If Models A-C were to succeed, then education through the medium of Irish should be possible for students in post-primary school, other than for those who have moved to the district. A 'bridging programme' such as the current *Droichead Programme* in Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne should be introduced for pupils who come late to the all-Irish system. It would be advisable to specify the percentage of the programme to be delivered through Irish thus ensuring certainty for school staff and transparency for parents, as is done in some of the areas studied, for example in Māori, Welsh and Basque. The reader is reminded that all international research shows that the strongest immersion education models, from the point of view of the minority language, are the most effective for achieving pupils' learning outcomes in all curricular areas (Johnstone, 2002).). We did not find any evidence to show that any one model is better than another in the case of post-primary education. Post-primary education is not provided in every region examined in this review. Every post-primary system is dependent on the primary school system enabling pupils to achieve a high standard in the target language so that they will be prepared for the academic challenge of the post- primary school. It is noteworthy that in Wales, the L1 and L2

curriculum is available throughout the school system, as far as A-level examinations. An objective of the *Welsh-medium Education Strategy 2010* is to increase progressively the numbers of pupils who study L1 Welsh in post-primary school.

Model A

This model would focus on the needs of native speakers of Irish, and it would be necessary to determine criteria to identify these pupils. Learners of Irish would not be included in these schools at primary level, notwithstanding the situation at post-primary level. Delivery of the entire curriculum would be through the medium of Irish over a period of two years, and English would be taught after that time. The curriculum, would place significant emphasis on developing and enriching pupils' Irish and English. The teaching of English would be delayed for a period of two years at least to facilitate the implementation of native-language medium education, on account of the composition of small schools commonly found in the Gaeltacht. In the majority of Gaeltacht schools, the two infant classes are accommodated in one classroom. If the teaching of English were to begin before the completion of senior infants, then junior infants would hear English spoken and the total immersion approach would be brought to an end. Discussion with these schools should take place in an open manner and schools empowered to implement an appropriate programme, similar to the practice provided for Francophones in Canada outside Quebec. Experience in other regions demonstrates that the central homogenous system is not suitable for the needs of speakers of minority language. The authors of the report are of the view that this is the only way of addressing the current situation where the needs of learners of Irish, rather than the needs of native speakers, are driving the system. Advantages of this model include: teachers would be enabled to respond properly to the needs of native speakers without being concerned that learners do not understand them; it is an additive bilingualism model for the minority language which would allow pupils to learn L2 (English in this instance) without detriment to L1 (Irish); Irish speakers would not turn to

English when other pupils did not understand them (Hickey et al., 2013); proper attention could be paid to core cultural aspects of the language such as dialogue, drama and song; Parents of native speakers could be confident that the schools are responding to the needs of their children and helping to ‘contribute to the maintenance of Irish as the primary community language in Gaeltacht areas.’ (Department of Education and Science, 1998, Section 6 (j)).

The disadvantages of the model include: the difficulty in many Gaeltacht areas of creating schools large enough due to the dispersed nature of Gaeltacht communities and the low density of population; pupils whose family language is English would have to be refused admission and perhaps would be obliged to find a school farther from home.

It would be better if demand for this model were to come from parents. It would be most useful if a parents’ association were active and able to access funding so that they would be supported to organise themselves in the professional manner. This approach would encourage the local participation referred to above. In addition, a ‘home visitor’ scheme would be worthwhile and would offer help, encouragement and support to parents to bring up their children through the medium of Irish, and would raise awareness of the advantages of bilingualism, the importance of literacy and other relevant issues. If parents had the necessary information, they could then make an informed decision regarding their children’s education.

Model B

This model would be based on the model of the all-Irish primary schools where early-total immersion is implemented. Teaching of English would not begin until the second term in senior infants. These schools would focus on the needs of learners of Irish; however, parents of native speaker children could choose these schools if they decided not to send their children to Model A schools. Where parents did not have the choice of sending their

children, native speakers, to a Model A school owing to geographical constraints, then these children would merit special care and attention. The school would be obliged to prepare an *Individual Language Plan* (similar to an *Individual Education Plan*) for every native speaker and to monitor the child's progress as part of school self-evaluation.

The advantages of Model B include: pupils would form a more homogenous group on the whole and it would be easier for teachers to focus in on the needs of these pupils as occurs in an all-Irish school; additive bilingualism for the majority language; parents could choose this type of school for their children if they so wished.

The disadvantages of the model include: teachers would have the same difficulties as currently exist in Gaeltacht schools in terms of responding appropriately to the needs of native speakers if there was no Model A school in the area.

Model C

This model would be based on the model of some all-Irish primary schools where immersion education is implemented and English is taught as a curricular subject from the beginning of schooling. Other than this, the schools would follow the curriculum as in Model B.

The advantages of Model C would be to satisfy the wishes of some parents to have English taught from the beginning of schooling, and pupils' needs would be more homogenous.

The disadvantages would be that this model would not satisfy the wishes of certain parents who would prefer English-medium education for their children; and it would be more difficult to encourage the language behaviour of children towards Irish.

Model D

We are aware of some schools situated in areas officially designated as Gaeltacht, where the teaching of the curriculum, other than Irish, is delivered through the medium of English.

If these schools are to be recognised as Gaeltacht schools, they should be allotted a definitive period of time to take up one of the above models A-C. As they work towards this target, the schools could begin the process by implementing Model D below. This model would be based on the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach. Schools in Model D would follow the curriculum implemented in the majority of schools outside the Gaeltacht, except, some other subjects would be taught through the medium of Irish. Over time, subjects would be added until Model C above is achieved. Irish would be taught as a curricular subject.

Model D would have the advantage of reflecting the recommendations of the *20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030* (Government of Ireland, 2010). It could, perhaps, satisfy the wishes of parents who would prefer, by and large, an English-medium education for their children. Learners of Irish could attend schools like these without exerting any detrimental impact on native speakers of Irish.

Disadvantages of Model D would be: a high standard of Irish would not be achieved and it would do little to fulfil the requirements of the Education Act 1998 in terms of contributing to the maintenance of Irish as the primary community language; children would not be adequately prepared to attend post-primary education through the medium of Irish and an English-medium system, for the most part, would be required at post-primary level for these pupils.

Summary of models

Table 1 provides a summary of the key features of the various models. The most appropriate models for the language maintenance position in the Gaeltacht are the models which contain the most Irish. Model A, in itself, would not be sufficient for native speakers. Support services for families would have to be provided as well, similar to the practice seen in Canada. A development programme like that in the Basque Country, *Ulibarri*, which

would have the support of the entire community, would be required. Teachers would require particular training in additive bilingualism for the minority language.

Table 1: Summary of the key features of the various models

	Model A	Model B	Model C		Model D
Gaeltacht Categories to which the model would pertain	A,B	A, B,C	B, C		C
Additive bilingualism for the minority language	✓				
Additive bilingualism for the majority language		✓	✓		
Development of dual literacy	✓	✓			
Teaching of English delayed	✓	✓			
Percentage of Irish-medium instruction	100% infant classes 85-90% in all other classes	100% up to beginning of 2nd term in Sen Infants 85-90% in every other class	85-90% in every class		Minimum of 50% Irish

Concluding Remarks

Regardless of the outcome of the review on education matters in the Gaeltacht, it is important to remember that it is the relatively small number of children whose family language is Irish who are, in our view, the most vulnerable and the most important group. The Commission on the Gaeltacht in 1926 recognised the importance attaching to this group. However, the State system has failed to foster and cherish them over the years and now has a final opportunity to take courageous and imaginative action. Particular attention

must be focussed on the language rights of these children and it must be recognised that these are not the same as rights of learners. If this decision is not made, the assimilation which is happening in all minority language settings throughout the world will continue. This is the very last opportunity that we will have to place Irish, as Ó Cuirreáin exhorts; ‘to the fore as the living language of the community and continue to pass on the language from generation to generation without interruption or gap’ ‘... in uachtar mar theanga bheo an phobail agus a bheith á cur ar aghaidh ó ghlúin go glúin gan bhriseadh gan bhearna.’ (Ó Cuirreáin, 2014: 10). If we do not seize this opportunity, the well-spring for the Irish language will run dry. The Gaeltacht Act 2012 places responsibility for the future of Irish on Gaeltacht communities. However, the State has a responsibility to provide the appropriate expertise to empower them to act for the benefit and in the interest of the language. It is recognised in the strongest regions studied in this review, for example, the Basque Country, Canada and Wales, that saving the minority language is not the concern of the school alone, and that a language planning process with appropriate funding from the State must be implemented.

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Appendix A: Systematic Search

In our search of the literature we chose the most commonly used databases to search academic journals. We used the following as the first step and the terms used are shown in Table 1 below: Summon, ERIC, EBSCO, Cambridge Journals Online, Innéacs Taighde COGG (Research Index), JSTOR, LLBA, MLA, Oxford Journals online, Wiley Interscience, and Swetswise.

Table 2: Lists of Words used in the Systematic Search:

Level of education	Various labels/terms for the education programmes	Associated Words	Aspects of education under enquiry
Elementary Pre-school Kindergarten Primary Post-primary Secondary High-school Education	Second Heritage Indigenous Aboriginal Heritage Endangered Minority Regional Bilingual Immersion	Child Pupil Student Young Acquisition	Status Language planning National/ State policy School management Pedagogical practices Language Support Networks Strategies Language Act/Legislation

ERIC and EBSCO were discovered to be the most useful databases. Having worked on ERIC and EBSCO we noted that it was necessary to input in the search the name of the country, the name of the language and the aspect under enquiry as shown in the example below:

Search for SCOTLAND and GAELIC and EDUCATION in All fields + text

In a broad search such as this 77 articles emerged but many of them were unsuitable for the literature review in terms of content or were out of date. It was necessary to narrow the search and a minor change was made:

Search for SCOTLAND and GAELIC and EDUCATION in Abstract (except in All Fields + Text).

To ensure that the articles were current a search was conducted on the period from 1999 onwards. Since not a great deal of related research was carried out in Scotland during that period only 14 articles were found on ERIC database and 20 on EBSCO database. In other heritage regions on which more research had been completed such as Wales, results were too broad and too general by times and the search had to be narrowed. This was achieved by the addition of three specific words. For example:

Search for BILINGUAL and WALES and WELSH and EDUCATION in Abstract

Search for HERITAGE or BILINGUAL and WALES and WELSH and EDUCATION in Abstract

Search for MAINTENANCE or IMMERSION and WALES and WELSH and EDUCATION in Abstract

It was necessary to be vigilant in the use of the various terms since divergent labels are in use in different countries to describe the same phenomenon. For example, the label ‘bilingual education’ is used in Wales but was not as prevalent in New Zealand. One example is the search conducted on ERIC in relation to Māori in New Zealand:

Search 1: *Search for NEW ZEALAND and MĀORI and ENDANGERED LANGUAGE (in abstract) Number of articles: 1*

Search 2: *Search for NEW ZEALAND and MĀORI and HERITAGE LANGUAGE (in abstract) Number of articles: 3*

Search 3: *Search for NEW ZEALAND and MĀORI and MINORITY LANGUAGE (in abstract) Number of articles: 16*

It was evident that more widespread use was made of the term ‘MINORITY LANGUAGE EDUCATION’ in New Zealand to describe bilingual education programmes in that country. In the case of Hawai’i and Wales we found that Bilingual Education was quite common as a term. Samples of search on HAWAII.

Search 1: *Search for HAWAII and HAWAIIAN and ENDANGERED LANGUAGE (in abstract) Number of articles: 2*

- Search 2: *Search for HAWAII and HAWAIIAN and HERITAGE LANGUAGE*
(in abstract) Number of articles: 4
- Search 3: *Search for HAWAII and HAWAIIAN and MINORITY LANGUAGE*
(in abstract) Number of articles: 3
- Search 4: *Search for HAWAII and HAWAIIAN and BILINGUAL EDUCATION*
(in abstract) Number of articles: 7
[Google Scholar and Google as search facilities]

Although the systematic search for academic articles was effective, it was not, in itself, sufficient. Occasionally reference was made to unpublished education reports or research, or to other information sources in the academic articles, and these resources were not available within the academic search. For example, in the search on Gàidhlig in Scotland, reference was made to organisations such as *The Scottish Government Languages Working Group, Parent, Bord na Gàidhlig, Comunn na Gàidhlig, Gaelic Excellence Group* etc. In these cases it was considered that Google should be used to discover additional information.